

Democracy in Action Project - Council of Europe

Focus Group Students, Haskovo , 5.4.2017

1. How do you spend your time in the net?

Today everyone is in Facebook, one could learn a lot of new things from the net, one could find whatever information is needed on whatever topic, sometimes we do projects together.

We spend a lot of time in the net because the life, our life is rather dull. Here we could find the answers of some questions we keep on asking. And at first place the net provides opportunities for acquaintances.

I do spend at least 4 hours daily, watching clips, reading articles.

For me the most important thing is that I could connect with friends, as well with my relatives who are abroad.

I am online all the time even at school.

I do learn a lot from the net, a lot of interesting and curious facts. And first of all – the communication with friends, with relatives. Through the net I do receive information from school as well.

I could say that I do spend all day long in the net. I do participate in different competitions, do develop a platform of my own. For me the net is a interesting professional tool.

I do spend all my time in the net if I'm free. Even at school I'm online, within a word internet provides much more opportunities to communicate with.

I do enter often in different forums and do read a lot in order to educate myself. In the net I'm only while searching information.

Yes, you are right it is possible to learn a lot in the net, but the price is an isolation from the world.

I would like to add that Internet helps me a lot to learn languages.

2. What happens easy and what – difficult in the net? Would you share something special about your life in the net?

It's just fine that you could see that someone else is online. You could get acquainted with new people.

The difficult thing is to understand the other person and more than often there is misunderstanding. You could not see the other, could not see his gestures, mimics, there's no the sound of his voice, the intonation which is so important.

The good thing is that one doesn't feel inhibited in the net. I do feel more courageous and free. I do not have to answer immediately – you could check the text before you post it.

Yes with information it could be so and so. Your personal information could be misused, it could be resent. Nothing as well could remain hidden.

Yes, if you do forget something you could check it.

I would add that internet facilitates our movement in the world – I could not imagine how the people could reach whatever place without smartphone in the past!

As well it is important that being in the net you are not engaging as much as in real life, when you have face to face communication. You could lie on the sofa at home and you could communicate – it's just fine. When you communicate online you feel that often the other has expectations about yourself.

The bad thing is that very often innuendos and intrigues fill the net. And as well anyone in the net becomes more courageous, clever, beautiful. One tries to look and to present oneself in a favorable light.

3. Are there any rules in the net? For example, do not insult, do not lie, do not make fake self-presentations?

I think that everyone makes rules of its own. If I do chat I try to listen and not to judge. I do not do wrong things in the net in order not to look like some one from the countryside.

I there any rule – how to write, how to express myself? I do consider that we have to write well using Cyrillic and not to use Latin abbreviations and numbers.

This is what I think, but too many people do not care and do not think at all about all this. When you try to write faster and do use abbreviations, you could be misunderstood. As well a lot of fake information and fake news are circulating in the net.

My point is that it is mre important to understand one another ad not to check how well we are expressing ourselves. Communicating in the net is not like passing grammar examination.

4. What about privacy in the net, how do you think about your right to have personal life protected?

To comment the other person is to intrude into his life. There should not be such comments. On the other side, nowadays everyone participates. Everyone is in the net, therefore one has to be prepared to face such publicity and comments. It is something normal taking into consideration that everyone expects approval or vice versa – the approval is expected by yourself.

Sometime happens even between good friends - the one posts unappropriated photo on his friends' wall.

For the sake of your privacy you could decide, you could make a choice who to see your post.

Do we follow the rules in different sites and forums? Do we read the rules – I think that none or almost no one does it.

4. Do you see any differences between the behavior and communication online and offline?

In the net one feels free. In real life or offline you could say it directly to the other person. Online one is more covert, concealed and tries to present oneself better.

If one decides to behave better so he/she could do it. But often the people are not aware what they do and it doesn't matter where they are online or offline.

5. Which are the basic things which should be followed in the net if you want to expect good communication?

The things online should correspond to the things in real life. But as we could observe everything in internet is at somewhat higher level. I do not like it – it should be more real.

Everyone has to be careful and responsible about the information he/she shares and with whom it is shared. And the next rule - one has to express oneself correctly and in a literate way.

I do not think that the rules are needed! There should not be limitations to communication!

If you are presenting yourself for someone else or just not like the one you are – you are producing fake information. If I face such situation with someone else I simply ask my friends is this true or fake?

It is true that there are many sites producing fake news. We could be manipulated as well and that's the reality.

6. Do you participate in any initiatives online?

I do participate in a literature group – it's very interesting experience and I do learn a lot of things there.

There is a group assisting its members who wants to study in Germany. I do receive a real assistance. Without this group I couldn't be in touch with so many people.

There is entrepreneurship Facebook group.

I would like to mention groups realizing charity initiatives as well as groups specific for our age – learning group for university applicants, group where special lessons for university applicants are delivered.

I did participate in an online essay competition and that's how I became Sofia university student.

7. Would you join an initiative which you know for sure is involving only a few persons?

As about me, it depends on the initiative. If it's a good one I should not hesitate.

And what about the Human rights – the right to be free, to express yourself, to have your opinion, the freedom of thought, the right to privacy – are these rights preserved in the net?

In internet everyone is equal to everyone. The equality feeling is more developed online than offline. In real life we have different divisions, social groups, classes, hierarchy. In the net it is possible to manipulate its own life – to change it, to decorate it. There's no discrimination as well and internet applications are free of charge.

One has the right to express oneself. A man is equal to the other men. Everybody could participate in the net and everybody could be visible. Everybody has also a space where he/she could express him/herself.

Everybody has the right to a safety life. But in the net we often allow our private or personal space to be violated.

The people feel scared when they read fake news – for example about upcoming bomb attacks in the city.

8. Do you speak at school about the net, about rules and etc.?

No, no one speaks about this. At school it is only possible to post your homework in Facebook and to make it visible to everyone.

No it is not true, I would say we have digital teachers and non-digital teachers, with the former we do discuss things like this.

But as a whole the teachers do speak about the net only in case it's their obligation – to deliver a lecture on dangers in the net, for example.

Do you think that communicating in the net will help you to become better?

I think that experience could be transferred in real life as well. Even more – life communication means more experience accumulated than the online one. There is

a lot of good instructive stories in the net itself. I think that internet communication prepares us to live better tomorrow.

And without internet the life will be dull, limited, poor but more responsible one.