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THE ROLE OF VIRTUAL COMMUNICATION IN STUDENTS' LIFE

The role of virtual communication in students' life and its advantages and disadvantages are determined in the article. Different variants of communication via the Internet and their drawbacks are also depicted. The problem of so-called «emotional poverty», the increasing of social contacts in the modern society and their quality are dealt with. It is also set that, on the one hand, the Internet helps students to acquire deep knowledge on various subjects and disciplines and, on the other hand, it is practically the only means of communication not only for older persons but to a maximum number of young people owing to its accessibility.

Key words: *the Internet, virtual communication,emotional poverty, social networks, messengers.*

Nowadays the Internet is the largest computer network that opens up new opportunities for humanity. In the modern world you will not find a person who would not use it. It plays a definite role for each user. And the students, of course, are no exception. They use the Internet for educational purposes with pleasure and this fact doesn't depend on their nationality. However, its use has both advantages and disadvantages, which we will discuss further.

First, according to Y. Danko [2], N. Zasekin [3], T. Isakova [4] the Internet is the largest store of knowledge. Each person can add anything there. Due to this,

there you can find almost any information you wish. But it is rather difficult to find reliable information because of the large flow of data. There are many verified and reliable websites on the Internet, but they cannot replace libraries. Due to global distribution, many libraries use on line resources to facilitate the process of finding information. As a result, students have a wonderful opportunity to search for the necessary information not only in the Internet resources, but also in different libraries, sitting at home. Secondly, they also have a splendid possibility to publish their works. Especially it concerns various forums or even real scientific journals where students from different universities and even from different foreign countries can present their works and articles on completely different topics. Thirdly, the use of social networks for educational purposes can be considered a plus for using the Internet. Social networks have become commonplace. In social networks it is possible to create groups where communication takes place between several people at the same time. It has simplified the process of communication between students. Not a small role in this was played by messengers, making the process of messaging even easier. Following the students, teachers began to use instant messengers and social networks for educational purposes. They realized that the use of social networks for educational purposes simplified their work.

Above, we looked at the advantages of using the Internet. And now let's consider the disadvantages. First, the general availability and abundance of information allows students to stop working independently. They stopped thinking for themselves. And why, if it is really possible for them to find what they need, just by pressing a couple of keys on the keyboard when preparing or executing course works, tests, exams, etc.

A student enters the required topic or question in a search engine and selects the most appropriate answer and then simply rewrites it. Under normal conditions, to find an answer, one would have to read through a whole bunch or at least re-read lectures, and this would automatically increase the student's understanding of the subject. Secondly, when passing tests, exams, and so on students make extensive use of mobile phones. Modern mobile phones have access to the Internet, which

makes it even easier to find the right information. Such availability of information makes it easy to find works of the required topic and download them. In some cases, students pass these works to their teacher even without reading them. All this leads to the fact that the education of students falls.

The purpose of the article is to determine the role of virtual communication in students' life and to define its advantages and disadvantages.

Each person is not only an individual but also a socially formed personality who needs constant communication. This necessity doesn't go beyond the boundaries of biological or professional needs, but often becomes predominant. Of course, communication is a practical activity because contacts between people imply the embodiment of the transmitted information in one or another system of signs that make it objective. Whatever the nature of this information, the process of its coding and sending to the recipient is a practical activity. The emerging information society is characterized not only by the possibilities of accumulating and processing the information, but also by new forms of communication. Fundamental changes of the process of communication in the modern world are considered for a variety of reasons. First of all it is connected with the globalization of the media and communication. According to A. Giddens, it is she who sets out the «world information order» [1].

Another specific change is transformation of the structure of human communication experience. Thus, a characteristic feature of communication is the constant need for «building on», constructing both the image of a communication partner and the rules for interacting with it. Specialists, engaging in the study of virtual interpersonal communications, offer the following typology [6]:

- Interactive communication (e-mail, ICQ, Skype).

- Polylog communication (conferences, forums and chats).

The number of people who prefer a traditional letter to an electronic one is sharply reduced due to a number of reasons. Firstly, financial costs are practically reduced to zero: only Internet access is paid. It is the time that is necessary to spend on the website to send a letter. Secondly, there is no need for a paper,

sending via mail or mailboxes. And thirdly, the most important thing is that the email will be delivered within seconds after its sending. In addition, one can attach bulk files with text information, images, photos, music and even computer programs to the text of the letter. Moreover, there are free email information services on the Web (Subscribe.ru, Content.ru, etc.). One can receive a wide variety of information from currency rates and the latest news to training courses, by subscribing to them.

Another popular program for communication on the web is ICQ. Among the features of its 2001b beta version are voice messages, IP telephony, file sharing, sending SMS and more. ICQ is a revolutionary, user-friendly tool that informs who is in on line mode at any time and allows you to contact them if necessary. There is no more need to waste time searching for friends in the network because ICQ does it itself. It tells in real time which of the users are connected to the Internet. One can communicate with ICQ, send messages, files, Internet addresses, play games, and just spend time with different interlocutors. Recent developments allow the ICQ program to be installed on a mobile phone with Internet access, as a result of which the owner of the phone can connect with his interlocutors from almost anywhere in the world without access to a computer.

