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Минский государственный лингвистический университет

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**Онлайн и оффлайн коммуникация:
секрет успешного переключения**

**Online vs. Offline:
Don't Forget to Switch**

*Рекомендовано учебно-методическим объединением
по лингвистическому образованию в качестве пособия
для студентов учреждений высшего образования,
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Пособие предназначено для развития умений, позволяющих осуществлять эффективное переключение с реального общения на виртуальное с учетом специфики канала связи, используемых коммуникативных кодов, ролей участников процесса, их уровня коммуникативной компетенции. Пособие включает задания для аудиторной и самостоятельной работы по темам, соответствующим программе дисциплины «Культурный контекст профессионального общения».

Адресуется студентам старших курсов факультета межкультурных коммуникаций МГЛУ и других учреждений высшего образования, совершенствующим умения профессионального общения на английском языке.

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PREFACE

Switching effectively between face-to-face communication and technology enabled communication calls for a number of skills both in personal and professional contexts. It is not just changing the channel of communication. It entails using a totally different code, assuming a different role, following different rules of behavior. Being highly specific, online communication has developed a unique form of speech, a mixture of written and oral forms known as “the third type”, which is devoid of strict spelling or grammar rules. Among other peculiarities of computer-mediated communication are distinct non-verbal codes (emoji), Netiquette as a system of rules for online interaction, a plethora of fancy Internet subcultures, trend-setting ways of marketing and promotion, etc. To put it briefly, each time you switch from offline communication to online and vice versa, you have to shape your communicative behavior accordingly.

This textbook is aimed at developing communicative skills required for shifting successfully between the two modes of behavior – *online* and *offline*. The students are taught to differentiate between the two and avoid the dangers of switching mindlessly or automatically transferring the principles of face-to-face communication to Internet communication, and vice versa. It is shaped for senior students of Minsk State Linguistic University majoring in cross-cultural communication, but can also be of use to advanced learners of English at other universities.

The book offers in-class and home assignments, as well as tasks for individual (non-guided) work. The topics for discussion cover such issues as similarities and differences between online and offline modes of communication, peculiarities of verbal and non-verbal codes used online, sociocultural, psychological and biological factors of Internet communication, computer literacy and the rules of Netiquette, ways to become an influencer and protect oneself from computer fraud or manipulation.

The structure of each unit follows the major steps of the problem-solving process. The *Problem identification* stage helps the students to warm up and access their background knowledge while considering the brainstorming questions. The *Problem analysis* stage is aimed at thoroughly researching the problem on the basis of texts and various opinions expressed therein. It calls for critical thinking and helps to shed light on the contradictory nature of problems. The *Solution generation* stage offers additional reading materials and examples, presupposes individual research work and subsequent group discussions. The final *Solution implementation* stage focuses on creative work and encompasses various projects, such as role-play, essay writing, conducting experiments, etc. A competence diagnostic test is provided to assess the students’ progress at the end of the course.

Unit I. Online and Offline. Same or Different?

- **Problem identification**

1. What are the similarities between face-to-face communication and online communication?
2. What are the differences between face-to-face communication and technology enabled communication? What is specific of online communication?
3. Why has the Internet become ubiquitous? What made this process possible?
4. How has the Internet changed our lives? In what spheres is this influence visible?
5. How does the Internet itself evolve?
6. What are the benefits and risks of the Internet?
7. Is always-online availability good or bad?

- **Problem analysis**

1. **Read the text and consider the questions below.**

How the Internet Has Changed Everyday Life

The Internet has turned our existence upside down. It has revolutionized communications. In almost everything we do, we use the Internet. Ordering a pizza, buying a television, sending a picture over instant messaging. Before the Internet, if you wanted to keep up with the news, you had to walk down to the newsstand when it opened in the morning and buy a local edition reporting what had happened the previous day. But today a click or two is enough to read your local paper and any news source from anywhere in the world, updated up to the minute.

The Internet itself has been transformed. In its early days it was a static network designed to shuttle a small freight of bytes between two terminals. It was a repository of information where content was published and maintained only by expert coders. Today, however, immense quantities of information are uploaded and downloaded over this electronic leviathan, and the content is very much our own, for now we are all commentators, publishers, and creators.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the Internet widened in scope to encompass the IT capabilities of universities and research centers, and, later on, public entities, institutions, and private enterprises from around the world. The Internet underwent immense growth. It was no longer a state-controlled project, but the largest computer network in the world.

The emergence of *web 2.0* in the first decade of the twenty-first century was itself a revolution in the short history of the Internet, fostering the rise of social media and other interactive, crowd-based communication tools. The Internet was no longer concerned with information exchange alone: it was a sophisticated tool enabling individuals to create content, communicate with one another,

and even escape reality. Today, we can send data from one end of the world to the other in a matter of seconds, make online presentations, live in parallel “game worlds,” and use pictures, video, sound, and text to share our real lives, our genuine identity. Personal stories go public, local issues become global.

The rise of the Internet has sparked a debate about how online communication affects social relationships. The Internet frees us from geographic fetters and brings us together in topic-based communities that are not tied down to any specific place. Ours is a networked, globalized society connected by new technologies. The Internet is the tool we use to interact with one another, and accordingly poses new challenges to privacy and security.

Information technologies have wrought fundamental change throughout society. In our world, global information networks are vital infrastructure – but in what ways has this changed human relations? The Internet has changed business, education, government, healthcare, and even the ways in which we interact with our loved ones – it has become one of the key drivers of social evolution. The changes in social communication are of particular significance. Although analogue tools still have their place in some sectors, new technologies are continuing to gain ground every day, transforming our communication practices and possibilities. The Internet has removed all communication barriers. Online, the conventional constraints of space and time disappear and there is a dizzyingly wide range of communicative possibilities.

The development of the Internet today is being shaped predominantly by instant, mobile communications. Comprehensive Internet connectivity via smartphones and tablets is leading to an increasingly mobile reality: we are not tied to any single specific device, and everything is in the cloud. People no longer spend hours gazing at a computer screen after work or class. Instead, they use their mobile devices to stay online everywhere, all the time. Anyone failing to keep abreast of this radical change is losing out on an opportunity.

Communication opportunities created by the Internet

The Internet has become embedded in every aspect of our day-to-day lives, changing the way we interact with others. This insight struck me when I started out in the world of social media. I think the real value of social media is that you can stay in touch with the people who really matter to you. Social media let you share experiences and information, they get people and ideas in touch instantly, without frontiers. Camaraderie, friendship, and solidarity – social phenomena that have been around for as long as humanity itself – have been freed from the conventional restrictions of space and time and can now thrive in a rich variety of ways. Out of all the plethora of communication opportunities that the Internet has opened up, I would highlight the emergence of social media and the way they have intricately melded into our daily lives. Social media have changed our personal space, altering the way we interact with our loved ones, our friends, and our partners. They have forced us to rethink even basic daily processes like shopping. They have affected the economy by nurturing the business startup culture and electronic commerce. They have given us new ways to form broad-based political movements.

The Internet and education

The Internet has clearly impacted all levels of education by providing unbounded possibilities for learning. I believe the future of education is a networked future. People can use the Internet to create and share knowledge and develop new ways of teaching and learning that captivate and stimulate students' imagination at any time, anywhere, using any device.

The network of networks is an inexhaustible source of information. What's more, the Internet has enabled users to move away from their former passive role as mere recipients of messages conveyed by conventional media to an active role, choosing what information to receive, how, and when. The information recipient even decides whether or not they want to stay informed. We have moved to a pattern where the user proactively selects the information they need. Students can work interactively with one another, unrestricted by physical or time constraints. Today, you can use the Internet to access libraries, encyclopedias, art galleries, news archives, and other information sources from anywhere in the world.

The Internet and privacy and security

Another key issue surrounding Internet use is privacy. Privacy has risen near the top of the agenda in step with an increasing awareness of the implications of using social media. Much of the time, people started to use social media with no real idea of the dangers, and have wised up only through trial and error – sheer accident, snafus, and mistakes. Lately, inappropriate use of social media seems to hit the headlines every day. Celebrities posting inappropriate comments to their profiles, private pictures and tapes leaked to the Internet at large, companies displaying arrogance toward users, and even criminal activities involving private-data trafficking or social media exploitation. All this shows that – contrary to what many people seem to have assumed – online security and privacy are critical. And, although every user needs privacy, the issue is particularly sensitive for minors – despite attempts to raise their awareness, children still behave recklessly online. Outside the scope of what the industry or regulators can do, it is vital that users themselves look after the privacy of their data. The information is the user's property, so the user is the only party entitled to control the collection, use, and disclosure of any information about him or herself. Some social networks seem to have forgotten this fact – they sell data, make it impossible to delete an account, or make it complex and difficult to manage one's privacy settings. Everything should be a lot simpler and more transparent.

The Internet and personal relationships

The Internet has also changed the way we interact with our family, friends, and life partners. Now everyone is connected to everyone else in a simpler, more accessible, and more immediate way. We can conduct part of our personal relationships using our laptops, smart phones, and tablets. The benefits of always-online immediate availability are highly significant. I would find a long-distance relationship with my life partner or my family unthinkable without the communication tools that the network of networks provides me with. I'm living in Madrid,

but I can stay close to my brother in California. For me, that is the key plus of the Internet: keeping in touch with the people who really matter to me. Just a century ago, this was unimaginable. An increasing number of couples come together, stay together, or break up with the aid – or even as a consequence – of social communication tools. There are even apps and social networks out there that are purposely designed to help people get together. Of course, when compared to face-to-face communication, online communication is severely limited in the sense impressions it can convey (an estimated 60 to 70 % of human communication takes place non-verbally), which can lead to misunderstandings and embarrassing situations. I think the key is to be genuine, honest, and real at all times, using all the social media tools and their many advantages. Let's just remember that a liar and a cheat online is a liar and a cheat offline too.

The Internet and consumer trends

New technologies increase the speed of information transfer, and this opens up the possibility of “bespoke” shopping. The Internet offers an immense wealth of possibilities for buying content, news, and leisure products, and all sorts of advantages arise from e-commerce, a major distribution channel for goods and services. You can book airline tickets, get a T-shirt from Australia, or buy food at an online grocery store. New applications support secure business transactions and create new commercial opportunities. In this setting, it is the consumer who gains the upper hand, and the conventional rules and methods of distribution and marketing break down. Consumers' access to information multiplies, and their reviews of their experience with various products and services take center stage. Access to product comparisons and rankings, user reviews and comments, recommendations from bloggers have shaped a new scenario for consumer behavior, retail trade, and the economy in general.

The future of mobile technologies and total connectivity in our lives

The future of social communications will be shaped by an *always-online* culture. *Always online* is already here and will set the trend going forward. Total connectivity, the Internet you can take with you wherever you go, is growing unstoppably. There is no turning back for global digitalization.

Mobile Internet use alters the pattern of device usage. The hitherto familiar ways of accessing the Internet are changing too. The smartphone activities taking up the most time (over three hours a day) include instant messaging (38 %), social media use (35 %), listening to music (24 %), and web browsing (20 %). The activities taking up the least time (under five minutes a day) are: SMS texting (51 %), watching movies (43 %), reading and writing e-mail (38 %), and talking on the phone (32 %). Things are still changing.

<https://www.bbvaopenmind.com/en/articles/internet-changed-everyday-life/>

Questions

1. Why does the author of the article say that the Internet has turned our existence upside down?
2. Do you agree that the Internet can be considered a key driver of social evolution?

3. How has the Internet itself been transformed?
4. Do you agree that the Internet is now the preferred medium of everyday communication? How has it modified our communication practices? In what spheres do analogue tools still have their place?
5. Compare the two “controversial” statements: A. The Internet has removed all communication barriers. B. Online communication is severely limited. What is meant in each case?
6. In your opinion, do we use the Internet to share our real lives, our genuine identity or are we faking?
7. What are the benefits of always-online immediate availability?
8. What will shape the future of social communications?

2. Read the text and consider the questions below.

How the Internet and Social Media Are Changing Culture

By F. Furedi

Throughout human history new technologies of communication have had a significant impact on culture. Inevitably in the early stages of their introduction the impact and the effect of such innovations were poorly understood. Plato used the voice of Socrates to raise the alarm about the perils posed by the invention of writing and of reading. In his dialogue *Phaedrus*, Plato denounced writing as inhuman and warned that writing weakened the mind and that it threatened to destroy people’s memory. Also the invention of the printing press was at its time perceived as a threat to European culture, social order and morality. “Ever since they began to practice this perverse excess of printing books, the church has been greatly damaged,” lamented Francisco Penna, a Dominican defender of the Spanish Inquisition. Similar concerns have also been raised in the aftermath of the ascendancy of the electronic media – television in particular has been often represented as a corrosive influence on public life.

Plato’s reservation about the influence of new media on culture continues to influence the current deliberation on the influence of the Internet and of social media. For example, Maryanne Wolf, an American cognitive neuroscientist and the author of *Proust and the Squid: The Story and Science of the Reading Brain* frequently draws on Socrates to reinforce her argument about the debilitating effect of the Internet on the so-called reading brain. Her extensive discussion of Socrates is linked to her conviction that his warnings about the risks posed by the written text are particularly relevant for thinking about the transition from print to digital media and its impact on children. She wrote that “Socrates’ perspective on the pursuit of information in our culture haunts me every day as I watch my two sons use the Internet to finish a homework assignment, and then they tell me they ‘know all about it’.”

Apprehensions about the impact of the social media on children’s brains readily intermesh with alarmist accounts of predatory hackers and pedophiles, internet trolls, identity theft, phishing scams, Trojan horses, viruses and worms.

The Internet serves as metaphor through which wider social and cultural anxieties are communicated. That is why for so many of its critics its impact on offline culture appears in such a negative light.

Predictably the Internet is also an object of glorification by its technophile advocates. Time and again the public is informed that the Internet is transforming human life towards a more enlightened and creative existence. The public is constantly told that Big Data and the Internet of Things are about to revolutionize human existence. Claims that digital technology will fundamentally transform education, the way we work, play and interact with one another suggest that these new media will have an even greater impact on our culture than the invention of writing and reading. The digital technology and social media have already made a significant impact on culture. Towards the end of the 19th century artists sought to capture their subjects through portraits of individuals who were absorbed in reading a book. Today, it is the pictures of people standing in the middle of a crowd, captivated by what they are reading on their smartphone.

The Internet and social media are very powerful tools that can influence and shape human behavior. Many observers have concluded that in a networked world the social media possess the potential to promote public participation, engagement and the process of democratizing public life. That the Internet and the social media are powerful instruments for mobilization of people is not in doubt. However, it is not its own technological imperative that allows the social media to play a prominent role in social protest. Rather the creative use of the social media is a response to aspirations and needs that pre-exist or at least exist independently of it. This technology ought to be perceived as a resource that can be utilized by social and political movements looking for a communication infrastructure to promote their cause.

The Internet and everyday culture

The culture of everyday life has become entwined with the Internet. The flourishing of online dating offers a striking example of how the construction of significant relationships can draw on the resources provided by the social media. In many Western societies online dating has served as a provisional solution to the problems thrown up by a more individuated and segmented social setting. The stimulus for the cultivation of these online relations is the search for solutions to some of the problems confronting life in the offline world. However, the growing popularity of virtual encounters has had a significant impact on the way that men and women conduct their everyday affairs. The intermeshing of the virtual with the “real” is part of the reality of contemporary culture.

The influence of the Internet has been most significant in the way it has transformed the lives of young people. Their digital bedroom symbolizes a childhood that is significantly mediated through the social media, mobile phones and the Internet. Friendship interaction and peer-to-peer relations are increasingly conducted online or through text messaging. Such interactions have had major cultural consequences. Texting and online communications have influenced the evolution of language. They have thrown up new rituals and symbols and have had an important impact on people’s identity. Mediated exchanges often shape

and reinforce people's status. Consequently, what happens to people through their online interactions really matters to the way that people perceive themselves offline.

The digitalization of childhood can be interpreted as a response to a pre-existing need for new technologies of interaction. The digital bedroom emerged as the outcome of the growing tendency to relocate children's activities from the outdoor to the indoor. Risk-averse attitudes which verge on paranoia emerged as one of the defining features of contemporary child-rearing culture. Apprehensions about children's health and safety have led to new limits imposed on children's freedom to explore the outdoors. This confinement of children indoors has been associated with the growth of a phenomenon frequently described as the bedroom culture. So the main driver of this process was not digital technology and the social media, but the prior development of an indoor childhood culture.

Bedroom culture is the product of two interrelated and sometimes contradictory developments. On the one hand, the confinement of children indoors is the outcome of adult initiative. Surveys frequently attest to the fact that children would rather be outdoors and in particular they would rather be playing with their friends. For example, a series of interviews carried out with English children indicated that they would "prefer to be outdoors: hanging on street corners, shopping, at the movies, or playing sport, than indoors using the computer". At the same time the specific form that bedroom culture assumes is frequently shaped by children's desire to create their own space and enjoy a measure of independence from adult control. It is through digital technology that some people seek to regain the freedom that they have lost.

Bedroom culture represents the antithesis of the family-centered television viewing in a common room. Media usage has become increasingly privatized and children play an influential role in the construction of the new media home environment. Many children's bedrooms are media-rich environments – a growing proportion of children have computers in bedroom with online access. Highly motivated to create a separate autonomous space where children can experiment and develop their personality, youngsters seek to evade parental control. The flourishing of bedroom culture encourages the privatization of media usage as young people attempt to forge a world that is distinct from that of their parents. Through pursuing the project of self-socialization, young people attempt to personalize their media to ensure that it directly relates to their interests. This project tends to be pursued in isolation from other family members.

The repositioning of childhood into the indoors has not led to the consolidation of intergenerational ties. On the contrary, the rise of bedroom culture reflects the trend towards the privatization and individualization of family life. Children regard the new media as vehicles for setting themselves off from their elders and for attempting to forge links with their peers. They also seek to protect their interaction space from the monitoring of adults. From this perspective, media technology is not something to be shared but is something to be customized, personalized and consumed privately out of the sight of adults.

http://www.frankfuredi.com/article/how_the_internet_and_social_media_are_changing_culture1

Questions

1. Compare the two opinions: the Internet is transforming human life towards a more enlightened and creative existence vs. the Internet has the debilitating effect on our brain. Which one would you rather stick to? Are you a technophile advocate or an “alarmist”?
2. Prove that the Internet and social media are very powerful tools that can influence and shape human behavior.
3. Comment on the influence of the Internet on offline culture. In what spheres is it especially strong?
4. Do you agree that “what happens to people through their online interactions really matters to the way that people perceive themselves offline”?
5. In what way have texting and online communication influenced the evolution of language?

3. Read the text and consider the questions below.

Social and Psychological Effects of the Internet Use

Over the past two decades there was an upsurge of the use of Internet in human life. With this continuous development, Internet users are able to communicate with any part of the globe, to shop online, to use it as a means of education, to work remotely and to conduct financial transactions. Unfortunately, this rapid development of the Internet has a detrimental impact in our life, which leads to various phenomena such as cyber bullying, cyber porn, cyber suicide, Internet addiction, social isolation, cyber racism, etc. All these social and psychological effects appear due to the extensive use of the Internet. The Internet offers a quick access to information and facilitates communication. However, it is quite dangerous, especially for young users. For this reason, users should be aware of it and face critically any information that is handed from the website.

It is an undeniable fact that both computers and the Internet have become important achievements of modern society. They bring their own revolution in human daily life (science, education, information, entertainment, etc.) eliminating the distances and offering immediate and easy access to information and communication. With the continuous development of new technologies, the Internet users are able to communicate anywhere in the world to shop online, use it as an educational tool, work remotely and carry out financial transactions. The infinite possibilities that are offered by the Internet can often lead users to abuse it, or to use it for malicious purposes against other users, organizations and public services. With the rapid spread and growth of the Internet, there have appeared some social phenomena such as cyberbullying, internet pornography, grooming through social networks, cybersuicide, Internet addiction and social isolation, racism on the web. Moreover, there is always the risk of any sort of fraud exploitation by the so called experts of technology systems who use Internet as a means to carry out illegal acts.

Social networks

The human being is often considered as a “social being”. Therefore, it is no surprise that the Internet is continuously transformed from a simple tool for publishing information to a means of social interaction and participation. Social networks are characterized as online services that allow individuals to create a public profile within an entrenched net system. Social networks are a set of interactions and relationships. The term is also used today to describe websites that allow interface between users sharing reviews, photos and other information. The most famous of these websites are Facebook, Twitter, My Space, Skype, LinkedIn, Tumblr, YouTube, TripAdvisor. These websites are virtual communities where people can communicate and develop contacts.

Internet Risks

Social networking is an amazing technological phenomenon of the 21st century. Social networking allows each user to create and design a personal website, using graphics, color, music, pictures and give it a unique character. This activity is particularly popular among young people and does not require specific technical knowledge. On these websites, users through their virtual profile work interactively with other users, publishing photos and videos, join groups of common interests, publish and exchange their artistic creations, visit pages of other users and use a variety of applications.

The Internet is a powerful tool in our hands, but if it is not used properly, it can put someone in a very risky situation. The challenge of using the Internet is to be able to recognize potential hazards, to know how to prevent the risks and create options to avoid and terminate them. The most significant problems that may be found in the social networks are as follows.

Online Grooming. It describes the behaviour that tries to inspire confidence to a young user. The sexual abuse of the victim, physical violence or child prostitution and abuse through pornography may be the outcome of this process. The grooming is a smart handling process, which typically starts without sexual approach, but is designed to entice the victim to sexual encounter. Moreover, sometimes it is characterized as a seduction to highlight the slow and gradual process of disclosure of information from the younger user and build a relationship of trust.

Cyberbullying. It is an aggressive behavior using electronic means. Such behaviors can make young people feel lonely, unhappy and frightened, insecure and think that something is wrong. They lose confidence in their selves and may not want to go back to school or try to find ways to be isolated from their friends. Furthermore, in extreme cases, continuous, persistent and intense bullying has led to terrible consequences such as suicide intent. Harassment among children and adolescents may occur in very different forms not only manifested through aggression, but also through different types of intimidation that leaves the victim exposed.

Cybersuicide. It describes suicide or an attempt of suicide, which is influenced by the Internet. The cybersuicide has caught the attention of the scientific community, as recorded incidents of suicide are growing over the Internet. It has been suggested that the use of the Internet and specifically that the websites

about suicide can promote suicide and thereby contribute to increasing rates of cybersuicide. People who do not know each other come together and meet online and then they are gathered in a certain place in order to commit suicide together. There are users who commit this act while they are connected to the Internet: “committing suicide in real time via webcam”.

Cyber racism refers to the phenomenon of online racism. The expression of racism on the Internet is common and frequent and is facilitated by the anonymity which is offered by the Internet. Racism may be expressed through racist websites, photos videos, comments and messages on social networks.

Internet addiction is a relatively new form of dependency, which is under review by the scientific community. Essentially it refers to the increasing number of people who report more and more involvement with the Internet to raise the feeling of satisfaction and a systematic increase in the time spent for pumping this feeling.

Online scams. The Internet facilitates electronic transactions. Every day millions of people and businesses arrange their economic work through the net. As a matter of fact, it is necessary that the navigation of websites that carry out transactions should be performed with extreme caution and with confidence that they have taken into account legislation and compulsory insurance regarding personal data. The most common scam is the method of phishing. This is a particularly smart technique for economic deception through revealing personal data, in particular information concerning financial transactions. Misled unsuspecting users may disclose personal information to a fake form on the Internet. Evidence is further used for gaining access to personal data.

Electronic Gambling is an activity during which two or more people meet online to exchange bets. Such an activity involves the risk of real financial loss, which can be losing one's savings, home, property, etc. Many people become addicted and cannot stop thinking that during the next round they will get their money back.

In conclusion, one would say that the Internet benefits are numerous and contribute to the progress and prosperity of humans in all areas. However, Internet is provided in abundance and is easily accessible. Illogical use of the Internet makes it quite dangerous, especially for young users. For this reason, users should be aware of and critically face the information provided by websites. As a matter of fact, logical use and maintaining a balance are the keys to maximizing the benefits of the Internet.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4789623/>

Questions

1. What are the benefits of the Internet as a means of social interaction and participation?
2. Do you agree that rapid development of the Internet has a detrimental impact on our lives?
3. What are the Internet risks? Itemize them and provide a brief description of each.

4. Read the text and consider the questions below.

The Flight From Conversation *By Sh. Turkle*

We live in a technological universe in which we are always communicating. And yet we have sacrificed conversation for mere connection. At home, families sit together, texting and reading e-mail. At work, executives text during board meetings. We text (and shop and go on Facebook) during classes and when we're on dates. My students tell me about an important new skill: it involves maintaining eye contact with someone while you text someone else; it's hard, but it can be done.

Over the past 15 years, I've studied technologies of mobile connection and talked to hundreds of people of all ages and circumstances about their plugged-in lives. I've learned that the little devices most of us carry around are so powerful that they change not only what we do, but also who we are.

We've become accustomed to a new way of being "alone together". Technology-enabled, we are able to be with one another, and also elsewhere, connected to wherever we want to be. We want to customize our lives. We want to move in and out of where we are because the thing we value most is control over where we focus our attention. We have gotten used to the idea of being in a tribe of one, loyal to our own party.

