MEDIATIZATION OF THE YOUTH: THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AMONG THE HUNGARIAN TEEANAGERS

GYÖRGYI RÉTFALVI
Budapest College of Communication and Business

ABSTRACT

Mediatization of the youth: The use of social media among Hungarian teenagers

In this study I wrote about the findings of the BKF Viadukt research among Hungarian teenagers. Thanks to the focus group research and the survey, we found that Hungarian teenagers openly and willingly talk about their social media use habits, give access to their data, profile and cover pictures, the structure of their social network and the applications they use. They usually gave access to save their personal data for the research. We were able to determine what social media channels were popular among them in 2013, which were used more actively, and for what purposes.

Key words: the use of Internet, social media, public opinion

Because of the impact of the new media or the new new media, the use of media among teenagers has changed a lot in the last few years in Hungary. The emphasis related to media using habits changed from mainstream media consumerization to participation in social networks.

1 This article based on my conference presentation at: Művészeti és technikai civilizáció, 2013-12-02, Eger, Hungary and my publication: Györgyi Rétfalvi, „Először gépezek, aztán telefonozok, majd gépezek” Közösségi média használat magyar középiskolások körében – Alapadatok, in: “Kommunikáció, Média, Gazdaság”, 2014/1, BKF, Budapest, pp. 87-118. Supported by: TÁMOP-4.2.2/A-11/1/KONV-2012-0050 (VIADUKT).

Adres do korespondencji: Budapest College of Communication and Business, Nagy Lajos király útja 1-9, 1148 Budapest, Hungary
As is well known, a large part of the late-modern media environment is in change because of fast developing technology, the consequences of digitalization, and media convergence, which created a hybrid media environment. According to Jan van Dijk there were two so-called media revolutions in the past few years: a technological and a structural one. The technological revolution is the continuous shift from analogue to digital information processing: “The most recent technical communications revolution is characterized by the introduction of digital artificial memories, and digital transmission and reproduction” (van Dijk 2005: p. 15). This structural revolution is media convergence, as he calls it integration, where the differences between various kinds of media have disappeared: “The most important structural characteristic of the new media is the integration of telecommunications, data communications and mass communications into a single medium. It is the process of convergence. For this reason, the new media are often called multimedia” (van Dijk 2005: p. 7). The idea of media convergence applies wider interpretations and different levels. As Jenkins notes in his book: “Convergence does not occur through media appliances, however sophisticated they may become. Convergence occurs within the brains of individual consumers and through their social interactions with others. Each of us constructs our own personal mythology from bits and fragments of information extracted from the media flow and transformed into resources through which we make sense of our everyday lives” (Jenkins 2006: pp. 3-4). According to Paul Levinson with the appearance of online social networks, a new communication and social revolution has started. He calls the new media environment the new new media, where information can be distributed more quickly and widely, which might lead to new forms of society, new ways of living and new power structures within societies (Levinson 2013).

In communication and media theory, the paradigm of the information society was displaced by the paradigm of the network society. Networks are “sets of interconnected nodes through which communication flows occur, that are open flexible and adaptable forms able to expand without limits as long as communication codes are shared within the network” (Castells 2005). As van Dijk notes “With little exaggeration we may call the 21st century the age of networks” (van Dijk 2005) and where new networks are based on common interests.

In the online social networks, like Facebook, Instagram, Google+, Twitter, Tumblr etc, the information traffic patterns are integrated. In Jan van Dijk’s theory there were four types of basic information traffic before the appearance of online social networks. He calls them: allocation, registration, consultation and conversation, adapted from Jan L. Bordewijk and Ben van Kaam’s theory about the four definable traffic patterns (Bordewijk, van Kaam 1986): „The birth of integrated networks implies a combination of allocation, consultation, registration and conversation in a single medium” (van Dijk 2005: p. 21) and this new convergent communication pattern is called an integrated information pattern according to van Dijk. In the late-modern media environment there are a lot of