Another well-known way to communicate over the Internet is forums or web conferencing. There are several types of them.

- reference and information ones which are used on websites of various companies of firms. The point is that a client or a potential consumer asks a question on a topic of their interest (availability of goods, cost, provision of services etc). A company representative responds to a request.

- thematic ones which are distributed on specialized sites. For example, on the website devoted to the issues of medicine and health, there is a communication of interested people on the given topic. So there are forums for fans on the web computer games, sports fans, car enthusiasts, scientists, etc.

- Universal. On the Internet there are some sites created specifically for virtual communication. For example, gmail.com, mail.ru provide their users with

about 100 topics for communication. During the day, the number of visitors to the site may make up to 80 thousand people.

One of the main drawbacks of the forums is low updating of the information and efficiency. It means that the answer may appear in a few minutes or in a few days. But sometimes it may not appear at all, since the interlocutor has left the the site and maybe never come back to it. Therefore, chatting on the Internet in real time is more suitable for communication. This chat looks like a window in which there is a flow of messages from all participants in the chat and the content of the chat exists only «here and now».

In order to chat, you just need to choose a name for yourself (the so-called nick), and send a message that immediately appears in the general stream.
It is elementary to find the chat of interest in the network because the abundance of links and advertising clearly shows where to find a convenient place to talk. Chats are just like forums. There are several types of them. One chats do not require registration. You just need to enter a name that no one in this chat has. The other ones require registration and you need to come up with a password; still the third ones give the password themselves (give it right away or send it by e-mail). Registration chats can sometimes be logged in as a guest. A questionnaire may be offered asking about your email address, age, etc. In many chat rooms there are administrators who control what is happening: obscene expressions, nationalistic utterances, etc. are not allowed. And if the overwhelming part of communications on the Internet is related to certain topics of communication (forums, conferences), then in chat rooms you can talk about anything Many people are attracted to chat rooms, above all, anonymity. So, people they may not be the ones they claim to be, they can give biased information about their gender, age, nationality, health status. Thus, the chat is very democratic and, certainly, provides extensive opportunities for self-expression. Besides the fact that it performs a directly communicative function, the chat meets the needs of users in self-expression and even creativity. Many researchers compare chat rooms with a theater in which all the present users participate. At the same time, chat a kind of virtual reality that exists to a certain

extent independently of the participants. In the complete running away from «oneself» a person is forced to create his own image or several characters simultaneously. At the same time, he receives almost complete creative freedom, limited only by his own imagination. That is, virtual communication allows users to experiment with their own identity, creating «virtual personalities», which often differ from both personal identity and real self-presentation of users.

The psychological analysis of this phenomenology is mainly centered around the problem of motivating such «games with identity.» It is coming from a certain common premise: the Internet provides a person with the opportunity to «run away from his own body», physical appearance and, therefore, from a number of grounds social categorization such as gender, age, social and economic status, ethnicity, and so on.

The Internet communication today can be considered as a special social environment. It has a specific interaction language, specific norms interactions, selective transmission of social standards and own social hierarchy based on the possibility of influencing the course of communication. Unlike ordinary reality, the Internet environment is characterized by a much larger social uncertainty by virtue of its dynamics, fundamental infinity, and the presence of a greater variety of communication possibilities. In other words, if a person's being in the social world remains relatively structured, then his «virtual life» does not have usual framework for self-categorization.

Today, the number of users who have come to the Network in order to have an exciting time, chat or find friends and like-minded people is constantly increasing. This is primarily due to the fact that in the modern world the need of people for communication is growing. E. Durkheim, R. Merton, E. Fromm and other researchers studying the recent changes in the cultural sphere highlight the issue of the so-called «emotional poverty» [5]. They observe an increasing number of social contacts in modern society. However, quantitative growth impact on the quality and with an increased number of social contacts, their depth and emotional coloration decreased. The vast majority of contacts are utilitarian, their appearance

and content are functional, and often there is simply no time left for emotional attachments.

A person is increasingly faced with a stressful situation, generated by loneliness and depletion of emotional life. As a result, the topic of loneliness has acquired particular relevance, especially in big cities - and not only for older people, but also for people at the age of maximum social communication. One of the mechanisms to compensate for this phenomenon becomes The Internet. In the conditions of modern life, its rapid rhythm, constant lack of time, it is the Internet that makes communication first and foremost accessible, providing communication with any recipient of a communication message from anywhere in the world, the only condition for this is the presence of a computer or mobile phone with the Internet access.

In conclusion, it is possible to say that the Internet is one of the best inventions of mankind. And it is difficult to overestimate its role in each student's life. Despite the fact that the Internet can not replace books and classes, it is the best assistant for those who want to get in-depth knowledge on every subject and it is also a powerful tool in the hands of a student if he correctly disposes them and doesn't mix virtual and real world. Therefore, our next investigation will be connected with the studying of different means of correct and rational use of the Internet by modern students.

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