Our colleagues want to go to that board meeting but pay attention only to what interests them. To some this seems like a good idea, but we can end up hiding from one another, even as we are constantly connected to one another. A businessman laments that he no longer has colleagues at work. He doesn't stop by to talk; he doesn't call. He says that he doesn't want to interrupt them. He says they're "too busy on their e-mail". But then he pauses and corrects himself. "I'm not telling the truth. I'm the one who doesn't want to be interrupted. I think I should. But I'd rather just do things on my BlackBerry."

A 16-year-old boy who relies on texting for almost everything says almost wistfully, "Someday, someday, but certainly not now, I'd like to learn how to have a conversation." In today's workplace, young people who have grown up fearing conversation show up on the job wearing earphones. Walking through a college library or the campus of a high-tech start-up, one sees the same thing: we are together, but each of us is in our own bubble, furiously connected to keyboards and tiny touch screens. A senior partner at a Boston law firm describes a scene in his office. Young associates lay out their suite of technologies: laptops, iPods and multiple phones. And then they put their earphones on. "Big ones. Like pilots. They turn their desks into cockpits." With the young lawyers in their cockpits, the office is quiet, a quiet that does not ask to be broken.

In the silence of connection, people are comforted by being in touch with a lot of people – carefully kept at bay. We can't get enough of one another if we can use technology to keep one another at distances we can control: not too close, not too far, just right. I think of it as a Goldilocks effect.

Texting and e-mail and posting let us present the self we want to be. This means we can edit. And if we wish to, we can delete. Or retouch: the voice, the flesh, the face, the body. Not too much, not too little – just right. Human relationships are rich, they're messy and demanding. We have learned the habit of cleaning them up with technology. And the move from conversation to connection is part of this. But it's a process in which we shortchange ourselves. Worse, it seems that over time we stop caring, we forget that there is a difference.

We are tempted to think that our little “sips” of online connection add up to a big gulp of real conversation. But they don't. E-mail, Twitter, Facebook, all of these have their places – in politics, commerce, romance and friendship. But no matter how valuable, they do not substitute for conversation. Connecting in sips may work for gathering discrete bits of information or for saying, “I am thinking about you.” Or even for saying, “I love you.” But connecting in sips doesn't work as well when it comes to understanding and knowing one another. In conversation we tend to one another. We can attend to tone and nuance. In conversation, we are called upon to see things from another's point of view.

Face-to-face conversation unfolds slowly. It teaches patience. When we communicate on our digital devices, we learn different habits. As we ramp up the volume and velocity of online connections, we start to expect faster answers. To get these, we ask one another simpler questions. We dumb down our communications, even on the most important matters. It is as though we have all put ourselves on cable news. Shakespeare might have said, “We are consum'd with that which we were nourish'd by.”

And we use conversation with others to learn to converse with ourselves. So our flight from conversation can mean diminished chances to learn skills of self-reflection. These days, social media continually ask us what's “on our mind”, but we have little motivation to say something truly self-reflective. Self-reflection in conversation requires trust. It's hard to do anything with 3,000 Facebook friends except connect.

As we get used to being shortchanged on conversation and to getting by with less, we seem almost willing to dispense with people altogether. Serious people muse about the future of computer programs as psychiatrists. A high school sophomore confides to me that he wishes he could talk to an artificial intelligence program instead of his dad about dating. He says the A.I. would have so much more in its database. Indeed, many people tell me they hope that as Siri, the digital assistant on Apple's iPhone, becomes more advanced, “she” will be more and more like a best friend – one who will listen when others won't.

During the years I have spent researching people and their relationships with technology, I have often heard the sentiment “No one is listening to me.” I believe this feeling helps explain why it is so appealing to have a Facebook page or a Twitter feed – each provides so many automatic listeners. And it helps explain why – against all reason – so many of us are willing to talk to machines that seem to care about us. Researchers around the world are busy inventing sociable robots,

designed to be companions to the elderly, to children, to all of us. One of the most haunting experiences during my research came when I brought one of these robots, designed in the shape of a baby seal, to an elder-care facility, and an older woman began to talk to it about the loss of her child. The robot seemed to be looking into her eyes. It seemed to be following the conversation. The woman was comforted. And so many people found this amazing. Like the sophomore who wants advice about dating from artificial intelligence and those who look forward to computer psychiatry, this enthusiasm speaks to how much we have confused conversation with connection and collectively seem to have embraced a new kind of delusion that accepts the simulation of compassion as sufficient unto the day. And why would we want to talk about love and loss with a machine that has no experience of the arc of human life? Have we so lost confidence that we will be there for one another?

We expect more from technology and less from one another and seem increasingly drawn to technologies that provide the illusion of companionship without the demands of relationship. Always-on/always-on-you devices provide three powerful fantasies: that we will always be heard, that we can put our attention wherever we want it to be, and that we never have to be alone. Indeed our new devices have turned being alone into a problem that can be solved.

When people are alone, even for a few moments, they fidget and reach for a device. Here connection works like a symptom, not a cure, and our constant, reflexive impulse to connect shapes a new way of being. Think of it as “I share, therefore I am.” We use technology to define ourselves by sharing our thoughts and feelings as we’re having them. We used to think, “I have a feeling. I want to make a call.” Now our impulse is, “I want to have a feeling. I need to send a text.”

So, in order to feel more, and to feel more like ourselves, we connect. But in our rush to connect, we flee from solitude, our ability to be separate and gather ourselves. Lacking the capacity for solitude, we turn to other people but don’t experience them as they are. It is as though we use them, need them as spare parts to support our increasingly fragile selves. We think constant connection will make us feel less lonely. The opposite is true. If we are unable to be alone, we are far more likely to be lonely. If we don’t teach our children to be alone, they will know only how to be lonely.

I am a partisan for conversation. To make room for it, I see some first, deliberate steps. At home, we can create sacred spaces: the kitchen, the dining room. We can make our cars “device-free zones”. We can demonstrate the value of conversation to our children. And we can do the same thing at work. There we are so busy communicating that we often don’t have time to talk to one another about what really matters. Employees asked for casual Fridays, perhaps managers should introduce conversational Thursdays. Most of all, we need to remember – in between texts and e-mails and Facebook posts – to listen to one another, even to the boring bits, because it is often in unedited moments, moments in which we hesitate and stutter and go silent, that we reveal ourselves to one another.

I spend the summers at a cottage on Cape Cod, and for decades I walked the same dunes that Thoreau once walked. Not too long ago, people walked with their heads up, looking at the water, the sky, the sand and at one another, talking. Now they often walk with their heads down, typing. Even when they are with friends, partners, children, everyone is on their own devices.

So I say, look up, look at one another, and let's start the conversation.

https://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/22/opinion/sunday/the-flight-from-conversation.html?_r=1&pagewanted=all

Questions

1. What is the difference between conversation and connection?
2. What does the notion of “plugged-in lives” stand for?
3. In your opinion, what helps us to define ourselves or reveal ourselves to one another better – technology or face-to-face communication?
4. What would rather choose – an important new skill of maintaining eye contact with someone while you text someone else or learning how to have a “real” conversation?
5. Do you personally have the habit of “cleaning the relations up” with technology?
6. Agree or disagree: e-mail, Twitter, Facebook, etc. do not substitute for conversation.

5. Read the text and consider the questions below.

Psychological Predictors of Internet Social Communication

By S. A. Birnie, P. Horvath

This study investigated the relationship of traditional social behavior to social communication via the Internet in a completely wired campus where every professor uses computers in classroom teaching, each residence is wired to the Internet, and every student is issued a laptop. It has been suggested that shy and socially isolated individuals communicate more on the Internet because it provides some protection from social anxiety. However, little research has empirically tested this assumption. We proposed, instead, that online social communication would complement or supplement the uses of face-to-face social contact resulting in a positive association between the two forms of social behaviors. We assessed the frequency and intimacy of traditional social behaviors, sociability and shyness in 115 undergraduates (52 male, 63 female). These variables were then used to predict the frequency and intimacy of Internet social communication. Sociability and the frequency of traditional social behaviors were positively associated with the frequency of Internet social communication. The intimacy of traditional social behaviors was positively associated with the intimacy of Internet social communication. Overall, online social communication appeared to complement or be an extension of traditional social

behavior rather than be a compensatory medium for shy and socially anxious individuals. However, shyness was associated with increased intimate socializing over the Internet, indicating that traditional and Internet communication are not functionally equivalent.

Introduction

Are people who use traditional forms of contact (e.g., face-to-face, telephone) likely to use the Internet similarly? Are individuals who are shy more likely to use the relatively greater privacy afforded by the Internet for social contact and expression? Such questions are usually difficult to answer because of the disparity caused by socio-economic factors that affect access to computers and the learning of computer skills, unless all the participants sampled are on an even-level playing field in terms of access to computers and to computer skills. However, it is important to try to address such questions. The fact that Internet users are increasing in numbers, suggests that more and more people will use it for interpersonal communication. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship of traditional forms of social behavior to social communication using electronic media. The present study is unique in that all the participants sampled were roughly comparable in terms of access to computers and potentially to computer skills.

There has been much discussion about the impact of the Internet on society, social interaction, and communication. For example, it has been suggested that the Internet will have a greater impact on society than television did, as the Internet affects many more areas of a person's life – personal, family, school, and work domains. The Internet is claimed to be a communication technology that has changed how people relate to one another. However, empirical research has not always found this to be the case. To examine a related issue, we investigated whether individuals communicate over the Internet for social purposes similarly to their use of more traditional forms of social communication.

Computer-Mediated Social Communication

Computer-mediated communication (CMC) has been a topic of debate. One topic of interest to researchers was whether true social communication was possible over company networks (i.e., in e-mail or messages posted to company bulletin boards). It was argued that communicating through text makes CMC low in “social presence” given the absence of necessary social context cues like eye contact. A main concern of social presence theory is that CMC is deficient compared to face-to-face communication in social context cues like facial expressions, posture, dress, social status indicators, vocal cues. However, other research found that CMC was primarily honest, creative, and positive.

Despite the claim that true emotional expression was not possible in CMC, computer networks used for social purposes became more active than non-social networks. In contrast to what would be expected from social presence and information richness theories (i.e., communication on the computer is impersonal and cold), friendly, dominant, and relaxed communication styles have been associated with increased use of CMC. Even when the intent was work-related,

people inevitably sought to achieve social goals. Despite the claim that computer communication had fewer social cues than face-to-face interaction, people experimented with the new medium for social purposes. CMC appears to facilitate social interaction.

Social Network Theory

A second major area of CMC research was introduced when the Internet started to appear in the typical home. Some researchers have cited the negative effects of the Internet on traditional social interactions. Other researchers have claimed that the Internet enhanced traditional relationships and family ties. When the Internet was placed in the home it did not result in people's "dropping out of real life" and in fact, it augmented involvement in traditional familial activities. It was suggested that frequent Internet users might actually have more active social lives than non-users. A majority of Americans surveyed perceived that communication over the Internet has improved their connections to family and friends. Some recent studies have found Internet use to be associated with increased local and distant social circles and face-to-face interactions with friends and family. In line with the "rich get richer" model rather than the "social compensation" model, increased family communication was associated with Internet use among those with greater social support. Increased community involvement was associated with Internet use among extroverts rather than introverts.

Social network theory suggests that the more people are socially connected, the more intensely they are likely to communicate using various media available to them. Internet social communication supplements and is an extension of traditional social behaviors. It has been found that the more individuals in organizations are connected, communicate face-to-face, and the more intimate their relationships, the more frequently and intimately they use email and a variety of media to communicate. In other words, the Internet supplements traditional social behavior, without necessarily increasing or decreasing it.

Uses and Gratifications Theory

The anonymity of the Internet may provide some protection against social anxiety experienced by shy individuals. Accordingly, shy individuals may use the Internet for social communication somewhat differently than sociable individuals. Differences in the motivations at play in the use of traditional and Internet forms of communication would suggest that the two forms of communication are not functionally equivalent.

Uses and gratifications theory has provided a framework for examining the satisfaction of needs and interests through different forms of communications media. One type of medium may be preferred to another if it is better at fulfilling certain needs such as entertainment or socializing. The uses and gratifications theory suggests that if individuals find face-to-face communication and online communication useful to reach similar goals, then they will use the two media similarly. If, however, the uses of communication over the Internet were different from those of face-to-face communication, then one could expect different motives

as a factor in the two forms of communication. The Internet may help to reduce the social anxiety experienced by shy individuals. Accordingly, this effect may lead to somewhat different patterns of use in the two media for shy individuals.

The Present Study

The main question that concerned this study was the relationship of traditional social behaviors to Internet social communication. Would individuals who are highly social continue this behavior online? Or would it be more likely that opportunities for greater privacy or anonymity would make the Internet appeal more to those who have difficulties with traditional forms of social communication?

In line with social network theory, it has been found that the more individuals communicate face-to-face and the more intimate their relationships, the more they use a variety of media, including the Internet, to communicate. Those engaging in more traditional socializing and intimacy would manifest more online socializing and intimacy. The more sociable the individual in face-to-face relationships, the more frequently and intimately they would use the Internet to maintain their relationships with others. Therefore, we expected that the Internet would complement or supplement traditional social behaviors.

Participants were 115 undergraduate students with a mean age of 23.03 years. They were enrolled in spring and summer courses, or were working on campus during the summer.

Traditional Contact Frequency. Participants were asked to list the individuals (e.g., friends, family, acquaintances) with whom they communicate socially in a traditional manner (i.e., face-to-face or telephone). Each listed person was rated on a scale from 1 to 8 depending on the frequency of traditional communication.

Traditional Contact Intimacy. Participants were asked to rate each person (i.e., the previously listed individuals) with whom they communicated socially in a traditional manner, on a rating scale from 1 to 5 depending on the frequency of intimate social communication (i.e., how often they disclosed personal information to the person face-to-face or over the phone).

Traditional Socializing Frequency. Participants answered general questions, e.g., “During the week I often go out and socialize with my friends” and “I am involved with clubs and organizations with other individuals”.

Traditional Socializing Intimacy. Participants rated general questions, i.e., “Face to face conversations with my friends are for the most part superficial” and “If I had a problem, I could turn to my friends to talk about my problem”.

Sociability. Examples of questions in the current study are “I like to be with people”, “I welcome the opportunity to mix socially with people”, and “I am most happy when I am around other people”.

Shyness. Examples of questions are “I am socially somewhat awkward”, “I don’t find it hard to talk to strangers”, “I feel tense when I’m with people I don’t know well”.

Computer Skills. Participants were asked to indicate whether they were familiar with applications related to computer use (e.g., e-mail, HTML editor, etc.). Participants were also asked to indicate whether they had ever accomplished any of three computer-related activities (e.g., downloading an Internet file, making a personal Web page).

Internet Contact Frequency. Participants were asked to list the individuals (e.g., friends, family, acquaintances) with whom they communicate socially over the Internet.

Internet Contact Intimacy. Participants were asked to rate each individual with whom they communicated socially via the Internet (i.e., the previously listed individuals) on a rating scale from 1 to 5 depending on the frequency of intimate social communication with each person (e.g., how often they disclosed personal information to the listed individuals over the Internet).

Internet Socializing Frequency. Participants answered general questions, e.g., “I use random Internet chatting sites” and “I spend time talking to acquaintances or people I have never met face-to-face on the computer”.

Internet Socializing Intimacy. Participants rated general questions, e.g., “I disclose personal/intimate information to my friends during social communication using ICQ/e-mail” and “If I had a problem I could turn to people over ICQ/e-mail to talk about my personal problems”.

The mean number of traditional social contacts was 10.90, while the mean number of Internet contacts was 8.32. About half of the Internet contacts were the same as the traditional social contacts. Participants communicated both traditionally and over the Internet with most of their contacts on a bi-weekly or weekly basis (contact frequency measures). Average disclosure traditionally was between “infrequently” and “sometimes” and average disclosure over the Internet was lower at “infrequently” (contact intimacy measures). The frequency of traditional social contacts was higher than the frequency of Internet social contacts, and likewise the intimacy of traditional social contacts was higher than the intimacy of Internet social contacts. Younger participants tended to socialize more traditionally, had better computer skills, and also tended to socialize more on the Internet. Females engaged in more traditional contact and socializing intimacy than males.

The findings of this study advanced our knowledge of how traditional socializing is related to social communication over the Internet. The study looked at electronic social communication more generally, not just at friendships formed online. We measured both online social contacts with those considered important in the participants’ lives, as well as more anonymous social communication, such as with individuals at random chatting sites. In addition, the research investigated the association between communication behavior across different media not just interests and preferences, which may not be highly correlated with actual behavior.

Conclusions

Although the two media were not functionally equivalent in fulfilling social needs, the findings do suggest that online social communication is more likely to be an outlet for the sociable person than a compensatory mechanism for the shy or socially anxious individual with infrequent or superficial social contacts. In contrast to the speculation about the social-isolate benefiting the most from Internet social communication, our data suggest that it is the person with a large social network and frequent/intimate social communication who is more likely

to use the Internet for social purposes. Advances in Internet communication technology may have reached a point where the gap between it and traditional social communication is closing.

Communication media have been regarded as having powerful influences that change social processes. Our findings suggest that in addition to change in social patterns fostered by the media, people also adapt new technologies to extend and expand their traditional forms of social interactions.

<https://academic.oup.com/jcmc/article/7/4/JCMC743/4584232>

Questions

1. Do traditional forms of contact and online communication have more similarities or differences?

2. Agree or disagree: Shy and socially isolated individuals communicate more on the Internet because it provides some protection from social anxiety.

3. Does the Internet use necessarily result in people's "dropping out of real life"?

4. In your opinion, does online communication complement traditional social behavior or serve as a compensatory medium? Does your opinion coincide with the one stated in the article?

6. Read the text and consider the questions below.

Internet-Based Communication

By M. A. Gernsbacher

Google the question, "How is the Internet changing the way we communicate?" and you will find no shortage of opinions, or fears, about the Internet altering the way we communicate. Although the Internet is not necessarily making communication briefer (neither is the Internet making communication less formal), the Internet is manifesting our preference for writing over speaking. I propose that our preference for communicating through Internet-based text derives from a fundamental feature of writing: in contrast to speech, which is most often synchronous, text is most often asynchronous.

In this article I argue that the Internet provides a fruitful new avenue for studying text and discourse. However, some readers might be wondering why scientists want anyone to spend more time on the Internet. As it is, if the Internet craze continues, we are destined to become a nation of morons. Just look around, and you will see how many teenage girls hang out from morning to night on Facebook and Snapchat, to the neglect of their school work and their mental health. And don't we all agree that YouTube, with its plethora of pratfall and cat videos, threatens to change us into creatures with eyeballs as big as cantaloupes with no brains at all? And what about the mental laziness enabled by our being able to Google anything we can't remember? Surely, Internet-based search engines create forgetfulness because people who search the Internet stop searching their own memories.

So why should text and discourse scientists flock to the Internet as a fruitful new avenue for study? Isn't Internet-based communication as a substitute for live, in-person communication merely a spurious form of progress? Don't we agree that we should only be studying face-to-face communication not mechanical Internet-based communication?

As for the fear of the continued Internet craze leading to our becoming a nation of morons, that fear was voiced in a 1950s commencement address, given by Boston University's president, who was referring to that era's craze: television. Similarly, the claim about YouTube changing us into creatures with eyeballs as big as cantaloupes with no brains at all? That, too, was a quote from the 1950s, also about the fearful rise of TV, this time spoken by Fred Allen, a radio personality.

As for the public's distress about so many teenage girls who hang out on Facebook and Snapchat from morning to night, to the neglect of their school work and their mental health? That fear dates back to the 18th century and the use of those newfangled gadgets called novels. "Many young girls, from morning to night, hang over this pestiferous reading, to the neglect of industry, health, proper exercise, and to the ruin both of body and of soul". In his 1778 essay on morality and literacy, British schoolmaster Vicesimus Knox opined that "If it be true that the present age is more corrupt than the preceding, the great multiplication of novels has probably contributed to its degeneracy, because fifty years ago there was scarcely a novel in the kingdom." Other 18th century scholars predicted that "the increase of novels will help to account for the increase of prostitution and for the numerous adulteries and elopements that we hear about." Indeed, in a list of presenting ailments recommending admission to the Trans-Allegheny Lunatic Asylum, we find novel reading adjacent to nymphomania and opium addiction.

As for Google rotting our memories? That declaration was made by Socrates about the invention of writing: "This discovery of yours will create forgetfulness in the learners' souls, because they will not use their memories." Indeed, Socrates believed those who relied on the written word, including me as an author and you as a reader, "will appear to be omniscient, but will generally know nothing; they will be tiresome company, having the show of wisdom but without the reality."

The Internet is Becoming Ubiquitous

Because I was a child of the 1950s who witnessed the advent of numerous important technological inventions, such as seat belts, the microchip, the cardiac pacemaker, and the antibiotic, tetracycline (as well as Barbie Dolls, Mr. Potato Head, McDonalds restaurants, and drive-in movies), I was imprinted on the power of technology. As for the Internet, I am particularly struck with its amazingly fast saturation speed. By saturation speed, we mean the number of years required to achieve saturation through half of all households. For the telephone, saturation through U.S. households took over 50 years. For air conditioning, saturation took nearly 30 years. For the automobile, it took over 20 years. However, for the Internet, saturation has been achieved in a remarkable dozen years, second only in saturation speed to the smartphone.

Nearly 8 of 10 North Americans, 6.5 of 10 Europeans, and 6 of 10 Australasians use the Internet daily. Drilling down to look at only my home country, the United States, men are just as likely as women to use the Internet daily (85 % and 84 %). Black non-Hispanic Americans (85 %) are just as likely as White non-Hispanic Americans (86 %) to use the Internet daily. Americans who live in urban areas are just as likely to use the Internet daily (86 %) as Americans who live in suburban areas (86 %), with just a small decrease for those who live in rural areas (80 %). Although daily Internet use is somewhat tied to a person's annual salary, over three fourths of Americans who live in poverty access the Internet daily.

As in many countries, it is the younger adults who go online most frequently. For example, 98 % of Americans age 18 to 29 and 92 % of Americans age 30 to 49 use the Internet daily. But more than half of U.S. senior citizens use the Internet daily. It is this older age group who is demonstrating the most rapid increase in Internet usage. In just a few years, when the rest of the baby boomers join this age group, the age-Internet use disparity will undoubtedly diminish.

We use the Internet for e-mail, with 150 billion messages sent per day, of which 69 % are spam. We use the Internet for social media, spending an average 3.2 hours a day on sites such as Facebook, where 500 million people log in every day; Twitter, where 175 million tweets are sent every day, and YouTube, where 4 billion videos are viewed every day. On Instagram, 40 million photos are uploaded every day and 1,000 comments are made every second, along with 8,500 likes. However, one of the newest social media eclipses its adolescent siblings: Snapchat users send an astounding 400 million photos and videos each day. Half of 18- to 34-year-olds check Facebook as soon as they wake up each day, and nearly a third do so on their mobile phones before getting out of bed.

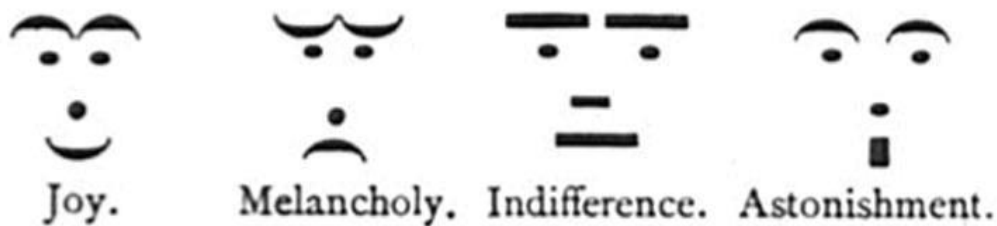
Mobile smartphones, and ergo access to the Internet, are becoming ubiquitous throughout the world. When the Reddit community was recently asked what would be the most difficult thing to explain if someone from the 1950s suddenly appeared today, the most up-voted response – among the 12,000 answers this question received – was the following: “I possess a device, in my pocket, that is capable of accessing the entirety of information known to man. I use that device to look at pictures of cats and get in arguments with strangers.”

How is the Internet Changing the Way we Communicate?

Internet-based communication is not necessarily less formal. Sure, some of us raised our eyebrows when we saw Dr. Francis Collins, Director of the U.S. National Institutes of Health, the world's largest medical research and funding agency, end his tweet about the U.S. Supreme Court case decision disallowing DNA patenting, with the slang expression, “Woo Hoo!!!” (complete with triple exclamation points).

However, textual slang dates back centuries. For example, in an exasperated letter to Winston Churchill in 1917, Lord Fisher not only used double exclamation points (“Some headlines in the newspapers have utterly upset me! Terrible!!”) but also used the abbreviation OMG! (“I hear that a new Knighthood is on the

tapis – OMG!”). Similarly, emoticons, like those smiley faces composed of colons and parentheses, are nothing new. They arrived in text in the late 1800s, as soon as the typesetters of *Puck* magazine could rejigger their typesetting machine.



Internet-based communication is not necessarily briefer. Very few contemporary text messages can match the brevity of a postal letter written in 1862 by the noted author Victor Hugo. Hugo had just completed his latest novel, *Les Miserables*, and had gone away on a vacation. But he was understandably anxious to learn how the book was selling. Therefore, he wrote his publisher the following letter:

?

Indeed, his correspondence comprised only one character, a question mark. Hugo’s publisher responded just as tersely:

!

We might grouse when we hear that authors are now using Twitter, with its 140-character limit, to pen short stories. But Guatemalan author Augusto Monterroso beat the 140-character limit back in 1959, with his ultra-short story, “El Dinosaurio”, the entirety of which is “Cuando despertó, el dinosaurio todavía estaba allí.” (“When she or he awoke, the dinosaur was still there.”). Short forms of formal communication have been with us for centuries.

Thus, the Internet is not making communication briefer. Neither is the Internet making communication less formal. We have always had brief forms of communication, even in writing, and we have always used written communication in informal modes. But the Internet and the smartphone are changing one way that we communicate: Internet-based communication is manifesting either our latent or a newfound preference for written communication over spoken communication.

Internet-Based Communication Manifests a Preference for Written Communication

We are witnessing a steady decrease in communicating by spoken telephone call. In its wake, we are witnessing a steady increase in communicating by written text message. U.S. teenagers are leading the pack, each sending, on average, over 4,000 text messages a month. But even senior citizens are gravitating toward texting. U.S. adults over age 65 send, on average, two text messages a day, as demonstrated by NBA basketball player Kevin Durant’s grandmother, who texted to congratulate his team, the Oklahoma City Thunder, on their win over the Phoenix Suns (“Thunder struck again & the Sun(s) went down (Great W)!

Love u g mom”), and to add some old-fashioned grandmother scolding (“Kev kev stop cussing so much [because the TV cameras] be showing u when u do”), to which the dutiful 6’9” grandson apologized (“sorry grandma I be so emotional, I love u”).

The more we text message each other, the less we phone call. Indeed, *The New York Times* asks: Why talk when you can text? Nielsen reports that “Teenagers growing up now don’t even think the phone is primarily for voice. It’s primarily for text.” Thus, the major influence the Internet is having on the way we communicate is by manifesting our preference for writing over speaking. But why? I propose that the preference for written communication derives from a fundamental feature of writing: it is most often asynchronous. In contrast, speaking is most often synchronous, as when we converse face-to-face or talk on the phone. Although forms of writing exist that are synchronous (e.g., Internet-relay chat [IRC], which operates as synchronous text-messaging) and technologically supported forms of speaking exist that are asynchronous (e.g., recorded lectures and voice mail), there are many more forms of asynchronous written communication than asynchronous spoken communication. It is writing’s asynchrony that I propose underlies the preference for writing over speaking that the Internet is manifesting.

Internet-Based Communication Manifests a Preference for Asynchronous Communication

Asynchronous text-based communication dates back to the invention of writing. All of today’s popular modes of asynchronous Internet-based communication have precursors in the pre-Internet era. For instance, Facebook and other Internet-based discussion boards were predated with community bulletin boards. One member of the community would post (with literal thumbtacks) onto a (physical) bulletin a written message or document (*Ride Needed; Garage Sale Tomorrow*). Other persons came along later, read the initial posting, and perhaps added to it. Then, another person posted another written message or document, and the cycle continued.

Thirty-five years ago, one of the ways I asynchronously communicated with colleagues during graduate resembled e-mail. Whenever I wanted to set up a meeting with my advisor or arrange lunch with another graduate student, I walked to the departmental mailbox room. There, beside the wooden cubbies all of us were assigned, lay a pad of hot pink “While You Were Out” notes. I wrote my message on one of the notes, tucked it into the recipient’s mailbox, and waited until the person replied to my note by writing on it and tucking it back into my mailbox. All of us walked by that wall of mailboxes multiple times a day, sending messages or receiving messages, much like we use e-mail in current day. (Indeed, we used these departmental mailboxes for file sharing. If we wanted to share a file, we simply paper-clipped the note onto the file folder and stuck that into the person’s mailbox.)

One of Twitter’s precursors was the car bumper sticker, which reached its peak popularity in the 1960s and 1970s. Like Tweets, the messages on bumper stickers were also limited in length, and, like Tweets, bumper sticker communication

was designed for large-scale broadcast. Bumper sticker communication ran the gamut of advertising, imparting personal and political opinions, and documenting the communicator's achievements (e.g., "My Child Is an Honor Student at..."). The popularity of bumper stickers, as a short-form of communication, has diminished so much over the past couple of decades that archivists call for the historical preservation of what was once a "seemingly ubiquitous" short-form of communicating a "range of historical and social events and trends".

A precursor to the text message was the venerable telegram, the last of which was sent in the summer of 2013, completing a three-century stride. Telegrams were, by practice, a form of brief communication because users were charged by the word. Indeed, the bulk of Nelson Ross' 1928 publication, *How To Write Telegrams Properly: A Small Booklet*, instructed telegram users in the fine art of telegram-chat (e.g., "A man high in American business life has been quoted as remarking that elimination of the word 'please' from all telegrams would save the American public millions of dollars annually.")

A telegram announced the Wright brothers' invention of aviation ("Successful four flights Thursday morning") and the Titanic's demise ("SOS SOS CQD CQD Titanic. We are sinking fast. Passengers are being put into boats"). A telegram authored by the head of the British Navy in early September 1939 rivaled the brevity and informality of many teen's current day text messages ("Winston is back"), as did physicist Edward Teller's 1952 telegram reporting the detonation of the first hydrogen bomb ("It's a boy").

During the telegram's heyday, 300 million were sent a year. This form of brief, asynchronous text-based communication could be sent from just about anywhere. A telegram addressed to "The President, White House, Washington, D.C." would reach the Chief Executive "if filed at any telegraph office in the world". And this very popular form of brief, asynchronous text-based communication could be received just about anywhere.

In both the precursors to and the current instantiations of Internet-based text communication, asynchrony is key. Asynchrony provides convenience, as the National Science Foundation explains: "The popularity of [Internet-based text communication] lies in its convenience. No more games of telephone tag, no more staying late to wait for a phone call." Such convenience was illustrated recently when the Nobel Peace Prize committee was unable to contact its 2013 recipient synchronously by telephone but were able to turn to Twitter.

Parents prefer communicating via asynchronous Internet-based text to speaking synchronously on the phone when contacting their children's pediatricians (for test results, scheduling appoints, or discussing a particular symptom). Corporate employees, from clerks to vice presidents, also overwhelmingly prefer communicating via asynchronous Internet-based text to speaking synchronously on the phone (when negotiating, explaining, clarifying, and exchanging quantitative and technical information). As one employee relates: "If an issue requires back and forth communication, I am much more comfortable on e-mail. Messages are more understandable since people have thought the message through."

College students, enrolled in traditional face-to-face courses, prefer to contact their professors through asynchronous forms of Internet-based communication (e.g., e-mail or discussion board) than to ask questions in person at the beginning or end of class, attend in-person office hours (which was preferred by only a fraction of a large sample of university students), or telephone the professor (not preferred by any student). Professors also prefer asynchronous forms of Internet-based communication to synchronous, in-person forms when communicating with students.

Adolescents prefer the “controllability” of asynchronous forms of Internet-based communication when developing and maintaining friendships. As Thompson philosophizes: “For all the hue and cry about becoming an ‘always on’ society, we’re actually moving away from the demand that everyone be available immediately.”

Another attraction of text-based communication is its intransience. The written word itself is intransient or permanent, whereas all but recorded speech is transient. Speech can go in one ear and out the other, as the expression says, whereas text can be retrieved, reproduced, and searched. The advantage of intransient text over more transient speech has been noted for decades and undoubtedly motivated the decision in the 1960s to use a teletype machine as the hotline between the U.S. Pentagon and the USSR’s Kremlin, rather than a bat phone. “I’m bound to have problems if I communicate numbers [via phone],” confesses one business professional. “Who wants to sit with a paper and pencil and jot down these numbers? I would much rather have it on e-mail where I can see it and print it if I so desire.”

I’m betting that Internet-based communication (Internet-based discussion boards and even Internet-based instruction) will soon become the norm. Therefore, I encourage us, as language researchers, to think of the Internet as providing new avenues for the study of text and discourse.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4553240/>

Questions

1. If you were to explain to someone from the 50-s what Internet is, what would you say? Make reference to the quotation from the text: “I possess a device, in my pocket, that is capable of accessing the entirety of information known to man. I use that device to look at pictures of cats and get in arguments with strangers.”

2. How can you prove that, basically, social media and text messaging are nothing new? What are the precursors to Facebook, Twitter, text messages, emoticons, etc.?

3. Comment on the statistics proving that the Internet has become ubiquitous.

4. How does the Internet alter the way we communicate? Does it really make communication briefer or less formal?

5. Do you agree that the Internet is manifesting our preference for writing over speaking?

6. Why do people tend to prefer asynchronous forms of communication to synchronous?

7. Do you approve of the idea that in the modern world everyone should be available immediately? Make reference to the quotation from the text: “For all the hue and cry about becoming an ‘always on’ society, we’re actually moving away from the demand that everyone be available immediately.”

- **Solution generation**

1. Do you use hashtags while communicating online? In what situations, on what websites, etc.?

2. Read the following bits of information and explain what a hashtag is and how it has evolved.

What is a hashtag?

Before it became a household term (and even added to the Oxford English Dictionary!), hashtags simply referred to the pound symbol #.

That all changed in 2007 when Twitter began to use the hashtag as a method of indexing keywords to help facilitate good search results for it. Since then, most every social media site has been leveraging hashtags for that same purpose.

<https://blog.hootsuite.com/how-to-use-hashtags/>

A hashtag is a label for content. It helps others who are interested in a certain topic, quickly find content on that same topic.

<https://smallbiztrends.com/2013/08/what-is-a-hashtag.html>

Fun factoid: depending on where you are in the world, the symbol # is called various things. In the United States and Canada, it is called a number sign or sometimes a pound sign. But in other places, such as the United Kingdom and Ireland, that # symbol is called a hash sign. So you see, that’s how these labels came to be called “hashtags”. In essence, a hashtag is a label that consists of a word or phrase *tag* with a *hash* symbol in front of it.

<https://smallbiztrends.com/2013/08/what-is-a-hashtag.html>

3. Read the following extracts and explain what functions the hashtags perform. Relying on the texts, make a list of functions, both primary and secondary. Can you add to this list?

When it comes to social media, the hashtag is used to draw attention, to organize, and to promote.

<https://www.takeflyte.com/hashtags-explained>

Hashtags are, of course, a great way to:

- build your company’s brand;
- boost a marketing campaign;
- keep in touch with your audience.

Hashtags aren't just good for brand building and engagement – they can also help you find your target audience as well.

More specifically, hashtags can help your target audience find you.

How? Simple: by using the hashtags they use.

This method is especially effective within social media sites like Instagram where users can follow hashtags and see all the posts that use them.

<https://blog.hootsuite.com/how-to-use-hashtags/>

Sometimes a hashtag is so zany or specific that there are few, if any, search results attached to it. These exist mainly for entertainment purposes. Orlean gives the example “Sarah Palin for President??!?! #Iwouldratherhaveamoose.” As she points out, it is unlikely anyone would actually search for “#Iwouldratherhaveamoose,” but it adds a dash of humor that followers appreciate.

Here are some sample tweets that use hashtags to add context, humor and voice:

- Let the weekend begin! #TGIF;
- Wearing socks with Crocs is so stylish #kidding;
- Just dropped my second ice cream cone. #fail;
- I hate when people smoke e-cigarettes indoors. #annoying #rude #whygodwhy;
- The movie #Gravity is beautiful, but so terrifying! #nevergoingtospace.

<https://mashable.com/2013/10/08/what-is-hashtag/>

4. Here are some tips on how to hashtag successfully. Read the extracts and comment on the ways of creating effective hashtags.

Hashtags are simple things. There are just a few technical requirements to know.

No Spaces Allowed

A hashtag can be a single word, an abbreviation, an invented combination of letters and numbers, or a phrase. If it is a phrase, there can be no spaces between words. All letters and numbers must run together without spaces in a hashtag. You can't have punctuation or symbols in your hashtag (other than the # symbol at the beginning). Numbers are OK, but you must also have at least one letter with the numbers – hashtags cannot consist entirely of numbers.

Start With the # Symbol

To create one, start with a hashtag symbol # and follow it directly with letters and sometimes numbers.

Create Your Own Hashtag

Anyone can create a hashtag. I've created numerous hashtags over the years. You could create one of your own or several if you wish. All you do to create a hashtag is think it up. Then start using it in your messages. Usually, you add it to the end of messages. But you could add it anywhere in the message that makes sense, as long as it's readable.

You are not required to register a hashtag anywhere. There are some hashtag directories around, but they are unofficial, outdated and usually not worth the trouble.

Make Hashtags Unique

If you think you've invented a hashtag that's completely new, do a search first on the social platform you intend to use it on. We find that about 25 % of the time, the hashtag we want to use is already being used for some other purpose.

Now, there's no hashtag police. So technically, there's nothing stopping you from using a hashtag already in use. But doing so will cause confusion, or worse, be seen as an attempt to hijack a discussion just to gain attention. If the hashtag you want is in use, it's best to go back to the drawing board.

Don't forget to check usernames, too. Make sure your intended hashtag is not the same as an existing username on a social network. Here again, it may cause confusion to use a hashtag such as #DellSMB if there is a user @DellSMB. Besides, the user probably would interpret it as an attempt to hijack their brand name.

You could find yourself on the receiving end of a cease-and-desist letter, or with the social platform taking action for violating someone's trademarked name if the issue is taken to extremes.

One exception to the uniqueness concept: some people use general topics as hashtags, such #Marketing or #Sales. In essence, no one "owns" a general topic hashtag.

Make Hashtags Easy to Remember and Understand

Keep hashtags as short as possible. That's especially important for Twitter where you have a limited character count. It's best if a hashtag is an understandable word, phrase or abbreviation.

Hashtags that are long, hard to pronounce or hard to remember, will be hard for people to use, too. You can't go wrong with something short and easy to remember.

How to Use a Hashtag That Already Exists

Rather than creating your own hashtag, sometimes you want to enter a discussion around a topic where a hashtag already exists. You would simply add that hashtag somewhere (usually at the end) of your Twitter tweet or other social media updates.

By doing so, you are sharing your content related to that same topic. By adding the hashtag to your content, you are saying "Hey, I want to chime in on this discussion." Others interested in that topic will see your content.

When Not to Use a Hashtag

Avoid hashtag pollution. This is using multiple hashtags in a single message. Any more than two hashtags in a message makes it difficult to read.

It's considered bad etiquette to add a hashtag to an unrelated message just to get attention. Always make sure your content is relevant to the hashtag you use. Otherwise, people may report you for being a spammer, or respond testily.

<https://smallbiztrends.com/2013/08/what-is-a-hashtag.html>

Twitter has a helpful list of best practices for using hashtags, but here are three key tips for all users.

Be specific. If you're using a hashtag to join a conversation, make sure the hashtag is specific and relevant to your topic. If you're talking about Obama's health care plan, use #Obamacare instead of simply #Obama. A vague or generic hashtag like #health or #opinion isn't effective either.

Keep it simple. Hashtags, like links, look like spam if they are used too often. Three hashtags should be the maximum on Twitter and Facebook, but you can get away with more hashtags on Instagram and Vine. And don't hashtag the same word twice (“#Gravity is a great movie! Everybody go see #Gravity”). It's #redundant.

Give context. A tweet that contains only hashtags is not only confusing – it's boring. If your tweet simply reads, “#happy”, your followers will have no idea what you're talking about. Similarly, if you tweet, “#BreakingBad is #awesome,” you're not really adding much to the conversation.

<https://mashable.com/2013/10/08/what-is-hashtag/>

5. Hashtags have some “side effects”, too. Read the information and explain when and why hashtags fail to work. When should they be avoided altogether?

The dangers of hashtags

Hashtags have been known to get some brands into trouble.

Look before you leap. It's a common tactic to use trending hashtags to gain visibility in social media.

Recently, *DiGiorno Pizza* jumped on the hashtag #WhyIStayed, not realizing that it was being used to discuss domestic abuse.

While they did a good job of apologizing profusely, there's no denying damage was done to their brand. That's just one of hundreds of examples of brands not looking before they leap when it comes to trending topics.

Going too broad with hashtags. While a broad hashtag may seem like casting a wide net, chances are broad terms will either not be searched on, or your tweet will be lost in the shuffle.

<https://www.takeflyte.com/hashtags-explained>

Twitter has grown into an enormous microblogging community with a unique culture and distinct style. And a key component of Twitter's success is... the hashtag! Ah, how we love that little waffle shaped symbol that allows us to filter tweets and emphasize certain topics. And it has expanded from Twitter with social media hashtags now serving as a key part of nearly all channels.

However, as time has gone by in the social media world, it seems the hashtag has taken on a new role. Annoying and useless hashtags, and long strings of words held together by a hashtag, have become common occurrences – and slowly but surely, these annoying hashtags overwhelm the ones we once considered useful.

So what's the deal? When did hashtags go from being practical to pain in the neck? And is there still any profit to be gained from using them?

The Dark Side of Social Media Hashtags

Hashtags are EVERYWHERE, and a lot of the time they are just plain ridiculous. I swear, I feel like everyone around me has decided to become very active members of a secret club called “#AnnoyDanielleWithRidiculousHashtagsSociety”.

Let me list off a few of my biggest pet peeves when it comes to hashtag use, and I urge you to avoid them like the plague:

#Hashtagging #Every #Single #Word. If someone is hoping to gain new followers by hashtagging every word in their tweet, I have two things to say.

People are generally not using hashtags to search on Twitter anymore. How often do you see tweets that include hashtags? Yeah, not so often. With great regret and a heavy sadness in my heart, I say RIP hashtag for search. My condolences go out to all who will have a difficult time letting go, but it's time to move on.

Even if some ancient spell resurrected Hashtag For Search from the dead, compulsive hashtagging would be sure to scare the majority of people away.

#hashtaganobnoxiouslylongstringofwords. I understand that people aren't generally using hashtags for search reasons, which may lead some to think that this behavior is OK – but it's not. Please just type out the words like the English language intended, with spaces.

Using hashtags on sites that do not support them. What's the point? If the site doesn't support hashtags, then why are people using them? If I missed the memo, please let me know, because I'm very confused.

Using hashtags in “real life”. This one KILLS ME. Listen, I'm not a violent person at all – but if I'm having a face to face conversation, and the person I'm conversing with says something along the lines of, “We should go on a weekend get-away. Hashtag YOLO!” – I will have to try very hard to resist the urge to slap some sense into him/her.

<https://www.rivaliq.com/blog/hashtags-the-good-the-bad-and-the-ugly/>

People of all ages have caught on to using hashtags but there's an abundance of people out there who are committing a social media crime: OVER HASHTAGGING.

Over-hashtagging means you use too many hashtags in any single post. The common practice is that you use 2–3 short hashtags or one long hashtag in a tweet and everywhere else you should use no more than three. This is just my opinion and a strong suggestion. On Instagram, if you want to use a copious amount of hashtags try to post them a few lines below your copy.

Why is over-hashtagging bad?

- It distracts from the post/key message.
- Too many hashtags can make your post look like spam.
- It looks sloppy.
- Uses up a lot of your characters (when you have a very precious character limit).
- Makes you look like an amateur social media poster (like you just don't understand the concept).

<https://www.customfitonline.com/news/2014/9/5/too-many-hashtags-bad-practice/>

6. Conduct some research and compare hashtags on different networks, e.g., Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc. What differences did you manage to spot?

7. In one of the extracts from Ex. 5 the author describes using hashtags in “real life” as something extremely annoying. What is your attitude to using hashtags beyond online communication and/or their primary function? Read the extracts and compare different opinions.

And sometimes people take hashtags and bring them into the real world, which is awkward for everybody. TV shows try to engage with viewers with hashtags all the time. And British soul singer Robin Thicke took hashtags off the Internet and onto his music video.

Even when you’re not on social media or the Internet, you’re not completely safe from hashtags. Like “BRB” and “LOL,” it’s starting to creep into actual conversations. And people might pretend it’s ironic when they say things like “hashtag TGIF” but they kind of mean it.

<https://www.digitaltrends.com/social-media/to-hashtag-or-not-to-hashtag-depends-on-the-social-network/>

And now hashtags have become a part of our real conversations and have changed the way we communicate.

Hashtags are now used in texting and when we talk out loud, with people saying things like, “I can’t wait to go to Florida this spring break, hashtag: no more snow” or “I found five bucks in my pocket today and was able to get a Starbucks drink, hashtag: blessed.”

https://www.huffpost.com/entry/how-hashtags-evolved-and_b_6795646

“The colloquial hashtag has burst out of its use as a sorting tool and become a linguistic tumor – a tic more irritating than any banal link or lazy image meme,” wrote Sam Biddle in a Gizmodo article about how hashtags are ruining the English language.

And while I can see and appreciate the value in hashtags, and understand how many have taken to using them in real life in a mocking sort of manner, I still think they’re better kept to online communications and their original function.

https://www.huffpost.com/entry/how-hashtags-evolved-and_b_6795646

8. Read the following quote.

Someone commented on Small Business Trends by saying, “I’m still not sure how hashtags are being used, or how to use them, or when to use them, or what the significance is in using them... totally confused...”

<https://smallbiztrends.com/2013/08/what-is-a-hashtag.html>

What would you tell this person? Make sure you sum up the relevant points associated with hashtags that we have discussed above.

- **Solution implementation**

1. Write a magazine article on the topic “Computer-mediated communication is deficient compared to face-to-face communication”.

2. As a specialist in computing science, prove that the Internet has changed our lives in general and the way we communicate in particular.

3. Write a short essay on the topic “Life before the Internet. I’m glad I wasn’t there”.

4. As a concerned mother of a teenager, write a letter to the editor of a popular magazine, complaining that the continuing Internet craze is turning modern kids into morons.

5. As an avid user of the Internet, prove that our social roles have changed: now we are all commentators, publishers, and creators.

6. Write a personal blog post on the topic “I share, therefore I am”.

7. As a psychologist, prove that a liar and a cheat online is a liar and a cheat offline too.

8. As a victim of Internet fraud wishing to warn the others, explain that the Internet is not a blessing, but rather has a detrimental impact on our lives.

9. As a teacher of English, prove that the use of hashtags should be limited to online communication.

Unit II. Encoding and Decoding Online Messages: Verbal and Non-verbal Code

- **Problem identification**

1. In what way is the feedback different in “synchronized” and “unsynchronized” forms of interaction?
2. What is the ratio of verbal/non-verbal means of communication in face-to-face interactions and online communication?
3. To what extent are verbal and non-verbal means of communication same or different in face-to-face and online interactions?
4. Do we use standard English in e-communication or does virtual interaction call for a language of its own? What is peculiar of Internet slang?
5. What specific messages can we encounter on websites?
6. What are the difficulties associated with interpreting emoji and other non-verbal symbols on the Internet?

- **Problem analysis**

1. **Read the text and consider the questions below.**

The Psychology Behind Social Media Interactions
By L. Margalit

Why is digital communication so often easier than communicating face-to-face?

Arriving home after a long day at the office spent almost entirely in front of the computer, you take off your shoes, make yourself a drink and, ironically, sit in front of your computer again. It is incredible how many of us choose to communicate with others through social media channels like Facebook and Twitter rather than speaking directly with the people we share our homes with. In fact, when we sit with our laptops and chat with friends, we feel we are relaxing and escaping from our daily grind into the digital world.

Why does this happen? Why is communicating through a computer so often easier than communicating face to face?

Studies have found that day-to-day interactions are based almost entirely on non-verbal communication. When we interact with others, we are continuously processing wordless signals like facial expressions, tone of voice, gestures, body language, eye contact, and even the physical distance between us and them. These non-verbal signals are the heart and soul of the interaction. We cannot understand the true meaning of an interaction if we do not have the ability to interpret these non-verbal signals. They enable us to infer the other person’s intentions, as well as how involved they are in the conversation, whether they are stressed or relaxed, if they are attracted to us, and so on. These messages exist in any type of face-to-face interaction, even those that do not involve active conversation. Non-verbal signals add a level of depth to the interaction, but demand cognitive and emotional effort.

The extra effort involved in face-to-face interactions can be spared in online interactions that are founded on minimal or constrained social cues; most of these signals can be summed up in emoticons or punctuation. Hence, it is easier to hide our emotions behind an email, a Facebook post or a tweet. These platforms help people project any image they want; they can be whoever and whatever they want to be. Without the ability to receive non-verbal cues, their audiences are none the wiser.

Face-to-face interaction is considered a “synchronized” form of communication. One person is silent while the other speaks, one nods while the other explains, and one knows the other isn’t necessarily finished speaking even if they’re silent; we can tell when our counterpart is processing information. Synchronized behavior is impossible online, as we cannot see the other person. If a person asks, “Are you there?” in a messaging platform and does not receive an immediate answer, there is no way to ascertain whether the other person has not answered because they are not there, because they do not feel like speaking at that moment, or because they are angry with the “speaker”.

In this type of “unsynchronized” communication, the interaction need not be coordinated because the behavior is not directed by the other person’s feedback. People in online interactions are much more casual because they do not have to be attentive to each others’ signals. Verbal and symbolic feedback is not immediate, so there is no need to be constantly aware of the other person’s responses. It makes the interaction less demanding and enables us to do other things concurrently – for example, browse other websites or communicate with other people at the same time without causing offense.

It is well-documented that observing others in a particular emotional state automatically triggers the representation of that state in the observer. So if we see another person sad, we will experience how that person feels. This phenomenon is believed to support our ability to understand social interaction; sharing others’ emotional states facilitates our understanding and prediction of their intentions and actions because emotions make individuals feel, act and view the world in a similar fashion.

In contrast, online interactions are devoid of emotions. One tragic example involves a mother, Sharon Seline, who often exchanged text messages with her daughter, who was away at college. One afternoon, they “chatted” back and forth, with mom asking how things were going and daughter answering with positive statements followed by emoticons of smiles and hearts. Later that night, the daughter attempted suicide. The signs of depression were there, but could only have been interpreted through face-to-face communications and the *sharing* of her emotional state.

Social media facilitates a virtual form of interaction. The term “virtual” is used to describe things that are not real, but which take on the important qualities of the real. When playing a computer war game, for example, we can experience excitement, frustration and tension, but we can never be injured. In fact, the creators of virtual war games argue that the virtual experience is better

than the real one, because the dangers connected to the real experience are removed. In the same way, interactions via social media make visitors feel connected without the difficulties and complexities involved in face-to-face interactions. Compared to interactions with computers, interactions with human counterparts require more emotional involvement, cognitive effort and brain activation. When we are not in the mood to exercise these resources, we too often choose the easier, virtual option.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/behind-online-behavior/201408/the-psychology-behind-social-media-interactions>

Questions

1. Why is communicating through a computer often considered easier than communicating face to face?
2. What functions do non-verbal signals perform in face-to-face interaction?
3. Can emoticons be considered a one-for-one replacement of non-verbal clues that are used in face-to-face interaction?
4. Do you agree that it is easier to hide our emotions behind an e-mail, a Facebook post or a tweet?
5. Is it possible to say that online interactions are devoid of emotions altogether?
6. If you do not receive an immediate answer from a person while communicating online, what does this “message” mean?

2. Read the text and consider the questions below.

How the Internet Changed the Way We Write – and What to Do About It

The usual evolution of English has been accelerated online, leading to a less formal – but arguably more expressive – language than the one we use IRL. So use those emojis wisely...

English has always evolved – that’s what it means to be a living language – and now the Internet plays a pivotal role in driving this evolution. It’s where we talk most freely and naturally, and where we generally pay little heed to whether or not our grammar is “correct”.

Should we be concerned that, as a consequence, English is deteriorating? Is it changing at such a fast pace that older generations can’t keep up? Not quite. At a talk in 2013, linguist David Crystal, author of *Internet Linguistics*, said: “The vast majority of English is exactly the same today as it was 20 years ago.” And his collected data indicated that even e-communication isn’t wildly different: “Ninety per cent or so of the language you use in a text is standard English, or at least your local dialect.”

It’s why we can still read an 18th-century transcript of a speech George Washington gave to his troops and understand it in its entirety, and why grandparents don’t need a translator when sending an e-mail to their grandchildren.

However, the way we communicate – the punctuation (or lack thereof), the syntax, the abbreviations we use – is dependent on context and the medium with which we are communicating. We don't need to reconcile the casual way we talk in a text or on social media with, say, the way we string together sentences in a piece of journalism, because they're different animals.

On Twitter, emojis and new-fangled uses of punctuation, for instance, open doors to more nuanced casual expression. For example, the ~quirky tilde pair~ or full. stops. in. between. words. for. emphasis. While you are unlikely to find a breezy caption written in all lowercase and without punctuation in the New York Times, you may well find one in a humorous post published on BuzzFeed.

As the author of the BuzzFeed Style Guide, I crafted a set of guidelines that were flexible and applicable to hard news stories as well as the more lighthearted posts our platform publishes, such as comical lists and takes on celebrity goings-on, as well as to our social media posts. For instance, I decided, along with my team of copy editors, to include a rule that we should put emojis outside end punctuation not inside, because the consensus was that it simply looks cleaner to end a sentence as you normally would and then use an emoji. Our style guide also has comprehensive sections on how to write appropriately about serious topics, such as sexual assault and suicide.

Language shifts and proliferates due to chance and external factors, such as the influence the Internet has on slang and commonplace abbreviations. (I believe that “due to” and “because of” can be used interchangeably, because it's the way we use those phrases in speech; using one rather than the other has no impact on clarity.) So while some of Strunk and White's famous grammar and usage rules – for example, avoiding the passive voice, never ending a sentence with a preposition – are no longer valuable, it doesn't mean we're putting clarity at stake. Sure, there's no need to hyphenate a modifying phrase that includes an adverb – as in, for example, “a successfully executed plan” – because adverbs by definition modify the words they precede, but putting a hyphen after “successfully” would be no cause for alarm. It's still a perfectly understandable expression.

Writers and editors, after consulting their house style guide, should rely on their own judgment when faced with a grammar conundrum. Prescriptivism has the potential to make a piece of writing seem dated or stodgy. That doesn't mean we need to pepper our prose with emojis or every slang word of the moment. It means that by observing the way we're using words and applying those observations methodically, we increase our chances of connecting with our readers – prepositions at the end of sentences and all. Descriptivism FTW!

<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/booksblog/2017/dec/07/internet-online-news-social-media-changes-language>

Questions

1. Comment on the mutual influence of “online English” and “offline English” on one another. Which one exerts a stronger influence over the other and how is this influence manifested?

2. Do you agree that “online English” is less formal but more expressive than the language we use in face-to-face interaction? What accounts for this? Compare the information provided in this article with the opinion expressed in the text from Ex. 1 of this unit.

3. How can you explain the fact that the language we use online is, on the one hand, similar to the one we use in real life (standard English), but on the other hand, differs from it a lot (in terms of punctuation, syntax, abbreviations, etc.)? What do these similarities and differences depend on?

4. Comment on the examples of specific punctuation uses in online communication.

3. Read the list of text abbreviations. Are they all familiar to you? Add at least three more examples of your own to the list.

Top 10 Text Abbreviations

According to search query data, the following text abbreviations are the most requested chat definitions:

- ROFL means *Rolling on floor laughing*;
- STFU means *Shut the *freak* up*;
- LMK means *Let me know*;
- ILY means *I love you*;
- YOLO means *You only live once*;
- SMH means *Shaking my head*;
- LMFAO means *Laughing my freaking *a* off*;
- NVM means *Never mind*;
- IKR means *I know, right*;
- OFC means *Of course*.

https://www.webopedia.com/quick_ref/textmessageabbreviations.asp

4. Read the text and consider the questions below.

Understanding Common Web Error Messages

Over the years in the interactive marketing business, any consultant worth his or her salt has faced the dilemma of assisting a company whose primary issue is that its “Web site broke.”

No more information than that. “It broke.”

Many a parent can identify with this description as it pertains to children who say that they “hurt”, but can’t identify from exactly where the pain originates. Fortunately for Web consultants – and for e-commerce proprietors – there are and always have been very simple, easy-to-understand error message standards for the Internet.

Those messages are your keys to resolving Web problems, for yourself and for your customers. We'll examine the most common Web site errors, and provide easy ways to resolve them.

Let's say you open a browser, and start surfing your site. Oh dear, you've encountered an error message...

If it's:

400 Bad File Request

There is something syntactically wrong with the request from the browser to the server. Retype the URL, paying close attention to letter case and special characters.

401 Unauthorized

The request from the browser to the server requires authentication. More than likely this indicates that a username and password was required to access the page, and you didn't enter the correct pair.

403 Forbidden

The request from the browser to the server was understood, but the server has been instructed not to respond with a Web page. More than likely, there is a server permission issue – and that can be a conundrum for the e-commerce business owner, particularly if he or she is also a novice Web server administrator.

404 File Not Found

The server understands what you're requesting, but it can't find it. It could be that you've mistyped the URL. It could be that you put the file in another folder on the server.

408 Request Timeout

The server got your request, but what you've requested is just too darned big to deliver in a timely fashion. Sometimes, this error message displays when the server itself is too busy, and unable to respond with Web pages in a timely fashion. Check the file size of your images. Check with your hosting provider to see how many sites are being served along with yours on a particular server.

500 Internal Server Error

This is the mother of all error messages. It requires a server administrator because it signifies a configuration issue between the site and server. Unfortunately, the error could signify just about anything, but if you happen to be a DIY (do-it-yourself) sort of entrepreneur, there is a way to get more details:

If you're using Internet Explorer, open Tools → Internet Options → Advanced Options and Uncheck the "show friendly HTTP errors" setting.

One thing is for sure: This error doesn't display because of some HTML error. This is a server problem caused by configuration and triggered by a script, application, scheduled job, process, etc.

501 Not Implemented

This signifies that a Web server doesn't support a feature you're trying to access or execute. Examine the page in question, and contact your Web host. Let them know what's on the page, in terms of functionality and code, and they'll likely be able to tell you quickly whether or not what's on that page is supported.

502 Service Temporarily Overloaded

This error message is the equivalent to big-city traffic. The server is being hit and hit hard. It would serve the customer best to come back at a different time. If your site is not on a dedicated server, check with your host provider to determine which site on the server is getting trafficked heavily. Consider a dedicated server.

503 Service Unavailable

Could be a number of things, including a busy server. More than likely, it indicates that the user has lost his or her Web connection. Try surfing to another site to make sure you still have Web access. Visit a site you haven't been to in some time to make sure that it's not merely being loaded into your browser via cached memory.

Those are the most common numbered errors. Other common Internet errors include:

Connection Refused By Host

You don't have permission to access the site. Contact a server administrator.

File Contains No Data

This is a common error, and it probably reflects something awry in your HTML.

Network Connection Refused By The Server

The server is busy. Not much you can do in the short-term except to consider more bandwidth and/or a dedicated server if you're not hosting your business on one at this point.

<https://www.practicalecommerce.com/Understanding-Common-Web-Error-Messages>

Questions

1. Are you familiar with the meaning of web error messages listed in the article?
2. What users are likely to be interested in this information in the first place?
3. When a consultant hears the phrase "It broke" from his clients, how can he interpret it?
4. Do you agree that there exist very simple, easy-to-understand error message standards for the Internet?
5. Is it likely that we encounter such messages in everyday conversations/face-to-face communication?

5. Read the following extracts from various blogs (1–5). Relying on the verbal means used, identify the blog, its type and topic (A–E). Explain what helped you to complete the task.

1. The Ebola crisis has become a battle with many fronts. The outbreak is in a war zone, where violence and protests often interrupt the efforts to control the disease. There has been an uptick in community resistance to the medical operations, which are often staffed by international responders whose outsider status sometimes elicits fear and distrust, especially in the newest hotspots of the outbreak in Butembo and Katwa. The lead-up to the country's elections on Dec. 23 are expected to be fraught with even more unrest and political

instability. And now there's a threat of terrorism directed at the U.S. Embassy in Kinshasa, which might limit an already-restricted flow of U.S. responders to the DRC, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Case counts continue to climb, health workers continue to make up nearly a tenth of the cases, and infants and children continue to get infected at alarmingly high rates.

2. Last week Leta's trial contact lenses arrived and there is a long story to be told about how incredibly and surprisingly fast that kid got those things into her eyes and the look on her face when she saw the world for the first time without glasses on her face. I posted about it on Instagram, but let me just explain why I sectioned off four hours out of my calendar for this initial contact lens experience: remember in the 80s when colored contact lenses were a thing? Yeah. You're old like I am. I wanted to have green eyes for fun. So I tried to put one of my friend's green contact lenses into my right eye and seven weeks later I was still standing in her bathroom leaning as close to the mirror as possible, a three-foot-deep puddle of my own tears covering the floor. I never did get that thing in. And I am still mad about it. I could have had green eyes for a few minutes!

Afterward she talked endlessly as we drove to my mailbox about the edges of leaves and buildings and things she had not ever quite seen before. At least, not seen like *this*. She wanted to get contact lenses for a few reasons, one of them being that her eyelashes are too long to wear mascara when she is wearing her glasses. WHAT A PROBLEM TO HAVE. And I wanted to give this to her because, yes, I want her to *see leaves*, but she works so hard in every other aspect of her life that I'm constantly looking for ways to encourage and reward her. And it was on that drive to my mailbox that I informed her that I was picking up the FabFitFun Winter Box and that she could have anything she wanted out of it this time. Boy, did I ever speak too soon. MINUS TEN POINTS FOR THE WELL-MEANING MOTHER WHO JUST GAVE AWAY ALL THE STUFF IN HER FAVORITE BOX YET.

3. Sunday, January 01, 2017

It's that time again. That stupid bloody day where everyone's talking about turning over a new leaf, and how they have great plans and resolutions for the upcoming year, and it's annoyingly also the same day as this blog's origin date. Happy blog birthday to me. 13 years: blimey.

I posted something on Twitter just now, about how I feel wordless, that I have nothing to say about this anniversary, and I suppose that's not entirely true: I do have things to write about, I just don't feel they're worthy enough to be noted here – or they're too self-wallowing in pity to be shared publicly. But you know me: never one to not overshare...

I've no fascinating news about my life, either personal or professional, that I want to note here. I've had a hard year – but who hasn't? There's been tough family stuff, but that's private and I only confide in friends about that. I've had a constant black cloud threatening to hang over me – but I keep it just out of reach by running regularly, and every day I'm grateful for this giving me the strength

to carry on. Running has provided a reassuring foundation on which to build myself up, so even though I've had many lost days (and weeks) to illness and injury this past year, knowing I can return to running and fitness keeps my spirit high. Mostly, anyway. Striving for personal bests – competing with myself – continues to drive me forward and some days that's all I feel I have to go on. It may not be much, but it feels like a huge accomplishment just getting out of the house on a bad day and forcing myself to run; some days that's all I am capable of.

Reading the above, it's clear I have been down quite a bit. 2016 was, I think, also a lonely year for me. I really miss the companionship of being in a loving relationship. I miss someone laughing at my stupid jokes and my terrible clumsiness. I miss playing boardgames, and watching silly telly and making meals for two, not one. I miss being at a social event as a couple; it's horrible feeling like you're some kind of social outcast because you're the sole single person there. People talk about "couple privilege" – that couples have a societal advantage over single people – and I mostly think that's bollocks (and single person's envy), but I do think it's true that people who are coupled up forget how tough it can be, being single, when most of your friends are married and have kids. Or as in my other social circle, where everyone is polyamorous and partnered up with multiple people, what it might feel like to be on the outside periphery looking in. Not that nice.

I'm not sure I am ready to trust someone else with my heart again, but this hesitancy must surely be holding me back. I'm a believer in putting your all into things (which is how my blog and book happened and also how I got my heart broken), so I'm sure that the only thing I can do is try to be bold, try to be strong, and push forwards in the belief that good things will come if I strive for them. I need to let go a little – because to reap rewards, you have to be willing to take risks – and I'm scared, but I have no other choice really.

So this year, I'm going to try to push past my comfort zone and pursue the things I want. I have some work I want to make happen, there is a running goal I plan to achieve, and I hope to try to maybe remove one brick from the wall of defence I've built up to protect myself and let someone else in.

4. Nora and Paco had a Quaker meets Mexico wedding at the school where Nora's parents worked. Nora comes from Quaker roots and Paco was born and raised in Mexico, so the blend of these traditions was so interesting to see unfold.

There was a traditional Quaker ceremony followed by a surprise Mariachi band that led guests to a Mexican fiesta complete with a fab taco bar and music. Once the Mariachi band departed, a folk band came in to lead everyone in traditional square dancing. Plus, Nora was eight months pregnant so they were able to get some seriously gorgeous parents-to-be portraits at the same time.

Here's what Nora said about her dress choice while pregnant...

"For my wedding, I was eight months pregnant, so I thought I wouldn't find a dress in wedding boutique. My mom and I got out dresses that she had been saving for me over the years. She had bought me an empire waist dress over

a decade ago when she went to Spain. The dress was very simple but trying it on brought tears to my eyes. It felt right. I liked that it was linked to a Spanish speaking place given the themes of our wedding. We decorated the waistline with a beautiful peach colored sash I had worn as a bridesmaid in a friend's wedding. It matched perfectly with a pair of heels I had and it added color to the dress. I was glad to have a splash of color.”

5. If you've been thinking of upgrading your iPhone, now might be a good time to do it.

Apple is currently offering an extra \$100 for iPhone trade-ins when that trade-in cash is being put toward one of its new 2018-edition iPhones. The iPhone being traded in needs to be moderately recent. Phones that qualify for the deal include the iPhone 6, 6 Plus, 6s, 6s Plus, 7, 7 Plus, and 8.

A. “My name is Zoe Margolis – also known as Abby Lee, or the Girl with a One Track Mind. Six years ago, I began writing my blog, *Girl With A One-Track Mind*, which, with complete honesty, detailed the ins-and-outs of my sex life, and my thoughts and feelings about the subject matter... I decided to write about sex in my blog because I felt that the feminist and female-centred perspective is missing from mainstream media. A sexist double-standard about male vs. female sexuality still exists, and which chastises women if they express sexual wants and needs; I hoped my blog would provide a counter-balance to this old-fashioned attitude.”

<http://girlwithaonetrackmind.blogspot.com>

B. “Hey, I'm Ariel, Seattle-based author of a book called *Offbeat Bride: Creative Alternatives for Independent Brides*. This website is the ongoing celebration of folks daring to walk off the beaten aisle.”

Offbeat Bride is the web's most popular and most inclusive website catered to nontraditional wedding planning. The Offbeat Bride website launched on January 1st, 2007.

What initially began as a book promotional project slowly grew into a completely different beast – a publication with a small staff of editors who update daily with tons of “wedding porn” (photos from real people's really offbeat weddings), advice, and inspiration for couples who are working their asses off to create authentic weddings full of intention and personality.

<https://offbeatbride.com>

C. “HuffPost is for the people – not the powerful. We are empathetic reporters and observers. We hold power accountable. We entertain without guilt. We share what people need to know to live their best lives. If something matters to our audience, it matters to us.

We are the original internet newspaper, founded in 2005. Now we have newsrooms and editions in 16 countries. We're truly global, but still feel local. We tell stories in text, video, audio and pictures, and bring them to our audiences wherever they are. We're fast, fun and inclusive. And we'll always make sure you know what's real.”

The Huffington Post specializes in reporting on news stories and events from practically every major category and subcategory you could imagine – including world news, entertainment, politics, business, style, and several others. Founded by Arianna Huffington, Kenneth Lerer, and Jonah Peretti in 2005, the blog was acquired by AOL in February 2011 for \$315 million and has thousands of bloggers who contribute newsworthy written content on a wide range of topics.

<https://www.huffingtonpost.com>

D. Lifehacker.com was launched in 2005. It is a daily updated blog that specializes in news about hardware and software for Microsoft Windows, Mac OS and Linux.

<https://lifehacker.com>

E. “Hi. I’m Heather B. Armstrong. When I first wrote a bio for this site I called myself a SAHM – a Stay At Home Mom. More than a decade later I am now what’s referred to as a FTSWM – a Full-Time Single Working Mom.

This used to be called mommy blogging. But then they started calling it Influencer Marketing: hashtag ad, hashtag sponsored, hashtag you know you want me to slap your product on my kid and exploit her for millions and millions of dollars. That’s how it works.”

<https://dooce.com>

Keys: 1–C, 2–E, 3–A, 4–B, 5–D.

6. Read the text and consider the questions below.

The Internet Is Going Wild Over This New Emoji: What Does it Mean?

By D. Brown



Is it scratching an itch? Does it represent bad Botox? Perhaps it’s your reaction to an awful pickup line.

A new emoji with an uneven face and rosy cheeks is driving the internet wild. One eye is open, one eyebrow is slightly furrowed, and the mouth is doing something pretty inexplicable.

According to the Emojipedia, the go-to blog about emoji, this Woozy Face digital expression represents the state of being tired and emotional (aka drunk), but people on the internet seem to think it represents a wide range of other occurrences.

1. When you have a crush: “This the face you make in 3rd grade when your crush blesses your sneeze.”
2. When you have an upset stomach: “When that probiotic hits...”.
3. When you sneak in a burp: “When you burp and try and push your breath out the side of ya mouth.”
4. When you take a photo at the DMV: “This how every one be when they get their picture taken at the DMV.”

So where did it come from?

Apple introduced a range of new emoji as part of its iOS 12.1 update on Wednesday.

Along with the creepy-guy-at-the-bar emoji, the electronics giant included new animals, foods, characters with curly hair and bald people in its latest release.

The emoji were first previewed on World Emoji Day in July.

“Emoji are used by people all over the world to communicate,” Apple said in a statement. “iOS 12.1 brings even more characters to the keyboard that better represent global users, including new emoji for moon cake, red gift envelope and nazar amulet.”

Other reaction emoji include a frozen face, a begging face and one surrounded by hearts.

Aside from the 70 additional emoji, Apple introduced Dual SIM for iPhone XS, iPhone XS Max and the iPhone XR along with Group FaceTime.

Per usual, the update also includes various other bug fixes and improvements.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/2018/11/01/internet-confused-what-does-new-woozy-face-emoji-mean/1848431002/>

Questions

1. Why did the new emoji cause so much controversy?
2. What does the Woozy Face digital expression actually represent?
3. What other interpretations of this emoji are suggested by people on the Internet?
4. What would you use this emoji for? Will you accompany it with an explanation (a verbal message) or use it on its own?

7. In your opinion, what does the following emoji mean? In what context would you use it? Does it convey positive or negative emotions?



Explanation: This emoji means “I’m angry with you, but I want you to know that I love you”. Actually, this emoji was created by someone witty and was meant to be a joke. Maybe, we should consider adding it to the list of popular emoji?

8. Read the following extracts from blogs about films and acting and consider the questions below.

A: Lady Gaga looking beautiful 😊 without makeup... Ladies/girls don’t need makeup to look good. 😊 I like my crush eyes without any makeup cause it seems clear.

B: YAS YOU ARE RIGHHHHHHHHT!!!!

A: I can’t believe how much she evolved in her music, style. She’s the definition of talent.

B: 👍👍❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️

A: A Star is Born and A Wig Is Gone.

B: LMFAO HAHAHAHAHAHHAH WIG IS GONE

Questions

1. How do verbal and non-verbal codes merge on the Internet?
2. What is clear and what is difficult to understand in each case?
3. What would change if it were face-to-face communication?

• Solution generation

1. Have you ever been confused by Internet slang? What message did you fail to interpret correctly because of unfamiliar words? Did you try to solve the case of misunderstanding and look up the meaning of confusing terms?

2. Read the following extracts and comment on the nature of Internet English, or online English. In what way is it different from the English we use in face-to-face communication? What are the reasons why Internet slang is so confusing?

Places like social media, comments sections and online forums, for example, use English that might seem completely new to you.

That’s because talking on the Internet can be very different from talking in person or even in e-mails. Online English is casual and personal, and uses a lot of slang.

Before you dive into the world of Internet English, remember that there are many profanities and curses in Internet slang, and sometimes words are misspelled or used incorrectly. Many of the words people use online all the time would not be used in face-to-face communication.

<https://www.fluentu.com/blog/english/english-internet-slang/>

The language of the Internet evolves on a daily basis. Which means the Internet can be a confusing place, even for someone who is using it every day. In fact, modern Internet slang words have transformed language, so it's crucial to learn the common phrases.

Sure, you could refer to online slang dictionaries, but it's difficult to stay clued in that way.

<https://www.makeuseof.com/tag/30-trendy-internet-acronyms-slang-need-know-fit/>

Some people call it Internet slang since many abbreviations are mostly used in informal conversations of specific groups in social media networks. However, the typical slang of British English, American English, Australian English, and others is localized whereas Internet abbreviations are universal and used by any person who catches the gist of a chat.

<https://preply.com/en/blog/2018/05/04/the-most-used-internet-abbreviations-for-texting-and-tweeting/>

3. As you have already learnt, one of the groups of Internet slang leading to confusion is abbreviations. Not all of these short-hands can be understood by the majorities of Internet or e-mail users. However, there are some exceptions which are fairly safe to use. They are listed below. Are all of them familiar to you? Where and how do you use them? Provide at least five examples of their usage from your own experience or from various Internet resources.

2 – to / too
4 – for
B – be
C – see
I – eye
O – owe
R – are
U – you
Y – why

<https://www.smart-words.org/abbreviations/text.html>

4. What makes people abbreviate? Read the extracts and express your opinion about the subject matter. Make a list of reasons adding two more items of your own.

What Makes People abbreviate? Limits. As simple as it is, people have started abbreviating words due to the limited number of characters permitted in a single message or tweet. Until 2017, one tweet could include no more than 140 characters and 20 characters for a username. This number doubled to 280 characters, yet the tradition to abbreviate is still a trend these days. People want to save their efforts and time for typing especially when it's made on the go.

Besides, one of the reasons to use shorthand in texting is the accelerated life pace which makes us say or do more in less space and time.

People stopped using long beautiful transition words or phrases like *nevertheless, notwithstanding the fact that* because it takes too many taps to write them. Hence, the second reason is simply human's laziness and impatience to type full words. Still, it's not that bad because idleness has been an engine of progress for many centuries.

The shorthand communication can be compared to a specific secret language code between users in different online chats, social media, instant messaging services like Skype, WhatsApp, Telegram, Facebook Messenger, etc. This abbreviation code is also a perfect way to protect one-to-one conversation from someone's intrusion.

One of the assumptions is that the greater part of abbreviations appeared because teens needed to hide their private chats from parents' eyes. And there are specific examples that confirm it:

- PAW (Parents are watching);
- PITR (Parent in the room);
- PBB (Parent behind back);
- POMS (Parent over my shoulder);
- KPC (Keeping parents clueless);
- PAH (Parent at home).

Basically, millennials were those who created and popularized the use of Internet chat abbreviations. Shortened common words, word combinations, and even sentences have become a part of tweeting and instant messaging. Have you wondered what does NTH mean in texting messaging and why can't people simply say "*Nice to have!*"

Of course, you can join a chat and write instead of TTYL or OMG their full variants like *Talk to you later / Oh my God*. Twitter won't crash, and others in a chat won't come with curses. However, eventually, you will write their shorthand variants to keep up with others.

<https://preply.com/en/blog/2018/05/04/the-most-used-internet-abbreviations-for-texting-and-tweeting/>

5. In what way is Internet English affecting the language we use in face-to-face communication? Is it ruining Standard English or, vice versa, enriching it? Read the extracts and compare different opinions.

There has been a lot of debate over whether the Internet is ruining the English language or just merely changing it. There were predictions from the past that in the near future, everyone was going to communicate with just acronyms or "emojis". The Internet has indeed resulted in a significant change on our use of the English language, and these changes are not random and without rules.

<https://blogs.ntu.edu.sg/hss-language-evolution/wiki/chapter-12/>

FYI, ASAP, as well as other acronyms and abbreviations like BTW (By the way), IMO (In my opinion), LMK (Let me know), PRB (Please reply by) have been included to the business e-mail conversation which almost never happens with common slang.

<https://preply.com/en/blog/2018/05/04/the-most-used-internet-abbreviations-for-texting-and-tweeting/>

The Internet also has the power to change the everyday words we use and give them different semantic uses.

For example, Twitter introduced “tweeting”, which we now use as a verb. Facebook allows us to “defriend” someone and we all know about “trolling”. Even simple words such as “like”, “poke”, “wave”, “tag”, “wall”, “post” and “status” now have different connotations for us.

If I asked you whether you liked your friend’s post on their wall the other day, you wouldn’t imagine I was talking about a letter on a fence. All these words now give the impression of our online presence.

Furthermore, this thinking process is so automatic it is now embedded into our subconscious. But remember, two decades ago we hadn’t even heard of the Internet, let alone Facebook.

Does Internet slang really change the way we speak? It’s true, some slang words have filtered into our everyday lives. Abbreviations like OMG, FOMO, LMAO and words such as *hashtag*, *selfie* and *cyberbully* are all part of our collective conscious. But do we use them in real life and if so, do they change the way we speak?

It is true that some abbreviations are more popular than others. For example, OMG and LOL. These changes to our language appear to have taken place virtually overnight. So are we about to become a world that communicates via acronyms? Linguist David Crystal thinks not.

“The Internet has only been around for some 20 years, which is no time at all. It takes a lot longer for permanent or significant language change to operate. Most people speak today just as they did before the Internet arrived.”

However, Internet slang is not just about words and phrases. It also includes emoticons. Smiley faces, sad faces, our language is peppered with such references.

However, although some phrases, words and acronyms may enhance and add to the expressive nature of our language, experts don’t believe that Internet slang will change it significantly.

“The occasional additional spoken abbreviation (such as LOL) is hardly a significant effect” (David Crystal).

<https://www.learning-mind.com/internet-slang/>

A popular element of Internet slang is LOL, meaning ‘laughing out loud’ or ‘lots of laughs’. It’s become so widespread in Internet and text language that it’s used more and more in face-to-face conversation, and is the inspiration for other laughter-related terms such as ROFL (rolling on the floor laughing) or LMAO (laughing my *ss off).

While LOL has long been an entry in the so-called urban dictionary, its common use also earned the term a place as an official acronym in the English dictionary in 2011. Such is its popularity that other languages have begun to incorporate the term into their own speech, and it is not uncommon now to hear people interject sentences in their own language with LOL – or other Internet slang words. It’s even morphed into a term of empathy or sarcasm in speech – you may reply “LOL, me too!” when a work colleague complains about hating Monday mornings.

Other languages have their own versions of a laughing abbreviation, perhaps inspired by the English language LOL. The French version “MDR” stands for “mort de rire”, which roughly translates as “died of laughter” – although LOL is popular in France, too. The Thai variation is “555”. In Thai, “five” is pronounced “ha”, three of them being “hahaha”. While in Brazil, “RS” is used as an abbreviation of “risos”, the plural of “laugh” and it can be written several times in a row to express harder laughter.

<https://www.english.com/blog/english-internet-slang/>

For more than 600 years, English speakers used *because* as a conjunction meaning ‘for the reason that’, dutifully following it with a full clause of explanation (or at least the word *of*). Then, a few years ago, this old standby suddenly began bursting with new life, as people started using it to form terse, cheeky rationales in a manner that defied all grammatical decorum: How do you know climate change is real? “Because science.” Why are you sleepy? “Because burrito.” Academics went aflutter, debating whether *because* had evolved into a preposition and which types of nouns fit this newfangled construction. But there was little disagreement on the driving force behind the change.

<https://time.com/5629246/because-internet-book-review/>

6. Some people believe that the influence of Internet slang on our lives is not limited to the language we speak. It can affect us in a much stronger way. Read the text and share your point of view.

Does Internet Slang Change the Way We Think?

To demonstrate how Internet slang changes the way we think let’s look at the abbreviation LOL. We all know LOL as ‘laughing out loud’, but thanks to advances in technology, its meaning is now changing.

In fact, depicting LOL as laughing is positively outdated. These days, people use LOL to signify their message is meant to be funny or ironic. And it has other meanings too.

“LOL can also be a way to acknowledge that a writer has received a text – a written version of a nod of the head and a smile.” Internet Linguist Ann Curzan

So LOL is used now in a passive way as a listening tool, rather than an active means to say you are laughing.

<https://www.learning-mind.com/internet-slang/>

7. Research the problem of Internet slang, referring to at least five additional sources of information. Prepare a three-minute speech on one of the following topics.

1. Online English is more confusing than standard English.
2. Internet slang cannot change our language significantly.
3. Internet abbreviations are helpful in many ways.
4. Online English is quickly spreading offline, and the process cannot be stopped.

• **Solution implementation**

1. As a psychologist, prove that we cannot understand the true meaning of an interaction if we do not have the ability to observe and interpret non-verbal signals.
2. As a person who prefers speaking directly to communicating through social media channels, prove that the choice of the non-verbal means we use on the Internet is extremely poor and can be limited to emoticons and punctuation.
3. Conduct an experiment. Choose 10 random emojis and ask five friends or acquaintances of yours to generate their meanings. Present the results of the experiment to your groupmates.
4. Write a set of guidelines for Internet users: The rules of writing a social media post.
5. As a teacher of English, express your concern about the growing popularity of Internet slang and excessive usage of abbreviations.

Unit III. Social and Cultural Factors of Online Communication

- **Problem identification**

1. Who is more active on the Internet – men or women?
2. How does the generation gap between adolescents and adults manifest itself in the field of technology?
3. How does one's status and social role affect online communication?
4. How is it possible to communicate across borders via the Internet successfully?
5. What channels are beneficial for cross-cultural communications?
6. What are the specific Internet subcultures? Are all of them harmless?

- **Problem analysis**

1. **Read the text and consider the questions below.**

Men vs. Women: Who Is More Active on Social Media?

Ever wondered who is more active on social media: men or women? Or what women use social for vs. men? Are women or men more active?

The old saying “Men are from Mars, women are from Venus” holds water when it comes to how men and women use social media.

Females use social media less than men for business reasons, whereas women use social media to share more personal information than men, revealing more about their personal lives. Women are more vocal, expressive and willing to share. In other words, women are biologically wired for social networking.

At least, that's according to data compiled by FinancesOnline.com.

Sounds cliché, doesn't it?

Generally, females use social networking sites to make connections and stay in touch with family or friends.

Men, by contrast, use social media to gather the information they need to build influence. Social media helps them perform research, gather relevant contacts and ultimately increase their status.

While this explains how they use it differently, but do you know who is more active on social media: men or women?

This may seem like an important question, but if the majority of your consumers are predominantly men or women, it will impact which social channels you would need to focus on.

Men and women have varying degrees of online activity across different sites. 74 % of Internet users are using social media, with women (76 %) having a slight edge over men (72 %).

Behind every social media platform stand millions of women – and they certainly seem to love their mobile phones. A Nielsen study shows that women spend nearly 10 minutes social networking through the mobile web, or through apps every day, whereas men spend a little less than 7 minutes.

The diversity may not surprise you, but drilling down to a platform-by-platform level might.

According to this report from Spredfast, the major platforms have varying degrees in gender splits.

Social Media Platform by User Gender

Platform	Female Users, %	Male Users, %
Snapchat	70	30
Pinterest	60	40
Instagram	58	42
Facebook	52	48
Twitter	47	53
LinkedIn	46	54
YouTube	45	55

But what about people's actual behaviour on the platforms?

Pew, Nielsen, and Burst Media data depict some other impressive stats about male vs. female use of social media. In checking out their sources and data points, we discovered that women are more likely to interact with brands via social media than men.

More than half of women use social media to show support and access deals or promotions from brands, compared to just 36 % of the men online.

Not only do women use social media to stay up to date with brands, they also comment on their favorite brands more than men do.

The fact that women are more active on social media than men has held true for at least the last five years. However, it is important to note that women interact in different way and are leading the shift from desktop to mobile where social media is concerned, which is a huge concern for social networking sites launching in the next few years.

<https://www.brandwatch.com/blog/men-vs-women-active-social-media/>

Questions

1. Do you agree that women are biologically wired for social networking?
2. What do men and women use social media for?
3. How are gender differences manifested across major platforms?

2. Read the text and consider the questions below.

“Why haven't you got a husband?” she asked, opening an empty Quality Street tin and offering me an imaginary biscuit.

“Not everyone has a husband,” I said, taking care to select the right one... “Granny hasn't got a husband.”

“That’s because Granny is too old,” she assured me. “Daddy said so. And she used to be married to Grandad Mal, didn’t you know?”

As my mum liked to say, Alice was six going on sixteen. I couldn’t remember being quite so precocious when I was her age...

“I did know that,” I replied, following her lead and nibbling on my fantasy biscuit. “I don’t have a husband because I haven’t found anyone I want to marry yet.”...

“Daddy says you’re getting old too,” she replied. “And that you’d better get a move on because you’re not getting any younger.”

“Did he now.” I pulled back the curtains and shot Alan a death stare across the garden “And what else did your daddy have to say?”

“He said everything started to go downhill for Mummy after thirty-five and that you ought to try to get a ring on it well before then.”

Note to self. Literally never open your mouth in front of a child over the age of one.

L. Kelk. One in a Million

Questions

1. Dwell on the role of age factor in communication.
2. What should one bear in mind while talking to kids?
3. The example provided is a case of face-to-face communication. In your opinion, do the same rules apply in online communication?

3. Read the text and consider the questions below.

From Gen X to Y and Z: Technology and the Generation Gap
By S. Ramasubbu

The elusive “generation gap” is construed as being widest when one of the two generations is the adolescent. While the gap exists in almost all facets of social and personal domains, never is it more evident than in the field of technology, where one of the generations is a digital native and the other an immigrant or even an alien, depending upon the stage of the continuum of adulthood.

The use of gadgets itself is markedly influenced by age, as shown in Pew Research Center’s Internet & American Life Project that studied how different generations use technology.

Although cell phones are now the predominant form of interpersonal communication, the way they are used significantly varies between generations. Youngsters use their phones for a variety of activities such as taking photos, texting, going online, instant messaging, emailing, playing games, listening to music, and even recording and watching videos while adults progressively

according to their age progression, restrict the use of these devices to fewer and fewer activities. Interestingly, Pew Research found that the one cell phone activity that transcends age is taking photos, with adults just as likely to click photos on the cell phone cameras as the young. However, the type of photos taken differs, with adolescents clicking more selfies than adults.

The Internet seems to be a good leveler of digital use, at least within the US. While fewer than 60 % of senior citizens (ages > 65) are conversant with and use the Internet, the percentages are comparable for all other age groups; 92 % for teens, 97 % for young adults (18–29 years), 94 % for the mid-lifers (30–49) and 88 % for older adults (50–64). How the Internet is used varies among age groups. While teenagers and young adults under age 30 use the Internet to find information, socialize, play, shop and perhaps conduct business, older users visit government websites or seek financial information online. However this gap is narrowing, according to Pew Research, and activities such as e-mails and search engines being increasingly used by all age groups that are online.

Social media is another area where there is an age difference. While the percentage of adults who use social media (72 %) is not that different from the youngsters in it (81 %), there is a difference in the type of social media applications that is favored. Youngsters (teens and young adults) seem more prevalent in social media applications such as Facebook and Twitter while adults dominate tumblr, Instagram and Pinterest. Adults are largely passive or semi-active users of social media as seen in that adults typically add contacts only on request while adolescents actively seek new friendships.

Adolescents use the social media platform as a conversation space and an outlet for self-expression, aimed largely at building new relationships while adults use social media to maintaining existing relationships. Adults have fewer contacts with a third of the adults in social media admitting to having family as their main contact group. Contrast this with the fact that only 10 and 15 percent of adolescents reported to have family in their social media contact list.

The type of material people post on social media sites differs as well. A surprising observation has been that teens post fewer photos on social media sites (like Instagram, for instance) than adults. Teens also post more selfies than adults, which is directly related to the fact that they click more selfies than adults. Teens also appear to post material that depict “mood/emotion” and “follow/like” topics, which are geared towards attracting more followers. Adults however, post under topics that included “arts/photos/design”, “locations”, “nature” and “social/people”.

It is generally believed that young people are risky users of social network sites, because they apparently share more information about themselves than is safe and care little about their privacy. This contention is backed by countless examples of catastrophic outcomes of such exposures. However, the media frenzy around such incidents belies the real situation. Youngsters, especially teens,

have been found to make better use of the privacy settings provided by social network sites compared to adults. This is probably because they tend to separate their offline identity from their online identity in order to manage their reputation.

Two other areas where reality defies expectation are online shopping and gaming. Although it is generally believed that teens and millennials drive e-commerce trends, a survey has shown that a large number of middle-aged consumers shop online. More interestingly, seniors are also increasingly adopting mobile commerce – one in four mobile shoppers in the US is over the age of 55.

As for gaming, older adults game more than young adults (teens not included). This is probably not shocking in that older adults tend to be retired, and hence have more time to spend on activities such as gaming.

While the relationship between age and technology use is, if not always as expected, not really shocking, there is a growing disparity in the tech industry – the generators of technology. According to a survey by PayScale, the median age of workers at many of the most successful companies in the technology industry hovers well below 35. Older companies had a higher median age, and younger companies had medium age of 30 or younger. This is despite the fact that the people who heralded the IT revolution are now in their forties and beyond. This disparity has been attributed to the change in technology tools and platform over the years. It can be argued that the comfort level that the younger generation has with technology is manifesting itself in them helping find newer ways to improve productivity and efficiency of our lives. What this bodes for the future of human-kind can only be speculated at this point, but it certainly portends to be an unprecedented chapter in the history of civilization.

https://www.huffpost.com/entry/from-gen-x-to-y-and-z-tec_b_7645410

Questions

1. How do different generations use technology?
2. In what way does the use of cell phones for interpersonal communication vary across generations?
3. How is the age difference manifested in social media?
4. Comment on the differences in online shopping and gaming among age groups.

4. Read the story and explain how social roles (status) affect a person's behavior – both online and offline. Comment on the double standards referring to the proverb “Gods may do what cattle may not”.

Today, my boss yelled at me for having Facebook open at work. That's fine, I closed it and continued on with my work. In a meeting later on I could see the reflection of my boss's laptop screen in a mirror behind her desk. For two hours, I watched her scroll through her Facebook feed.

5. Read the text and consider the questions below.

Top Tips for Communicating Online Across Cultures

By T. Brake

When it comes to cross-cultural communications, there are no hard and fast rules for selecting an appropriate channel, but here are some considerations to point you in the right direction.

Understanding the various channels – here's the line up

Asynchronous: delayed time communication channels, e.g., email, threaded discussions, wikis, recorded webcasts.

Synchronous: real time communication channels, e.g., instant messaging, live webinars, live audio-, video-, and web-conferencing.

Lean: channels with a limited capacity for communicating visual, auditory (e.g., voice intonation and tone), and social cues (e.g., body language like facial expressions, gestures).

Lean-back: channels that only allow user to be passive listener and/or observer, e.g., most TV and radio.

Lean-forward: channels actively engaging the user in scanning for content, making choices, even contributing and editing content, e.g., Internet, wikis, web-conferencing.

Rich: channels able to communicate large quantities of visual, auditory, and social cue information, e.g., video-conferencing.

Essential factors to consider

Accessibility. Do the other people you're going to communicate with across borders have access to the same or compatible channels and tools? You may take it for granted that they do, but never assume.

Does everyone have the same level of proficiency in using them? Those who are more proficient can easily become frustrated and lose their motivation if they feel held back by the less skilled.

Complexity. In cross-cultural communications, so-called lean media channels are often more productive. E-mail, for example, gives non-native speaking users time to compose and interpret messages accurately.

The use of richer media across cultures often overloads users with verbal, auditory and social cue information that creates confusion.

In complex projects, increase the chances of success by using a mix of channels that accommodate the different needs of different people for visuals, text, and speech.

Cultural orientations. Group-oriented cultures often don't like media that can zoom-in on individuals. It increases the danger of the individual losing face.

Also important to understand is how a culture perceives different channels, e.g., when status and hierarchy are important in a culture it may be that an e-mail is perceived as more formal, and, therefore, a more appropriate introduction than a telephone call.

In cultures where the establishment of a personal relationship is important, an email might be considered to be too impersonal (and rude).

Geography and time zones. When geographical distances are large and multiple time zones need to be crossed it is better to rely on asynchronous communication for most coordination.

Synchronous channels could be used periodically to help foster relationships.

A mix of technologies can be most powerful; a detailed email followed by a synchronous web-conference can be more productive than either channel alone.

Social presence and touch. Technology can be very impersonal, but research shows that online relationships can exceed face-to-face levels of intimacy, likeability, and sense of belonging over time.

Virtual teams have been proven to be more productive and deliver better results than co-located teams. The challenge is to choose the right technologies for the right jobs.

When relationship or performance issues need to be addressed a channel enabling a high level of personal connection and high touch is most beneficial. Never give personal feedback via e-mail.

A relatively straightforward exchange of information doesn't require a multimedia show.

If a decision is to be made, use channels that allow discussion but be clear upfront about decision rights and accountability online discussions can spin out of control. On the other hand, don't use e-mails for making decisions. E-mails usually raise more questions than they answer.

<https://countrynavigator.com/blog/digital-working/top-tips-communicating-online-across-cultures/>

Questions

1. What conditions are to be met when you communicate with representatives of a different culture online?

2. What factors should you consider in order to choose a channel successfully?

3. What recommendations are there concerning the selection of an appropriate channel in cross-cultural communication? How is it connected to the peculiarities of culture you are dealing with?

4. Dwell on the pros and cons of each channel used for cross-cultural communication.

• Solution generation

1. Have you heard of Internet subcultures? What are they like? In what way are Internet subcultures different from subcultures in general? What Internet subcultures do you know or are a member of?

2. Read the following extracts and comment on the nature of Internet subcultures and reasons for their emerging and developing rapidly.

On the Internet, a subculture is a large fanbase very dedicated to their common interests.

<https://www.listchallenges.com/internet-subcultures>

The Internet has given us many beautiful things – it’s replete with cute animal photos, myriad videos of people falling, and .gif-studded television recaps, and it’s also a place to seek and discover information, a place to consider and refute dissenting opinions, and a link between us and other individuals. This is especially true when it comes to discovering people who share our interests, hobbies, and fetishes. The Internet provides just enough (apparent) anonymity and a platform for sharing that people feel comfortable unfolding aspects of themselves usually kept stored away.

And the sense of community and exclusivity offered by the Internet has also helped create and cement veritable subcultures.

https://abcnews.go.com/ABC_Univision/Entertainment/subcultures-strong-online-presence/story?id=18511594

Perhaps the most universal claim made about the Internet is its ability to transmit cultural congruence. Unlike the pre-millennial era, nowadays we have a platform through which people can create, share and voice common interests (no matter how eccentric or niche), entirely free from the traditional constraints of location, demographic or distance.

As the image-sharing capabilities of the web have improved, some of the most noteworthy subcultural movements of recent years have been pushed into the limelight. Often driven by a vanguard community of individuals keen to fetishize specific elements of art, music, fashion and popular culture – notoriously through social media platforms like Tumblr and Facebook – these fledgling collectives frequently find themselves snowballing into a full-blown *force majeure* by a trend-obsessed society ever-hungry to be fed the “hottest new thing.”

<https://www.highsnobiety.com/2015/03/11/internet-subcultures-health-goth-seapunk/>

3. Research into an Internet subculture that is alien to you and that you personally consider weird. Prepare a brief report on the subculture, taking into account different opinions about this group and its activities. Now that you have conducted research, can you say you have come to understand this subculture better?

4. Just like in real life, there are counter cultures on the Internet. Troll culture is one of them. What do you know about Internet trolling and what opinion do you hold of people practicing it?

5. Read the following extract. Do you share the author’s opinion?

It would be smarter to be cautious, because the Internet’s personality has changed. Once it was a geek with lofty ideals about the free flow of information. Now, if you need help improving your upload speeds the web is eager to help with technical details, but if you tell it you’re struggling with depression it will try to goad you into killing yourself. Psychologists call this the online disinhibition

effect, in which factors like anonymity, invisibility, a lack of authority and not communicating in real time strip away the mores society spent millennia building. And it's seeping from our smartphones into every aspect of our lives.

The people who relish this online freedom are called trolls, a term that originally came from a fishing method online thieves use to find victims. It quickly morphed to refer to the monsters who hide in darkness and threaten people. Internet trolls have a manifesto of sorts, which states they are doing it for the "lulz", or laughs. What trolls do for the lulz ranges from clever pranks to harassment to violent threats. There's also doxxing – publishing personal data, such as Social Security numbers and bank accounts – and swatting, calling in an emergency to a victim's house so the SWAT team busts in. When victims do not experience lulz, trolls tell them they have no sense of humor. Trolls are turning social media and comment boards into a giant locker room in a teen movie, with towel-snapping racial epithets and misogyny.

<https://time.com/4457110/internet-trolls/>

6. Read the following classification of trolls and comment on the difference between the types.

The 10 Types of Trolls You'll Spot in the Wild

By C. Bryan and N. Gallucci

Right now, you are on the Internet. Thus, you have probably come across a troll. But the name "troll" is far from one-size-fits-all. In fact, there are lots of trollish Internet types skulking around online, looking for the next thing to troll about.

Here are the ten types you'll probably come across in the wild.

1. *The "Why is this news?" troll.* This troll's objective is to say that the thing you're talking about is not worth talking about. This could be any subject at any time: politics, coffee, your own family, an election on the day of the election. Anything! No matter what, the troll will ask, "Why is this news?" Yes, even if it it news. Such is the nature of the troll.

2. *The do-no-harm troll.* The do-no-harm troll's comments are confusing, but not harmful; weird, but not dangerous. They're based on a persona: that of a person who is wildly ignorant, but not necessarily in a toxic way. As trolls go, they are pretty good.

3. *The high-brow troll.* Admit it: We all know a high-brow troll (or seven) who have the potential to inspire eye rolls every time they open their mouths. High-brow trolls are those people who live to reference *New York Times* articles to make their points, often calling it "the Times" to let you know they're so dedicated to reading the paper that they're on a nickname basis with it.

The high-brow troll essentially exists to put people in their place while also humble bragging. They love to show off their extensive vocabulary, and if they choose to engage in a more lengthy troll, rest assured that thorough research and numerous facts will be presented.

4. *The wet blanket troll.* These trolls will stop at nothing to ruin a pleasant discussion, no matter the subject matter. Even the lightest of topics aren't safe from their incessant negative energy.

Recently, we were reading a nice thread on what to eat for breakfast and noticed one man popping up under any comment that mentioned eggs. "Eggs are high in cholesterol," he wrote many, many times. "Excellent, if your goal is to die of heart disease."

Eggs are fine though, and he's a wet blanket troll. Please enjoy your breakfasts and ignore him.

5. *The meme-reliant troll.* The meme-reliant trolls of the world are a unique bunch. While they have a lot of opinions and aren't necessarily afraid to share them, they only feel comfortable trolling if they can hide their social commentary behind the lighthearted veil of a meme.

You'll rarely catch this troll tweeting directly about politics, but they'll never pass up the opportunity to transform the latest Trump drama into a lawn boy meme. As Midterm Elections approach they won't outright urge people to vote, but they'll eagerly jump at the chance to retweet that Ariana Grande/Pete Davidson meme. And they take no shame in putting their extensive knowledge of *Spongebob Squarepants* episodes to use.

Meme-reliant trolls enjoy the trolling game – and they're good at it – but they aren't out to ruffle *too* many feathers, which is why they cushion the blow and try to diffuse the tension by delivering their opinions in a hilarious package.

6. *The friendship troll.* One of the most heartbreaking trolls you'll encounter in life is probably the friendship troll, a person who you might be very close with, but who occasionally exhibits frenemy behavior.

Friendship trolls takes it upon themselves to give their pals FOMO whenever possible. If they hang out one-on-one with a mutual friend, for example, they'll be sure to send photos letting you know that they're having a great time despite your absence. If they go to eat at your favorite restaurant or see a band you like they might send you some "thinking of you" content. Rather than giving you FOMO, they could have just invited you to hang *with* them, but of course, they did not.

7. *The broken record troll.* Another especially irritating presence, the broken record troll has almost zero range in trolling. They come up with one good troll, think they've mastered the game, and keep it in their back pocket just waiting to whip it out whenever the opportunity presents itself.

Broken record trolls also exist in bot form and behind Twitter accounts with very low follower counts. Anyone who joins social media for the sole purpose of scouring the site for posts related to a single issue (like politics, for example) and replying with the same canned insult falls under this category.

8. *The existential void troll.* Ever encountered someone online who carries on endlessly bleak conversations, often appears hopeless, and seems angry at the world? That's an existential void troll.

An existential void troll's tweets document the desperate searching for purpose and meaning in this life. Much like the wet blanket, this troll's a real downer, and will make you want to scream things like, "WHO HURT YOU?" and "WHY?"

9. *The brand troll*. Brand trolls are extremely hit or miss. When they're good (it's rare,) they set brands apart from the competition. But when they're bad, the social impact can be far-reaching and truly mortifying.

10. *Bad people*. These are the trolls who give trolls a bad name. Well, trolling already has a bad name, but it's these people's fault. They're mean, they're bigoted, and they make the Internet a worse place for everyone. Maybe someday Twitter will kick them off the platform, but for now, they remain.

<https://mashable.com/article/types-of-online-trolls/>

7. Provide examples of trolling from online chats, forums, etc. What type of trolling is it? How did the interlocutors react to the troll's behavior?

- **Solution implementation**

1. As a human relations expert, prove that women are more advanced users of social media than men.

2. Write an essay on the topic "Although generation gap exists in all spheres of social life, it is most evident in the field of technology".

3. As a cross-cultural communication specialist, explain how the use of the Internet differs across cultures. Consider group-oriented cultures, individualistic cultures, cultures that value status, cultures that value personal relations, etc.

4. Conduct an experiment. Ask 20 people whether they prefer to write an e-mail or make a telephone call when it comes to sorting out business or personal problems. How do the results correlate with the sociocultural parameters of your respondents?

5. As an organizational communication specialist, explain why virtual teams are more productive than co-located teams.

6. As a proponent of netiquette, prove that trolling is anti-social.

Unit IV. Psychological and Biological Factors of Online Communication

- **Problem identification**

1. What personality types do we encounter online and in real life?
2. How are emotions manifested in online communication? How are they spread?
3. Do we express emotions in the same way or differently while communicating online and in real life? Is it easier to “read” emotions online or offline?
4. Do social network sites cause depression or do they have beneficial effects on mental health?
5. Is social network addiction a mental disorder?
6. In what way can the use the Internet become a liberating experience for people with physical impairment?
7. Why is using the Internet challenging for physically impaired people?

- **Problem analysis**

1. **Read the text and consider the questions below.**

Detecting Emotional Contagion in Massive Social Networks

Happiness and other emotions spread between people in direct contact, but it is unclear whether massive online social networks also contribute to this spread. Here, we elaborate a novel method for measuring the contagion of emotional expression. With data from millions of Facebook users, we show that rainfall directly influences the emotional content of their status messages, and it also affects the status messages of friends in other cities who are not experiencing rainfall. For every one person affected directly, rainfall alters the emotional expression of about one to two other people, suggesting that online social networks may magnify the intensity of global emotional synchrony.

Emotional states can be transferred directly from one individual to another via mimicry and the copying of emotionally-relevant bodily actions like facial expressions. Experiments have demonstrated that people can “catch” emotional states they observe in others over time frames ranging from seconds to months, and the possibility of emotional contagion between strangers, even those in ephemeral contact, has been documented by the effects of “service with a smile” on customer satisfaction and tipping.

In an experiment we would directly control each user’s emotional expression to see what impact it has on their friends’ emotional expression. Instead of changing the user’s emotion directly with an experimental treatment, we let rainfall do the work for us by measuring how much the rain-induced change in a user’s expression predicts changes in the user’s friends’ expression. We apply our method to data collected for a set of 1180 days on Facebook from January 2009 to March 2012.

Users of Facebook interact with each other in many ways, mostly textual. To measure emotional expression, we use “status updates” (also called “posts”) which are undirected text-based messages that a user’s social contacts (Facebook friends) may view on their own News Feed. Relying on the Linguistic Inquiry Word Count (LIWC), a widely used and validated word classification system, we determine whether a post uses words that express positive or negative emotions. Although this is not the only way to measure sentiment, this method has previously been used to measure the emotional content of online messages. We then use two different metrics to quantify the average emotional state of a user during a day: the fraction of posts expressing positive emotions (“positive rate”); and the fraction expressing negative emotions (“negative rate”). Note that the positive and negative emotions are not two ends of the same scale. Some messages will express both positive and negative emotions just as individuals experience mixed emotions on occasion, so it is possible to score high on both measures. We then aggregate individual observations by city and day, restricting our attention to all English-speaking Facebook users residing in the 100 most populous US cities.

Our estimates of the social contagion of emotional expression suggest that there may be large-scale spillovers in online networks. What people feel and say in one place may spread to many parts of the globe on the very same day.

Although there are many factors that affect human emotions, we have confirmed here that individual expression of emotions depends on what others in an individual’s social network are expressing. These results imply that emotions themselves might ripple through social networks to generate large-scale synchrony that gives rise to clusters of happy and unhappy individuals. And new technologies online may be increasing this synchrony by giving people more avenues to express themselves to a wider range of social contacts. As a result, we may see greater spikes in global emotion that could generate increased volatility in everything from political systems to financial markets.

Our results are also consistent with prior work on the evolutionary basis of human emotions and with prior work focusing on the fleeting, direct spread of emotions. In addition to their internal and psychological relevance, emotions play a specifically social role: when humans experience emotions, they do not generally keep them to themselves, but rather, they tend to *show* them. Like laughter and smiling, emotions expressed online may serve the evolutionarily adaptive purpose of enhancing social bonds.

Our findings also have significance for public wellbeing. To the extent that clinical or policy maneuvers increase the happiness of one person, they may have cascade effects on others in their social networks, thereby enhancing the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of the intervention, and these results suggest that such cascade effects may be promoted online. For example, providing better care for those who are suffering might not only improve their happiness, but also the happiness of numerous others, thereby further vindicating the benefits of medical care or public policy.

<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0090315>

Questions

1. What is the social role of emotions?
2. Prove that emotions are contagious. Does it hold true to both – online and offline communication?
3. How do status messages on social networks contribute to the spread of emotions between people?
4. Can emotions expressed online really serve the purpose of enhancing social bonds?
5. Should cascade effects be promoted online? In what spheres?

2. Do our emotions in real life correspond to what we manifest online, and vice versa? Read the story and comment on it. Consider the participants' behaviour from different perspectives, paying attention to psychological parameters as well as the communicative codes used.

Today, I texted someone and typed, “lol”. My boyfriend asked me why I put “lol”. I told him because I thought it was funny. He looked at me weird and said, “But you didn’t laugh.” Now he thinks I’m weird because I didn’t actually laugh out loud.

3. Read the texts and consider the questions below.

A

Psychologists Say There Are Only Five Kinds of People in the World.

Which One Are You?

By A. Morin

Once you understand your personality type, it's easy to identify other people's too.

Your personality influences everything from the friends you choose to the candidates you vote for in a political election. Yet many people never really spend much time thinking about their personality traits.

Understanding your personality can give you insight into your strengths and weaknesses. It can also help you gain insight into how others see you.

Most modern-day psychologists agree there are five major personality types. Referred to as the “five factor model”, everyone possesses some degree of each.

1. *Conscientiousness*. People who rank highest in conscientiousness are efficient, well-organized, dependable, and self-sufficient. They prefer to plan things in advance and aim for high achievement. People who rank lower in conscientiousness may view those with this personality trait as stubborn and obsessive.

2. *Extroversion*. People who rank high in extroversion gain energy from social activity. They're talkative and outgoing and they're comfortable in the spotlight. Others may view them as domineering and attention-seeking.

3. *Agreeableness*. Those who rank high in agreeableness are trustworthy, kind and affectionate toward others. They're known for their pro-social behavior and they're often committed to volunteer work and altruistic activities. Other people may view them as naïve and overly passive.

4. *Openness to Experience*. People who rate high in openness are known for their broad range of interests and vivid imaginations. They're curious and creative and they usually prefer variety over rigid routines. They're known for their pursuits of self-actualization through intense, euphoric experiences like meditative retreats or living abroad. Others may view them as unpredictable and unfocused.

5. *Neuroticism*. Neurotic people experience a high degree of emotional instability. They're more likely to be reactive and excitable and they report higher degrees of unpleasant emotions like anxiety and irritability. Other people may view them as unstable and insecure.

Understanding the basics of personality

Personality remains relatively stable over time. The personality traits you exhibited at age 7 are likely to predict much of your behavior as an adult.

Of course, you can change some of your personality traits. It takes hard work and effort to make big changes, but most scientists agree that it is possible.

<https://www.inc.com/amy-morin/psychologists-say-there-are-5-personality-types-heres-how-to-tell-which-one-you-.html>

B

The Eight Types of Social Media Personality

By F. Middleton

From Instagram over-sharers to inexperienced relatives on Facebook, we can all identify with these social media personality types.

Log on to any social media platform and you'll notice people who belong to a "social media" group. Whether they're an oversharer or a rampant hashtagger, everyone adopts a persona on social media, and some are easier to spot than others.

Facebook is still the most popular social media site, with 1.87 bn global users. Whatsapp and Instagram (both owned by Facebook) have 1 bn and 600 m worldwide users respectively. Twitter meanwhile has 317 m, according to the Global Social Media Insight Summary 2017.

Thanks to plenty of free Wi-Fi hotspots around the country – BT has more than five million – it's never been so easy to log on and share. But who will you meet when social media, and what group do they belong to?

The oversharer. Do you really need to hear about how long your friend's run was on every social media platform? You'll know an oversharer when you realise you know what your acquaintance ate for breakfast, wore to work, how many steps she did, and what she bought from the supermarket on the way home. At least she's detailed.

The proud parent. "Look at my beautiful daughter getting 12 A's in her GCSEs" easily translates as "I am an amazing parent with some pretty fantastic genes, right?" What might be seen as family pride can be incredibly awkward

for people seeing the post, and can lead to serious bragging from different parents. “Yes, my Clara got 14 A’s, aren’t our girls great?” Not to mention the cringing children, who just wish their parents would thank them in person and leave social media to the pros.

The person who can’t use social media. “Dear Simon, I miss you and look forward to seeing you at Easter, love Nan.” It’s fantastic that the older generation are trying their hand at social media, but it still makes everyone giggle when Great Aunt Jean comments on every picture of you on your recent all-girls holiday to Ibiza. Nine out of 10 homes have access to superfast broadband, so it’s not surprising she gets there before your friends do.

The most boring person in the world. You know you should unfollow them, but you keep them around just to show your friends how boring this person is. Posts pictures of new car tyres, and asks questions about best anti-freeze.

The demanding person. This will be the person who sends 40 tweets a day asking for help. “Does anyone know a good builder in Shropshire?” they might ask, or “Can anybody recommend the best half-fat cheese in the supermarket?” No idea why they can’t use a search engine but BT’s more than £3bn investment in superfast broadband should help them find the answers.

The ones who selfie all the time. A total of 48 pc of Brits say not having access to the internet leads to loneliness, so what better way to combat that by posting selfies and waiting for the likes to roll in? Doesn’t matter if it’s at a bus stop, at the Oscars or at the gym – the person who posts selfies knows their killer pose and pout gain maximum attention.

The ones who want to debate everything. “I really hate David Attenborough” said no one ever, apart from the person gunning for a fight on social media. Healthy debate is fine, although you always get one person on Valentine’s Day/Christmas Day/their birthday saying how terrible it is that we celebrate the special day and hoping that somebody disagrees with them so they can show off their on-point debating skills.

The truly hilarious person. There’s always somebody who shares the best meme or writes the funniest joke, usually in response to a depressing news story. This is (probably) why BT rolled out fibre broadband across the UK, so we could get the funny person’s social media posts superfast and brighten up our day.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/connecting-britain/social-media-personality-types/>

C

Top 6 Psychological Types of Users That Can Be Met at Telegram Channels.

Do You Recognize Some?

1. *An alarmist.* Such users demonstrate the highest activity in channels making themselves and others crazy. Panic-mongers declare their eternal love to the project, but immediately switch to anger at the first sign of problems.

2. *A Believer.* It’s the major category of users in crypto channels. They invest their own money not only to get the profit but because of their trust in the project.

3. *A reseller*. This user comes to projects with one aim: to buy low and sell high. He doesn't care what kind of product is under development, or what's the idea behind it.

4. *Sarcastic troll*. A user who appears online once every month and asks the same questions every time: "So, how are you doing here? Has the project collapsed yet?"

5. *Forever banned user*. Such user loves flooding and gets banned for it each time. Then he creates a new account and starts all over again.

6. *A man with "connections"*. This kind of user often demonstrates connections in the CIA, the law courts, as well as with some presidents. Basic vocabulary: You're in big trouble. I have reported everything to the SEC.

<https://vi-vn.facebook.com/iqoptioncom/posts/top-6-psychological-types-of-users-that-can-be-met-at-telegram-channels-do-you-r/873472079529211/>

D

My phone vibrated in my hand. I had a new Facebook friend request.

Truth be told, I wasn't much of a Facebook user. Lurker, absolutely, but poster? Only on occasion. It took either an incredible gif or a generation shattering political event to drive me to tell Mark Zuckerberg how I felt and, generally speaking, I regretted it almost immediately after posting.

"Whoever he is, all his accounts must be set to private," Brian said... "I couldn't find him on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. Not even LinkedIn. I hope he's hiding something good."

"He's not hiding," I replied, turning Samuel's book over in my hands. "He's not on there. Or rather he's not using his account. At all."

"This is ridiculous," he protested. "Even my nana has Facebook *and* Twitter and she's eighty-nine."

"I know, I follow her," I told him with a regretful grimace. "And I want to believe she doesn't understand what she's posting, Brian."

"Oh, no," he said, sadly shaking his head. "She does."

"I suppose he's not the only human being in the world who hates the idea of posting his entire life online."

L. Kelk. One in a Million

E

Designing for Different Online Personality Types

By L. Margalit

As the buying process moves online, smart businesses are adapting and realizing the necessity of reading and responding to the digital body language of their prospects.

In my work as a web psychologist, I'm exposed to many different types of user behavior and online decision-making processes. Although each person is different and has an individual style, I have identified six recurring patterns

of behavior that I identify as specific “online personality types”. I’ll discuss the six pattern types, explain the psychological drivers of their behavior and provide site optimization tips that online businesses can use to leverage each type’s unique desires.

1. *The Wish Lister*. First up is the “There are so many things I want but know I can’t have” disorder. I’ve seen this pattern mostly in women and mostly on e-commerce websites. The visitor devotes lots of time and effort into carefully picking items she wants and putting them in her shopping cart. But the thing is, she is never buys them.

What causes this behavior? Unlike a “real-life” shopping cart, an online cart promotes feelings of ownership because the user can add and remove items at any time, and those items will remain in the cart even if the visitor leaves the site. She can open the cart any time she wishes and view her virtual property. By having all these desired items in her own personal cart, she almost feels like she owns them. And this serves as consolation for the fact that she can’t afford to purchase them.

How can you influence the purchasing decision? One way of encouraging the Wish Lister to complete a purchase is to discount one or two of the items in her cart between visits, and then greet her return with a pop-up window announcing, “It’s your lucky day! Your selected item is on sale.” This kind of unexpected personal discount gives the customer the sense that “the Universe is giving me a sign that I should buy this product.”

2. *The Brand-Oriented Visitor*. This is the visitor who cares about nothing but staying up to date with the latest trends that everyone is talking about. His purchasing decision is based solely on the fact that a product is reputed as a top brand, and his focus of attention goes straight to the emotional characteristics of the product such as colors, accessories, and attractive images. His online interaction centers on playing with the product, switching its colors, and examining different accessories that can be added to it.

What causes this behavior? The Brand-Oriented Visitor is what we call an impulse buyer. The trigger for his purchase is emotional arousal, which is why he tries out different colors and accessories to imagine how it would feel to own the product. Rational parameters like price, practicality, and ease of use are given less weight in his purchasing decision. He replaces the logical sequence of consumer activity with an irrational moment of self-gratification, purchasing items that are neither functional nor necessary.

How can you influence the purchasing decision? Successful product pages are those that know how to communicate with the customer’s emotional system and keep it in a state of arousal. In order to promote the impulse buy, product information should be hidden behind tabs (and thus available only “on demand”, rather than proactively imposed on visitors). Additionally, the website should exploit the emotional system’s propensity to react to subtle cues, utilizing stimuli like colorful and captivating images to trigger emotional arousal. This allows the Brand-Oriented Visitor to simply buy your product because of how it makes him feel.

3. *The Rational Visitor*. On the other side of the coin is the Rational Visitor, whose two-step purchasing decision process involves (a) rejecting the options that do not meet her most important criterion – usually price – and (b) using cost/benefit analysis to select from the remaining alternatives.

What causes this behavior? Rational Visitors feel they must rely on objective observation and factual analysis in their decision-making process. They seek a logical argument as a basis for action. For example, they wouldn't replace their well-functioning car just because "it's about time that we replace our car, we've had it for five years already". They require a solid argument to pursue a course of action. Subjective thoughts and emotions have no place in their decision-making process.

How can you influence the purchasing decision? Your website must support the Rational Visitor's decision making process by providing all the information she needs to make a calculated decision. A telecom site, for example, could provide extremely detailed information about the comparative features of different cell phones (screen size, resolution, weight, etc.) so the customer feels that she is making the most informed decision possible.

4. *The Maximizer*. This customer is obsessed with making the absolute best choice out of all available options. He reads through every single product listing from the top of the page to the bottom, and only then feels comfortable enough to make his selection. Regardless of whether it's a \$50,000 car or a \$5 used CD, the maximizer can't make up his mind until he has viewed every option.

What causes this behavior? The Maximizer is excessively worried about making a bad purchasing decision. Much of the time he becomes so paralyzed with anxiety that he doesn't buy anything – and even when he does, he generally feels somewhat frustrated with his decision. Keep in mind that this decision doesn't even have to be based on utility maximization. It can be based on appearance, safety features, or any other criterion.

How can you influence the purchasing decision? Observations of visitor behavior on multiple e-commerce websites have shown that, when faced with a large number of options, maximizers inevitably become frustrated and leave the website without making a purchase. Thus, businesses must intelligently limit the number of options that are presented to Maximizers, using such methods as filtering, limiting each row to five items, and providing a default or "suggested" purchase.

5. *The Satisfier*. This is the opposite of the maximizer: a customer who chooses the first product that satisfies her minimum or immediate needs. We see these visitors start at the top of the page, begin scrolling down and immediately stop and purchase when they find their match, regardless of how many other options are available.

What causes this behavior? To the Satisfier, time is money. She doesn't want to waste hours looking for the best possible option when she could be doing something else with that time. So she takes action when her criteria are met. This doesn't mean she'll settle for mediocrity. Her criteria may in fact be very high. But as soon as she finds an option that meets them, she is satisfied.

How can you influence the purchasing decision? One efficient method for helping a Satisfier is filtering, which allows her to drill down to the options most relevant to her needs. This is the digital equivalent of an in-store customer service representative telling her, “Let me know what color and size you need, and I will bring it to you.” Retail sites might also arrange their listings by brand, purpose or mood (romantic, sexy or fun).

6. *The Hesitator*. The Hesitator fills out an online registration form or places desired items in a shopping cart, only to have second thoughts upon reaching the call-to-action (CTA) button. He then spends a significant amount of time clicking on different tabs and hovering over the CTA, as if he is waiting for the site to persuade him to click.

What causes this behavior? The personality trait most likely to cause hesitation in online shopping behavior is risk avoidance. The Hesitator tries to avoid regrets over making the wrong decision and is confused by an abundance of choices.

How can you influence the purchasing decision? The Hesitator needs all the reward he can get to carry on with the purchasing process. He must be completely convinced that he is making the right decision. This requires constant feedback and approval in response to every little step he takes. One way to do this is to use positive-oriented wording. For example, the subscription page might welcome him with “You’ve made a great decision choosing *Forbes*” or “You are one step from joining our high-level community”. Positive wording has a carryover effect, so the feeling the Hesitator gets from encouraging feedback puts the entire experience in an optimistic light, making him feel good about the purchasing process. Also, the website design should limit the opportunities for him to rethink his decision. This can be accomplished by reducing the number of checkout pages, or by removing the ability to return to the previous page once the process has begun.

The game has changed. Your next customer will research and evaluate your products through web sites and online networks long before your salespeople get involved. In fact, a call to your salesperson may be the last step in the buyer’s journey, significantly limiting the influence and expertise that has long driven the buying discussion. As the buying process moves online, salespeople are getting less face time with clients, and thus lack insight into which of their prospects are showing the strongest buying signals. To succeed in this new digital climate, smart businesses are adapting and realizing the necessity of reading and responding to the “digital body language” of their prospects. This new body language is revealed through online activities such as browsing behavior, click-through rates, hesitation, scrolling and more. Tracking this behavior enables companies to quickly identify their buyers’ psychological needs and better assist them through the decision making process.

<https://uxmag.com/articles/designing-for-different-online-personality-types>

Questions

1. How does the type of personality influence our behaviour?
2. What psychological types of people are being distinguished in real life? Do you agree that five categories are enough to describe all the types of communicants?
3. Does personality remain stable over time or do some personality traits change?
4. What personality types can we find online? Do they correlate with the psychological types mentioned above?
5. What criteria are used to classify “online personality types”?
6. What specific personality types do you encounter in social media?
7. Can we speak of different types of users pertaining to certain social media platforms (Telegram, Facebook, etc.)? Is a classification for one platform applicable to other platforms as well?
8. Why do people find it strange when someone doesn't have an account in social media? How can such behavior be interpreted? What is the opposite of this?
9. What should online businesses and salespeople know about online personality types? What triggers the behaviour of modern consumers? What are the most common types of online customers?

4. Read the texts and consider the questions below.

A

Online Social Networking and Mental Health

By I. Pantic

During the past decade, online social networking has caused profound changes in the way people communicate and interact. It is unclear, however, whether some of these changes may affect certain normal aspects of human behavior and cause psychiatric disorders. Several studies have indicated that the prolonged use of social networking sites (SNS), such as Facebook, may be related to signs and symptoms of depression. In addition, some authors have indicated that certain SNS activities might be associated with low self-esteem, especially in children and adolescents. Other studies have presented opposite results in terms of positive impact of social networking on self-esteem. The relationship between SNS use and mental problems remains controversial, and research on this issue is faced with numerous challenges. This review focuses on the connection between SNS and mental health issues such as depressive symptoms, changes in self-esteem and Internet addiction.

During the past 10 years, the rapid development of social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, etc. has caused several profound changes in the way people communicate and interact. Facebook, as the biggest social networking site, today has more than one billion active users, and it is estimated that in the future, this number will significantly increase. Facebook is used for both business and personal communication, and its application has brought numerous

advantages in terms of increasing connectivity, sharing ideas, and online learning. Recently, however, some researchers have associated online social networking with several psychiatric disorders, including depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem. Due to the popularity of these online services in the general population, any confirmed connection between them and psychiatric diseases would pose a serious public health concern.

Facebook and symptoms of depression

Although several studies have made the connection between computer-mediated communication and signs and symptoms of depression, this issue remains controversial. There are many potential reasons why a Facebook user may have a tendency to become depressed, as there are numerous factors that may lead an already depressed individual to start to use or increase their use of SNS.

With the development of social networks, the time children and adolescents spend in front of the computer screens has significantly increased. This has led to the reduction of intensity of interpersonal communication both in the family and in the wider social environment. Although social networks enable an individual to interact with a large number of people, these interactions are shallow and cannot adequately replace everyday face-to-face communication.

Since social networks are a relatively recent phenomenon, this potential relationship between their use and feelings of loneliness and depression has not yet been properly investigated. In our recent study in a high school student population, we found a statistically significant positive correlation between depressive symptoms and time spent on SNS. One of the reasons why time spent on SNS may be associated with depressive symptoms is the fact that computer-mediated communication may lead to the altered (and often wrong) impression of the physical and personality traits of other users. This may lead to incorrect conclusions regarding physical appearance, educational level, intelligence, moral integrity as well as many other characteristics of online friends.

As it is thought that Facebook may be one of the factors influencing the development of depressive symptoms, it is also assumed that certain characteristics of online behaviour may be predictive factors in depression identification and assessment. Today, it is clear that SNS such as Facebook can be useful in the early detection of depression symptoms. The more depressive the user is, the more he/she would use Facebook features that focus on depression tips and facts. A depressed Facebook user has other characteristics, such as fewer friends and location tagging.

However, there is still no conclusive evidence that use of Facebook and other SNS causes depression or even a single symptom of depression. Online communication with friends and family (today mostly on SNS) is actually associated with a decline in depression. It seems that when social networks and the Internet in general are used to strengthen and maintain social ties, particularly within family members and close friends, the resulting social support has beneficial effects on mental health. On the other hand, extensive use of SNS outside these circles might weaken existing close family and friend interactions and increase feelings of loneliness and depression.

Social networking and self-esteem

Many authors define the term “self-esteem” as the evaluative component of the self – the degree to which one prizes, values, approves or likes oneself. It is an important factor in maintaining mental health and overall quality of life. Low self-esteem is associated with the pathogenesis of numerous mental illnesses, including depression, eating disorders, and addiction.

One of the possible explanations regarding the negative relationship between Facebook and self-esteem is that all social networks where self-presentation is the principal user activity cause or at least promote narcissistic behavior. Individuals with lower self-esteem are more active online in terms of having more self-promotional content on their SNS profiles. In other words, certain Facebook activities (such as “The Main Photo” feature) were negatively correlated with self-esteem. On the other hand, some results indicate that Facebook use may actually enhance self-esteem.

There are several models/theories on the possible effect of computer-mediated communication on self-esteem. Objective self-awareness theory suggests that any stimulus causing the self to become the object (instead the subject) of the consciousness will lead to a diminished impression of the self. These stimuli include looking at oneself in a mirror, hearing one’s own voice, writing one’s own curriculum vitae, or any other situation during which the subject’s attention focuses on the self. It is probable that a typical Facebook user will every day have multiple visits to his/her own page during which he will view his already posted photographs, biographical data, relationship status, etc. In light of similar data obtained from other users’ profiles, it may lead to either a short-term or a long-term reduction in self-esteem.

The “hyperpersonal model” of behavior during computer-mediated communication is also one of the possible factors that can modulate the self-esteem of a Facebook user. This model stresses the advantages of computer-mediated communication over conventional face-to-face communication in terms of users being able to optimize self-presentation to others more effectively. It is suggested that when using an online platform, the subject has more time to select, emphasize, and present those aspects of his/her personality, character, and temperament that would be viewed more favorably by other Facebook users. This is in contrast to conventional face-to-face interaction where the subject does not have enough time and opportunity to present the positive features of himself selectively. Based on this model, we could assume that this selective self-presentation on a SNS and increased relationship formation would impact positively on self-evaluation and therefore self-esteem. It is probable, however, that the overall impact of SNS on self-esteem is much more complex. Constant self-evaluation on an everyday basis, competition and comparing one’s own achievements with those of other users, incorrectly perceiving physical/emotional/social characteristics of others, jealousy and narcissistic behavior – these factors may positively or negatively influence self-esteem.

Online social network addiction

Addiction to online social networking, as well as Internet addiction in general, are insufficiently investigated phenomena. The addictive nature of SNS is supported primarily by the mental preoccupation of many chronic SNS users who as a result tend to neglect other aspects of their social functioning such as family and offline friends. In addition, sudden cessation of online social networking (i.e., lack of Internet connection) may in some chronic users cause symptoms that at least partially resemble the ones seen during drug/alcohol/nicotine abstinence syndrome.

Probably, the most important question is whether SNS addiction is actually a mental disorder, and whether it should be diagnosed and treated as such. The Tenth Revision of the International Classification of Diseases and Health Problems (ICD-10) defined several specific criteria for dependence syndrome such as a strong desire or sense of compulsion, difficulties in controlling consumption behavior, physiological withdrawal state after reduction or cessation, and so on. A diagnosis should be made if three or more criteria are present (at a certain time point).

It is clear that many of these diagnostic criteria could be applied to a minor percentage of chronic Facebook users who, as a result of this prolonged computer use, have problems in normal everyday functioning. However, one must be very careful with this approach, since in the future it could be quite difficult to distinguish SNS addiction from Internet addiction, which is a much more general disorder (Internet addiction disorder, problematic Internet use, or compulsive Internet use).

We should always have in mind that not all of the social networks are the same. The largest and most popular SNS, Facebook, is based on creating and updating personal profiles, where users can upload photos, videos, comments, statuses, and notes. Another popular SNS, Twitter, is based on a different concept: users post and read short text messages (“tweets”) in which they express their thoughts and opinions. Most of the studies focused on Facebook as the predominant SNS, and even in the studies where authors state the term “social networking”, in most cases, Facebook is the primary target of investigation. In the future, additional research will be needed to identify and describe the potential relationship between the use of SNS and various mental health issues.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4183915/>

B

Internet Addiction Disorder

*Signs, symptoms, diagnosis, and treatments for those
who may be addicted to the Web on their PC or smart phone*

By Ch. Gregory

What is Internet addiction?

Do you play video games on the Internet in excess? Are you compulsively shopping online? Can't physically stop checking Facebook? Is your excessive computer use interfering with your daily life – relationships, work, school?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you may be suffering from Internet Addiction Disorder, also commonly referred to as Compulsive Internet Use (CIU), Problematic Internet Use (PIU), or iDisorder. Though not officially recognized as a disorder in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV), its prevalence in American and European cultures is staggering – affecting up to 8.2 % of the general population. However, some reports suggest it affects up to 38 % of the general population.

It has been generally accepted among researchers, however, that Internet Addiction is only a subset of technology addiction in general. As the name states, its concentration is on compulsion with the Internet – as other areas of media addiction can be seen in television addiction, radio addiction, and other types of media addiction. Due to the explosion of the digital age, Internet Addiction Disorder has taken the reigns as the top culprit is technology addiction as of late. The troubling thing about this disorder is that if you are suffering from it, you are endlessly surrounded by technology. In the digital age, the Internet has taken over. Most of what we do, as a general population, can be done on the Internet. Can't find that shirt you want in the store? No worries – the Internet has it! Need to place an order for pizza? Why call? Complete an online order! Can't call over a friend to play a video game at 3 a.m. when you're suffering from insomnia and can't go back to sleep? I bet there's someone across the globe that is awake and ready to play! That's, in essence, why this disorder can be so troubling – even treatment-wise. It's hard to live these days by getting rid of the Internet. We're always surrounded by it – and for most of us, we use it daily.

Just because you use the Internet a lot – watch a lot of YouTube videos, shop online frequently, or like to check social media does not mean you suffer from Internet Addiction Disorder. The trouble comes when these activities start to interfere with your daily life. In general, Internet Addiction Disorder is subdivided into varying categories. The most commonly identified categories of Internet Addiction include gaming, social networking, email, blogging, online shopping, and inappropriate Internet pornography use.

What causes it?

This disorder is characteristic of having multiple contributing factors. Some evidence suggests that if you are suffering from Internet Addiction Disorder, your brain makeup is similar to those that suffer from a chemical dependency, such as drugs or alcohol. Internet Addiction Disorder seems to affect the pleasure center of the brain. The addictive behavior triggers a release of dopamine to promote the pleasurable experience activating the release of this chemical. Over time, more and more of the activity is needed to induce the same pleasurable response, creating a dependency.

Predispositions of Internet addiction are also related to anxiety and depression. Oftentimes, if you are already suffering from anxiety or depression, you may turn to the Internet to relieve your suffering from these conditions. Similarly, shy individuals and those with social awkwardness might also be at a higher risk of suffering from Internet addiction. If you suffer from anxiety and depression,

you might turn to the Internet to fill a void. If you are shy or socially awkward, you may turn to the Internet because it does not require interpersonal interaction and it is emotionally rewarding.

What are the symptoms?

Some of the emotional symptoms of Internet Addiction Disorder may include: depression, dishonesty, feelings of guilt, anxiety, feelings of euphoria when using the computer, inability to prioritize or keep schedules, isolation, no sense of time, defensiveness, avoidance of work, agitation, mood swings, fear, loneliness, boredom with routine tasks, procrastination.

What are the effects of Internet Addiction Disorder?

If you are suffering from this disorder, it might be affecting your personal relationships, work life, finances, or school life. Individuals suffering from this condition may be isolating themselves from others, spending a long time in social isolation and negatively impacting their personal relationships. Distrust and dishonesty issues may also arise due to Internet addicts trying to hide or deny the amount of time they spend online. In addition, these individuals may create alternate personas online in an attempt to mask their online behaviors. Serious financial troubles may also result from avoidance of work, bankruptcy due to continued online shopping, online gaming, or online gambling. Internet addicts may also have trouble developing new relationships and socially withdraw – as they feel more at ease in an online environment than a physical one.

Continued or questionable existence?

Though originally diagnosed as a “hoax” disorder – the increased digital age has propelled us into the Internet age and Internet addiction has become a truly real “thing.” However, many researchers are uncertain of whether Internet Addiction Disorder is a disorder in its own existence or rather a symptom of other underlying conditions.

Creating an even more problematic interaction is the fact that everything is online nowadays. It’s hard to make a distinction between online and offline worlds. Everything is Internet-based. From ordering food, interacting with friends, playing games, and even watching TV. Adding an additional layer of confusion and distinction is that other digital technology is taking over the world as well – make access to computers even easier. Now, we don’t have to be physically sitting in front of the computer – we can do anything from anywhere with just our phones, tablets, or other electronic devices.

<https://www.psycom.net/iadcriteria.html>

C

Internet Addiction: A Brief Summary of Research and Practice

Problematic computer use is a growing social issue which is being debated worldwide. Internet Addiction Disorder (IAD) ruins lives by causing neurological complications, psychological disturbances, and social problems. Surveys in the United States and Europe have indicated alarming prevalence rates between 1.5 and 8.2 %.

The idea that problematic computer use meets criteria for an addiction, and therefore should be included in the next iteration of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)*, 4th ed. was first proposed by Kimberly Young, PhD in her seminal 1996 paper. Since that time IAD has been extensively studied and is indeed, currently under consideration for inclusion in the *DSM-V*. Meanwhile, both China and South Korea have identified Internet addiction as a significant public health threat and both countries support education, research and treatment. In the United States, despite a growing body of research, and treatment for the disorder available in out-patient and in-patient settings, there has been no formal governmental response to the issue of Internet addiction. While the debate goes on about whether or not the *DSM-V* should designate Internet addiction a mental disorder people currently suffering from Internet addiction are seeking treatment.

There is ongoing debate about how best to classify the behavior which is characterized by many hours spent in non-work technology-related computer/Internet/video game activities. It is accompanied by changes in mood, preoccupation with the Internet and digital media, the inability to control the amount of time spent interfacing with digital technology, the need for more time or a new game to achieve a desired mood, withdrawal symptoms when not engaged, and a continuation of the behavior despite family conflict, a diminishing social life and adverse work or academic consequences. Some researchers and mental health practitioners see excessive Internet use as a symptom of another disorder such as anxiety or depression rather than a separate entity.

What is so rewarding about Internet and video game use that it could become an addiction? The theory is that digital technology users experience multiple layers of reward when they use various computer applications. The Internet functions on a variable ratio reinforcement schedule (VRRS), as does gambling. Whatever the application (general surfing, pornography, chat rooms, message boards, social networking sites, video games, email, texting, cloud applications and games, etc.), these activities support unpredictable and variable reward structures. The reward experienced is intensified when combined with mood enhancing/stimulating content. Examples of this would be pornography (sexual stimulation), video games (e.g., various social rewards, identification with a hero, immersive graphics), dating sites (romantic fantasy), online poker (financial) and special interest chat rooms or message boards (sense of belonging).

As can be seen from this brief review, the field of Internet addiction is advancing rapidly even without its official recognition as a separate and distinct behavioral addiction. Also it remains unclear to this day whether the underlying mechanisms responsible for the addictive behavior are the same in different types of IAD (e.g., online sexual addiction, online gaming, and excessive surfing). From our practical perspective the different shapes of IAD fit in one category, due to various Internet specific commonalities (e.g., anonymity, riskless interaction), commonalities in the underlying behavior (e.g., avoidance, fear, pleasure, entertainment) and overlapping symptoms (e.g., the increased amount of time spent online, preoccupation and other signs of addiction).

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3480687/>

D

In some respects, addictive use of the Internet resembles other so-called “process” addictions, in which a person is addicted to an activity or behavior (including gambling, shopping, or certain sexual behaviors) rather than a substance (mood-altering drugs, tobacco, food, etc.). People who develop problems with their Internet use may start off using the Internet on a casual basis and then progress to using the technology in dysfunctional ways. Many people believe that spending large amounts of time on the Internet is a core feature of the disorder. The amount of time by itself, however, is not as important a factor as the ways in which the person’s Internet use is interfering with their daily functioning. Use of the Internet may interfere with the person’s social life, school work, or job-related tasks at work. In addition, cases have been reported of persons entering Internet chat rooms for people with serious illnesses or disorders, and pretending to be a patient with that disorder in order to get attention or sympathy.

Causes and symptoms

No one knows what causes a person to be addicted to the Internet, but there are several factors that have been proposed as contributing to Internet addiction. One theory concerns the mood-altering potential of behaviors related to process addictions. Just as a person addicted to shopping may feel a “rush” or pleasurable change in mood from the series of actions related to a spending spree – checking one’s credit cards, driving to the mall, going into one’s favorite store, etc. – the person with an Internet addiction may feel a similar “rush” from booting up their computer and going to their favorite web sites.

A person might “surf the Web” to escape family conflict. Another possibility is that social or peer dynamics might prompt excessive Internet use. Some affected persons may lack the social skills that would enable them to meet people in person rather than online. Peer behavior might also encourage Internet use if one’s friends are using it. Modeling may play a role – users can witness and experience how others engage in Internet use and then replicate that behavior. The interactive aspects of the Internet, such as chat rooms, e-mail, and interactive games seem to be more likely to lead to Internet addiction than purely solitary web surfing.

One symptom of Internet addiction is excessive time devoted to Internet use. A person might have difficulty cutting down on his or her online time even when they are threatened with poor grades or loss of a job. There have been cases reported of college students failing courses because they would not take time off from Internet use to attend classes. Other symptoms of addiction may include lack of sleep, fatigue, declining grades or poor job performance, apathy, and racing thoughts. There may also be a decreased investment in social relationships and activities. A person may lie about how much time was spent online or deny that they have a problem. They may be irritable when offline, or angry toward anyone who questions their time on the Internet.

Treatments

Since Internet addiction disorder is a relatively new phenomenon, there is little research on the effectiveness of treatment procedures. Some professionals advocate abstinence from the Internet. Others argue that it may be unrealistic to have a person completely end all Internet use. As society becomes more and more dependent on computers for business transactions, educational programs, entertainment, and access to information as well as interpersonal communication, it will be difficult for a computer-literate person to avoid using the Internet. Learning how to use the Internet in moderation is often the main objective in therapy, in a way analogous to the way that people with eating disorders need to come to terms with food. Many of the procedures that have been used to treat Internet addiction have been modeled after other addiction treatment programs and support groups.

Although extensive studies have not yet been done, treatment appears to be effective in maintaining and changing the behavior of people drawn to excessive use of the Internet. If the disorder is left untreated, the person may experience an increased amount of conflict in his or her relationships. Excessive Internet use may jeopardize a person's employment or academic standing. In addition, such physical problems may develop as fatigue, carpal tunnel syndrome, back pain, and eyestrain.

If a person knows that he or she has difficulty with other forms of addictive behavior, they should be cautious in exploring the types of application that are used on the Internet. In addition, it is important for people to engage in social activities outside the Internet. Finally, mental health workers should investigate ways in which to participate in the implementation of new technology rather than waiting for its aftereffects.

<http://www.minddisorders.com/Flu-Inv/Internet-addiction-disorder.html>

Questions

1. What are the reasons for Internet Addition Disorder?
2. How is Internet Addition Disorder manifested and what consequences can it lead to? What are its emotional symptoms? What physical problems can it develop?
3. Does Internet addiction resemble a "process addiction" or a "substance addiction"? To what extent are its symptoms similar to the ones caused by drug/alcohol/nicotine addiction?
4. What are the most commonly identified categories of Internet Addiction?
5. What are the "rewards" people get from excessive Internet use?
6. Is Internet addiction a separate entity or a symptom of another disorder (e.g., anxiety, depression, etc.)?
7. Do you agree that Internet addiction is a significant public health threat?
8. What are the treatments and ways of preventing the disorder? Is it possible to have a person completely end all Internet use?
9. How can one distinguish social networks addiction from Internet addiction? Is the distinction always obvious?
10. How is online social networking addiction manifested and what can it be triggered by?

11. What are the relations between the usage of social networking sites and mental health issues, such as depressive symptoms, changes in self-esteem, anxiety? How do social media affect a person's mental health?

12. Can computer-mediated communication help us optimize self-presentation? In what way?

13. Explain how computer-mediated communication may lead to the altered (or even wrong) impression of the physical and personality traits of other users.

5. There are self-assessment tests you can do to find out how addictive to Internet you are. Answer the following questions.

1. Are you preoccupied with using the Internet? Do you think about your previous or future online activity?

2. Do you have the need to be online longer to be satisfied?

3. Have you made repeated but unsuccessful attempts to cut back, stop or control your Internet use?

4. Do you become moody, restless, irritable or depressed when you stop or decrease your Internet use?

5. Is your time spent online longer than what you originally planned?

6. Did your online use negatively affect a significant relationship, education, career or job?

7. Do you conceal the extent of your Internet usage from your therapist, family or others?

8. Does the Internet serve as an escape from problems or relief from a bad mood?

<https://www.psychguides.com/guides/computerinternet-addiction-symptoms-causes-and-effects/>

Interpretation of results: If you have given positive answers to five out of the eight questions, you are likely to be suffering from online addiction.

6. Read the story. Do you agree that online communication is a good way to hide your physical “imperfections” from your interlocutors?

Today, I met the “cute guy” I’ve been chatting with online for a few months. He never smiled in pics, but I didn’t think anything of it until I got to his place and he started talking. He didn’t have a single tooth in his mouth.

7. Read the texts and consider the questions below.

A

How the Internet Still Fails Disabled People

By E. Rust

The web can be liberating for disabled adults – but a lack of training, accessibility and funding means the online world is a step too far for many.

Elaine suffers from depression and anxiety. A psychiatric nurse suggested that she learn how to use a computer to keep in contact with her family so that she didn't feel so isolated. So Elaine decided to attend one-to-one tutorials at Cambridge Online. "I'm in my 50s. We didn't have computers when I was at school, so it was quite a job to teach me. I didn't even know how to use a keyboard and was afraid if I hit a wrong button, I would break it."

Since then she has learned how to type, use a search engine, send e-mails, save photos and make birthday cards by following the Tinder Foundation's Learn My Way courses. "My family lives in Scotland, but because of the computer I was able to see my nephew's fourth birthday pictures the next day. It's opened up a whole new life for me. If I go online I can lose myself for quite a while and it stops my mind wandering and thinking about myself."

For 20 years, Cambridge Online has offered free courses to disabled and disadvantaged adults. Every year 300 new learners are referred to their centre where they deliver 4,000 one-to-one tutorials annually. "Most of the people who come here have never touched a computer before. Confidence that the whole thing's not going to blow up when they touch it is what people struggle with in the beginning," says Andrew Entecott.

There are 10 computers at the centre with adaptive hardware, touch screens, alternative keyboards and mice, and magnification and screen-reading software. "We try to sell the benefits of going online by explaining that learning how to use a mouse and keyboard can reduce the amount of time you spend on the phone speaking to the council."

However using a computer is still something many disabled people struggle with. According to the Office for National Statistics, in May 2015, 27 % of disabled adults had never used the Internet, compared to 11 % of non-disabled adults. In 2013, Ofcom said that factors beyond age and income, possibly related to the individual's disability, contribute to limited Internet access.

The Extra Costs Commission, launched by the disability charity Scope, did a year-long enquiry exploring the extra costs faced by disabled people, estimated to be on average £550 more a month. In the report released in June 2015 they cite that disabled people could save money by learning how to use the Internet, for example by using cost comparison websites, yet disabled people were not online because of a lack of training, cost of equipment and the accessibility of web content.

Web accessibility is something that Ian Macrae struggles with every day. As someone with a visual impairment he uses VoiceOver software. He doesn't often recommend people simulate a visual impairment, but recommends that if you have a Mac, to turn on VoiceOver using the Command + F5 keys. "Don't cheat and look, but try navigating a website. I use Amazon every day to find Kindle Daily Deals. To do that I have to go through every heading before I reach what I want, then I have to go through each element within that heading to get to the list of books. The whole process of navigating a website is a long and complicated process," he says.

However Macrae still recommends that people with a visual impairment learn how to use the Internet, saying that it can be a “liberating experience”, giving the example of doing a weekly shop online instead of the hassle of walking around a shop. He would also advise web designers to create websites that are accessible for everyone, for instance by labeling all buttons and refraining from using too much multimedia, such as Flash. “I’m not saying people shouldn’t use Flash, but they shouldn’t make their website reliant on it because if it is, the website is completely inaccessible to a [visually impaired] person.”

Some disabled adults will never see the benefits of being online. Jack lives in sheltered accommodation at Steve Woolley Court in Peterborough. He suffers from Parkinson’s disease and has no interest in the Internet. “I thought it would be easy when I first heard about it, but I just get confused. I’m just so fed up with it all. Get yourself a television if you’re lonely,” he says. “If I was told the information I needed about my pension was online, I don’t know what I’d do. I’d have to get my scheme manager to do it for me.”

His scheme manager, Sean Siggee, disagrees with Jack when he says he’s not interested. “Jack is interested in the Internet. He’s trying to get into it, but he just needs guidance.” Of the 34 residents living at the sheltered accommodation, 20 use a computer. “Jack doesn’t like to ask for help. He feels like he’s a burden and doesn’t want to bother me. It’s the same with everyone. They’re afraid to keep asking, but they need to because everything is going online.”

The Extra Costs Commission suggest that web accessibility for disabled people isn’t an area the Government’s Digital Inclusion Strategy has addressed directly, nor does it offer clear accountability for improving digital accessibility. They’re calling for a review of the impact of the Equality Act in improving web accessibility and taking action when service providers fail to meet their obligations.

A Cabinet Office spokesperson said: “We’ve put accessibility at the heart of our award-winning gov.uk website, which is compatible with a variety of accessibility tools. But we recognise that not everyone is online. That’s why we’ll always provide assisted digital support for people accessing government services. We’re also working with the private and voluntary sectors to ensure that everyone in the UK has the basic digital skills needed to benefit from being online.”

One of these partners is Go On UK. The charity was set-up in 2012 by Baroness Martha Lane Fox. Their goal is to help people realise the benefits of being online. Its Chief Executive Rachel Neaman said: “It is the combined responsibility of government, the public, private and not-for-profit sectors to help close the digital divide. 10.5 million adults, 1.2m small businesses, and over half of all charities in the UK lack the basic digital skills they need to succeed in today’s digital society.”

Neaman says this represents “tens of billions of pounds in losses to the economy; billions more in efficiency savings for government and businesses; and the loss of countless benefits for individuals.”

<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2015/jun/29/disabled-people-internet-extra-costs-commission-scope>

B

Online Dating Is Hard Enough. Try Doing it With a Disability

By T. Sykes

Online dating profiles don't make it easy for users to communicate their disability in a sensitive and meaningful way.

After nearly four years of being single, I decided that I wanted to meet someone romantically. Instead of waiting for love to find me, as people often suggest, I decided to do what so many do these days: try online dating. I chose Match.com. I started looking at some of the available profiles and I eventually found someone that sparked my interest, so I sent a message introducing myself and asking more about them.

Receiving a reply from someone who is romantically interested in you can be a strong and positive feeling, especially since most of us, especially men, are familiar with embarrassing ourselves when asking someone out on a date. Starting any relationship is complicated, but it's all the more so for those of us with disabilities.

I have Dypraxia, an autistic spectrum disorder similar to all-body Dyslexia. It's not something that would be visible in photos or any other part of a typical online dating profile unless I disclosed it. When I finally met someone I liked, I was torn about when to admit my disability. I wanted them to accept me for who I was, but worried that she might dismiss me out of hand once she knew. In the end, I told the woman the truth because my disability, or rather, fighting to end the oppression of disabled people in society, is a big part of my life. I didn't receive another message back.

Forming a romantic relationship can be difficult for anyone. For people with disabilities, it can be one of the hardest things you ever do. Most online dating websites do not ask users whether they have a disability. When it comes to meeting potential partners for the first time, it can come as a surprise if the disability has never come up in online conversation. For many disabled people, it can be embarrassing to talk about their disability so it helps if dating websites offer them the chance to say that they have a disability or ask other people whether they are willing to meet disabled people. I've certainly found that being upfront is less embarrassing than revealing this in the later stages of dating.

A few websites, such as UK Disability Match, do offer disabled people the chance to meet others like themselves. But such sites can be abused by non-disabled people with a fetish for particular kinds of disability (yes, this exists), such as amputations. It is hard to make such websites safe and comfortable for genuine users while keeping them open to non-disabled people who are looking to contact disabled people for different reasons.

For me, knowing that I have the understanding of any partner is liberating and lets me be myself. With the options available on existing dating websites, I feel exposed, vulnerable and inhibited. They aren't conducive to conveying the sensitive, caring and confident image I would like to project and limit

the usability of these websites. With nearly 20 % of Americans affected by a disability, such dating websites are increasingly feeling alienating and obsolete for a significant number of users.

A disability is not part of your personality. Instead, like race or sexuality, it forms part of the context in which your personality develops. Often, disabled people are stereotyped, as if we were all the same. This replicates the experience disabled people often have in the education system, where schools tend to group together children with disabilities, regardless of severity or type. This may be practical for a school, but it's often unhelpful or limiting for disabled pupils themselves. It can not only create unpleasant or very limiting experiences for disabled students, but also encourages a generalized fear of disability amongst non-disabled people, which persists even later in life.

After that first rejection, I updated my profile to include my disability. I am still receiving just as many winks and likes as I did before, but I am a lot more secure in the knowledge that people are taking an interest in me in spite of my disability. In fact, I would encourage others to be more open on their profiles. It hasn't limited my prospects in the way I initially feared it would.

I know I am not alone. Others have surely found strategies that work better than mine. Dating websites now have a lot of data on their users and how they interact, and I hope they use their expertise to better advise users, including those with disabilities, on strategies that can be helpful in building profiles and initiating conversation.

Dating sites should also consider introducing a question about mental health difficulties and whether you have had difficulties in the past. It could even be an anonymous one that doesn't show up on the profile, but helps in the algorithm many sites use that pairs people together. On disabled-specific dating websites, a profile question on why users want to meet other disabled people might be helpful to sort out why people are using the website and the type of person they hope to meet.

One of the most common bits of advice people give about dating is to "be yourself". It's what disabled people want as well, but the nature of online dating makes it more about first impressions, and some people don't give those with disabilities a chance. Some subtle changes on dating websites could create better opportunities for users to indicate if they would at least be willing to date people like me. It would help disabled people relax in the knowledge that their potential date won't judge them solely on their disability.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/jan/18/online-dating-with-disability-match>

C

Internet Access for Disabled People: Understanding Socio-Relational Factors in Europe

Abstract

Access to the Internet offers new routes to economic and social inclusion for disabled people. Research on the digital divide shows that social factors affect Internet access, but disability status is often overlooked. This paper assesses

the extent to which disability makes a difference and how it interacts with other social effects to produce distinctive forms of digital exclusion. The analysis uses survey data from 27 European countries to explore and model, statistically, the interactions between Internet access, disability status, age, gender, education, household financial situation and household composition. Analysis confirms that there is a distinctive disability effect. In particular, the adverse effects of financial constraint, aging and living alone are exacerbated among disabled people. Both accessible technologies and appropriate supportive relationships are needed to address this.

Introduction

Information and communication technologies (ICTs), particularly the Internet, have transformed the way we live and communicate, in both private and public spheres of everyday life. They have evolved new ways of interacting in diverse contexts, from workplaces to higher education, offering new options for locational flexibility. Internet usage also impacts on psychological well-being, the formation and maintenance of personal relationships, group memberships and social identity. These developments and impacts create both opportunities for, and barriers to, the full participation and equality of disabled people in society. From a social model perspective, disability arises from unequal social relations between disabled and non-disabled people in disabling environments. As the Internet becomes increasingly ubiquitous in the landscapes of everyday life so enabling online environments, and equal access to them, must be viewed as intrinsic to achieving disability equality.

The concept of the “digital divide” is well established, referring initially to gaps in access to ICTs and particularly to Internet access. With exponential growth in basic access, including mobile phone access, focus turned towards differential patterns of usage and skills, yet the underlying access divide deepens and intensifies for some social groups, including some groups of disabled people .

Despite advances in Internet technologies, stronger non-discrimination legislation and a widening knowledge of web accessibility standards, much of the Internet remains inaccessible for many disabled people.

E-exclusion and disability in the EU

The proportion of EU households with Internet access from home was estimated at around 85% in 2016, with broadband connection the most common form of access. More than two thirds of Europeans use the Internet every day but still 14% have never used the Internet and patterns of access vary considerably between different EU countries and age groups.

Eurostat estimated that more than 73 million people in 27 EU Member States faced disabling barriers in one or more areas of life. More than half of them are over the age of 65 and this number is set to rise. Among them an estimated 3.4 million reported barriers to using the Internet.

Digital literacy and Internet access are widely recognised by the EU institutions as important for the enjoyment of citizenship rights, access to education, employment and political participation and the Digital Agenda for Europe is one of the flagships of EU strategy. Improving access and accessibility for disabled has emerged as a specific concern.

While limited accessibility has been identified as one factor that hinders disabled people's to access the Internet it is not the only one, and attention is inevitably drawn towards the disproportionate intersections of disability status with other socio-demographic factors that are well known to impact on Internet access. Most notable among these in the European context are age and level of formal education, with those aged over 55 or with lower level qualifications the least likely to be regular internet users. Disability prevalence is also much higher among older people and among persons with low qualifications compared to the average. These factors have implications for gender equality and for financial situation too – older disabled people are more likely to be women, and a strong association between disability and poverty persists throughout the life course. In addition, it is relevant to consider that the availability of support from others in the household, or living alone, could have a sizeable effect on a person's Internet access (and disabled people may be disproportionately likely to live alone).

The highest levels of access, and the narrowest disability gaps, were in Sweden, Denmark and the Netherland, with the lowest levels of access, and relatively wide gaps, in Greece, Portugal and Romania.

In general, across the sample aged 15 and above, there were more women than men (54 % female; 46 % male) and approximately 60 % were aged under 55. More than a third either had a tertiary education (29.9 %) or were still studying (7.5 %) and nearly two-thirds (62 %) reported their household financial situation as good. A significant proportion (28 %) reported that they lived alone. This social patterning reflects the relatively affluent but also ageing population of the EU.

The chance of having Internet access at home was 62 % lower for people who reported activity limitation (disability status) than for those who did not.

Conclusion

On average, seven out of ten European citizens had Internet access at home in 2012, but only five out of ten among those who declared an activity limitation connected to impairment or disability. Analysis confirmed that disabled people in the EU had a 62 % lower chance of having Internet access at home than non-disabled people. Alongside disability status, aging, low educational attainment, household finances and household composition also make a difference. The chances of having Internet access at home are reduced for people with only a basic education, those aged 45 and older, who live alone and/or have household financial constraints. In practice, socio-demographic factors explain most of the variance in Internet access at home, but disability makes a difference too. Disabled In particular, the adverse effects of financial constraint, aging or living alone were significantly exacerbated for disabled people when compared to non-disabled people – the disability divide was wider in these respects.

The opportunities presented by the regulation of accessibility standards in the market for ICT goods and services will make a real difference for many disabled people, and the prospect of a European Accessibility Act may hasten this process. However, it will make more of a difference if the minority who still remain excluded from the online revolution can be supported to access the Internet regularly from home.

Questions

1. In what way can learning how to use the Internet become beneficial for disabled people?
2. What special applications for people with physical impairments are there?
3. Why is the online world still a step too far for many disabled adults?
4. What are the problems associated with the process of navigating a website?
5. Are modern online dating websites shaped for the needs of people with disabilities?
6. How can web accessibility be improved for physically impaired?

- **Solution generation**

1. How many “basic” emotions are there? How do we express emotions on the Internet and in real life? Read the extract and consider the questions posed in it.

We feel hundreds of different emotions every day. Each emotion specific to the physical and social situations we find ourselves in. We are capable of four “basic” emotions: happy, sad, afraid/surprised and angry/disgusted.

The four of them meld together allow you to feel any emotion in many ways. If you think about expressing emotions on the Internet a lot of questions arise. Can we express ourselves the way we would face-to-face? Is it even possible to express how we really feel? How much do we express ourselves on the Internet?

<https://medium.com/digital-reflections/how-do-we-express-our-emotions-online-3a63a7cc2898>

2. Consider the following examples from online chats and forums and try to “read” the sender’s emotion. Explain what makes it easier to interpret the message and identify the person’s emotional state – verbal or non-verbal means? In what cases was it practically impossible to do and why?

1. lol thats a huge list!!!
2. WOW, that photo is truly amazing
3. I’m so sorry ... the right thing isn’t always easy to do.
4. Yooooooo
5. If you would be interested in being amongst the first subscribers, please PM me or reply here. 😊
6. Yup, this is well done musically.
7. Ummmm, noooooooo ... lol!
8. Hahaha^^^
9. %-(
10. What time do you want to meet up?????
11. YMMD
12. Don’t bother!

13. Now I have to say, I didn't realise it was musical (duh) just figured it was biopic and not being a fan of Elton John anyway it actually turned into a bit of nightmare.

14. (((((

15. 😄

16. 🙌

17. 😓

18. 😐

3. Who is more open in expressing emotions on the Internet – men or women? Consider the following examples and guess, who wrote the commentary. Can it always be distinguished? How does it depend on other factors, such as the topic etc.? Do all the examples show “typical” male or female behavior?

1. I cannot stand Sam Smith. If I have to hear “but he’s got a GREAT voice” one more time I will pull my hair out. His songs are boring and whiny.

2. It’s not age, it’s experience....

3. Not judging, man, but I wouldn’t risk it.

4. Her new single comes out tomorrow! I can’t wait. :D

5. WELL SAID. I have had similar experience also.

6. You’re crazy. Do you realise how expensive bitcoin is?

7. And yet my Vet FOUGHT me to “take her to the back” I said no, hell no, and no, no, no.

8. It was RANCID :lol: :lol: even the colour looked toxic.

9. I am considering a road trip from Rehoboth, DE to the Boca area in FL in Jan-Feb upcoming. Sophia is an indoor, well traveled, 7 year old Ragdoll cat. It will be just the two of us traveling, stopping along the way to sightsee. I am interested in hotels/motels that are pet friendly and CLEAN. Many horror stories out there about bedbugs, etc.

10. “I LOVE THIS APP. ITS AWESOME”

11. I am confused. I told my best friend about it, and she said it sounds exactly what she and her husband felt like when they first met (they have been together for seven years, the first four years long distance after months of stressfully deciding whether or not to date). She told me, “Love is a commitment, not a feeling.” and encouraged me to go for it.

12. I make sure that I'm there for her when life gets tough. I'm not sure that she does the same for me. I kept her updated by text on how I was managing my pain, and she didn't answer until much later. I figured she got busy at work and brushed it off. Then, she calls me to ask if I am going to this get together that we had an invite to. I told her that I couldn't even get out of bed and definitely was not in any shape to leave home. She said that she was going because she made a commitment to go to this event and she'd see me tomorrow. I'm devastated. It's painful to know what her priorities are.

4. Provide at least five examples of online emotion manifestation from websites of your choice. Analyze the examples and explain whether they fall into the "typical" patterns of emotion manifestation.

5. Write a message for a chat or forum which is as unemotional as possible. Now add a bit of emotion and change the message so as to: a) express emotions only verbally; b) express emotions only non-verbally; c) use a multitude of ways to express emotions; d) overreact, overdo with emotions (be a "drama queen" for a while). Compare different variants of the message and try to figure out, how your interlocutors would react in each case.

- **Solution implementation**

1. Write a short essay on the topic "What people feel and say in one place may spread to many parts of the globe on the very same day".

2. As an avid social networks user, explain why status updates of one user influence the status messages of their online friends.

3. As a communication theory specialist, prove that "reading" emotions online is as easy as in face-to-face communication.

4. As a psychologist, prove that social networks promote narcissistic behavior.

5. As a marketing specialist, prove that businesses should be able to "read" the "digital body language" of their customers in order to succeed in this new digital climate.

6. As a social worker, explain why some disabled adults will never see the benefits of being online.

7. As an IT visionary, prove that the rapid growth of the Internet holds promise for the disabled.

Unit V. Etiquette and Netiquette. Computer Literacy

- **Problem identification**

1. Are etiquette and netiquette similar or different?
2. Why do Internet users love other users with manners, just like in face-to-face communication?
3. Why is Netiquette essential in both – a civilized work environment and personal relationship?
4. What are the basic rules for popular media such as Instagram, Facebook, etc. Are they same or different?
5. How are the rules for using social media connected with copyright, intellectual property or confidentiality issues?
6. What account for the fact that digital literacy has become an essential skill in a scientist's tool kit?
7. Is browsing the Internet a good way of boosting one's speaking or writing skills?
8. Why do some people believe everything they see on the Internet?

- **Problem analysis**

1. According to the rules of etiquette, you shouldn't use your phone or surf the Internet when you are on a date/at a restaurant/at the theatre etc. Comment on the given episode. Can you think of reasons for justifying the communicants' behavior?

Today, I was on the worst blind date ever, so I tried to secretly request an Uber to get out of there. My date then picked up his phone, receiving my request. Turns out he's an Uber driver and he was looking for a reason to get out of the date too.

2. Read the texts and consider the questions below.

A

Internet Etiquette – 10 Rules of Netiquette

By K. Tranter

Okay, the Internet police won't come and get you, but there definitely are some great rules for Internet etiquette that will make your online experience more enjoyable.

1. When typing *never* write in all capital letters. That is shouting. People don't like it when you shout at them in person. And they sure don't like when you shout at them on the net!

2. Don't plagiarize. Someone spent a long time coming up with their content. When you borrow something from someone, give them the credit. Mention their name or the site where you have gotten your information.

3. Use proper quotes and always use the whole quote. Don't take quotes out of context and don't be selective about which part of the quote you want to use.

4. Don't gossip and keep personal information personal. Don't tell stories that you don't know for a fact to be true. And often, just because it's true, doesn't mean that it needs to be repeated.

5. Don't steal those photographs off the web even if they are a perfect fit for what you need. Chances are they are copyrighted. Get permission and give credit where credit is due.

6. Watch your language. No potty mouths.

7. Be patient with Internet newbies. Know that they are just learning like you did once upon a time.

8. No spamming. Remember that spam is unwanted electronic messages or sending the same electronic message over and over. This can get you in a lot of trouble on some sites and as a general rule it just irritates everyone else.

9. If you are using a header (such as in an e-mail) make sure your content really pertains to the header. You must admit it would really stink if the header said something about football, for example, and the e-mail was really about your newest and greatest business idea. Just stay on topic and the problem is solved.

10. Avoid overuse of emoticons. You know... those cute little smiley faces. They really lose their cuteness when overused and tend to irritate people.

Following these simple guidelines will keep your Internet connections happy and allow for more "social" interactions. Just like in face-to-face communication, Internet users love other users with manners. Manners go a long way in saying who you are and what you are.

<https://www.uticaod.com/x1177024386/Internet-Etiquette-10-Rules-of-Netiquette>

B

Proper Internet Etiquette. Email, Social Media, and Texting Guidelines

By D. Mayne

As use of the Internet expands into every aspect of people's lives, from emailing pals and doing social networking to scheduling job interviews and doctor appointments, many of us have become complacent, formed bad habits, and tossed proper etiquette aside. This is unfortunate and may create problems if we don't learn a few basic rules. Internet etiquette, also known as "Netiquette", is essential in a civilized work environment or personal relationship.

Be nice. The first rule of Internet etiquette is to be kind and courteous. Never flame or rant in a public forum. Show respect for the opinions of others, even if you don't agree, and refrain from name-calling. Avoid gossiping or saying anything negative about others.

Never say anything negative about your company, your former company, your boss, or your coworkers. You never know what may wind up being forwarded, whether it's intentional or an accidental slip of the finger on the "send" button. If you are unsure of anything you've typed, hold it in draft mode and read it later before releasing the e-mail or post. Doing otherwise could jeopardize your opportunity for a promotion, or worse, your current job.

Being nice includes avoiding cyber bullying. Think about how you would feel if someone said whatever you just typed about you. If you find it the least bit disturbing, delete it. Cyber bullying may lead to disaster if a despondent person perceives he or she is being threatened.

Learn Internet acronyms. As communication on the Internet explodes, so does the use of acronyms. Learn what they mean so you won't misunderstand messages and comments.

Some of the most common acronyms include:

BTW – By the way

TTYL – Talk to you later

LOL – Laughing out loud

ROTFL – Rolling on the floor laughing

FWIW – For what it's worth

POV – Point of view

B/C – Because

AYOR – At your own risk

B4N – Bye for now

DH – Dear husband

DF – Dear friend

EML – Email me later

JK – Just kidding

SFW – Safe for work

OIC – Oh I see

TYVM – Thank you very much

AFAIK – As far as I know

IIRC – If I recall correctly

EOM – End of message

C&P – Copy and paste

HTH – Hope this helps

NNTR – No need to reply

YAM – Yet another meeting

ICYMI – In case you missed it

Keep messages and posts brief. Most people use the Internet to save time, so honor that and keep all messages as brief as possible. If you have more to say, try breaking it up into smaller topics. This will force you to be more organized and enable the reader to digest the information in a more orderly manner.

Don't shout. Avoid using all caps in any email or post. Some people think that keeping the caps lock button on for the entire message will make it easier to read, while it actually does the opposite. It is not only difficult to read, it comes across as shouting, which is rude.

Use discretion. Whether you are sending e-mail, instant messaging, commenting on Facebook, adding images to Snapchat, or posting a message to your blog, you need to remember that anything you put on the Internet can be there forever. Even if you remove the material, someone may have copied or saved it. One rule of thumb many people use is to never post anything you wouldn't want your parents or boss to see.

Protect personal information. Since anything you post on the Internet is out there for all to see, avoid adding anything personal. This includes your address, phone number, social security number, and driver's license information. You don't want to make things easy for identity thieves, burglars, and predators.

Obey copyright laws. Never copy someone else's work and post it as your own. It is against copyright law because it is considered stealing. It is always a good idea to ask permission before quoting anyone, but that isn't always possible. If you want to quote someone, keep the quote short, cite the source, and put a link to the complete written work.

Protect children. If you allow your children to access the Internet, make sure you know what sites they visit and who their "friends" are. Monitor all their Internet activity very closely. Not only should you protect your children from predators, you need to make sure they don't post something that can come back to haunt them when they are seeking admission to college or looking for a job in the future.

Before you click "send". It is always a good idea to reread anything you type before clicking the "send" button. If you have time, step away for a few minutes and come back to it with fresh eyes. If not, at least check your spelling, grammar, and tone of the message. If it is late at night, and you are extremely tired, it's probably best to wait until the next morning. You can save most messages and posts in draft mode.

Help others. If someone appears to be new to the Internet, offer your assistance. Share information on proper etiquette, send them a link to a list of acronyms and emoticons, and offer to answer any questions until they get the hang of it. If you see that someone has posted something inappropriate, let him or her know privately. Never do anything to publicly embarrass anyone you know online.

<https://www.thespruce.com/proper-internet-etiquette-1216946>

C

Have you been receiving nasty comments on the net and are disturbed about them? Well, that would obviously be a person who does not know the basic netiquettes. Wondering what netiquette is? It is the basic etiquette to be followed on the Internet. It is the unofficial online code which is expected to be followed by every cyber-citizen. In every place, there is etiquette to be followed.

Be it a restaurant, an office or a restroom, every place has its own set of rules. Similarly, Internet also has etiquette which must be followed by a person while using the network. In today's generation, almost every person uses the Internet for a range of its services like typed chatting or e-mails or even audio-video chats. The use of this enormous medium of communication has become so ubiquitous that every person needs to know the netiquette. It is a casual form of courtesy in communication which is recommended to be used by a person on network. There are not too many things you need to know. You just have to know the right way of stating your message and know how to have an effective communication on Internet.

It is best to avoid writing words or phrases with the caps-lock on. Upper case is used only when you want to give an impression that you are shouting; so obviously, it has the potential of making the conversation rude. Use caps-lock when you have to emphasis or stress on a point or word. Using it for an entire sentence means making the sentence difficult to read.

Keep your e-mails concise and clear. Do not write long e-mails; they only make people lose interest in what you have to say. Crisp emails allow a better understanding of the content.

Do not curse, swear or insult others on the net. Speak to them the way you expect them to speak to you directly. Avoid saying nasty things over chat or on any public forum on net. It remains in the archive and you could be penalised for it.

Do not reply to strangers. If you receive e-mails from people you don't know then do not reply. It is not safe. The worst can happen if someone purposely wants to hurt you and your system. If you find an e-mail offensive or insulting do not reply to it. Ignore such offensive mails and block the sender for good. If still the mails get through and the content crosses all limits, then save the email and report it to the administrators and the customer service.

Since the conversation is not face-to-face, it gets difficult to understand whether a said comment was serious, rude or humorous. Emoticons or the smileys come in great help in this case. The smileys show if what you are saying is serious or funny or the like. It not only helps in clear understanding but also adds color to the message.

Think before you send your message. Once you click on the "send" option, you cannot take anything back. Hence, know what you are typing and be polite with your words. Do not type out whatever comes to your mind.

Use proper spelling and grammar. Use punctuations, wherever required, appropriately since it gives a clear understanding of the message that you want to deliver. Use the spell check option if you do not know the exact spelling of the words.

Look carefully before clicking on the "reply all" option. Do not use that option unless you want your mail to be sent to all people marked in the original mail.

In chats, if you want the conversations to not get recorded anywhere then keep the "chat off the record" option on. It does not save the conversation anywhere and it remains safe and secret.

There are some e-mails which are sent as chain letters. Do not forward that. Such mails mostly annoy people and create spam. They are very random and, more often than not, people aren't interested in reading them.

Once you finish with your e-mail or the typing in the chat, read through to check what you have written and make necessary changes if required.

Use abbreviations wherever necessary. BTW (by the way), ROFL (rolling on floor laughing), LOL (laughing out loud), FYI (for your information), etc. are the abbreviations commonly used.

Do not reply to spams. It will only lead to more spams or, in worst case, infect your system with viruses and other malicious software.

It is best to avoid using e-mails while discussing anything confidential.

Use appropriate and short subject headers. Long subject titles do not capture the interests and discourage people from reading your mail.

Net etiquette is not rigid rules that people have to follow to the "T". They are general guidelines which, when followed optimally, make the Internet a well-organised and civic forum. These rules make the Internet conversations and mails unambiguous and help protect you from the unsafe world of the cyber. The way you talk on Internet shows your fluency and your command over your language also so make sure you don't underestimate grammar on this forum.

<http://www.personalitytutor.com/internet-etiquette.html>

D

When communicating electronically, you do not have the luxury of your tone of voice, body language or hand gestures aiding you in getting your point across clearly. Therefore, Internet users have developed some widely accepted techniques that contribute to proper "Netiquette". Being mindful of the several tips listed below will ensure that your communications over the Internet will not offend anyone.

Keep your messages short and to the point. Many people do not like reading long messages on a computer screen, or worse, on the small screen of a cell phone or other mobile device.

Check your spelling. Nobody likes trying to read an e-mail with spelling mistakes. Most e-mail programs today include spell checkers. Please, check your spelling before sending your messages.

Use plain text. Elaborate text formatting such as Rich Text Format, HTML, and other fancy e-mail formats can arrive as gibberish to the recipient if their mail client cannot properly decipher the message. To make sure that your message is readable, use a plain text format unless you are told otherwise by the recipient.

Use mixed-case letters. Using all capital letters is considered SHOUTING, and is in bad taste. Using all lower-case letters can make your message difficult to read. Make sure that you turn off your caps lock before you start typing an email message, discussion group posting, or any other form of online communication.

Summarize the contents of your messages in the subject line. Summarizing the contents of your messages in the subject will assist the recipient in organizing and prioritizing his or her email.

Compose your e-mails as though they will be posted publicly. E-mail is not as private as you may think once it leaves your computer. Your e-mail can very easily be forwarded by the recipient or printed out and left somewhere. If your message is safe to read in public, it is safe enough for e-mail.

Only Carbon Copy (CC) your message to those who need to read it. People receive a lot of extraneous e-mail messages these days. Carbon copying your message to those who do not really need to read it will only add to the problem.

Use Blind Carbon Copy (BCC) when sending a message to a large group of people (especially those who may not know each other). Using Blind Carbon Copy to send your message to a large group prevents the recipients from seeing the list of e-mail addresses that the message was sent to. By listing all recipients in the “To” field of your message, you are effectively broadcasting each person’s e-mail address to everyone else on the list.

Only send your e-mail messages to those recipients who wish to receive them. Most bulk e-mail (e-mail that is sent to a large number of people) is considered to be spam (junk e-mail). Spam e-mail is considered to be annoying and unwanted by most people. Unless the message needs to be read by a large number of people (and in that case you should use blind carbon copy), do not send it.

Include your name at the bottom of your message. Some older e-mail programs do not make it easy to identify the sender of an e-mail message. Including your name and return email address at the bottom of your message makes it easier for the recipient to identify and respond to you.

Keep file attachments as small as possible. Large attachments (files over two megabytes) can clog up the recipient’s e-mail box and can also cause problems with older mail systems. Unless the recipient gives explicit permission to do so, do not send attachments larger than two megabytes.

Do not re-distribute material that is not yours. This is essentially copyright infringement. Taking images from another’s website for re-distribution, forwarding a personal email message, or sharing files or phrases that do not belong to you is considered to be rude and in many cases, illegal. Materials include: email messages, images, programs, music, movies, etc. This practice is often referred to as “leeching” files.

Keep your signatures or “sig files” short. Signature files are usually composed of an individual’s contact information and placed at the end of their email message. Signatures longer than 4–6 lines can get confusing and difficult to read.

Use abbreviations wisely. In the quest to shorten e-mail messages, many people use abbreviations for common phrases. Typical abbreviations such as BTW and FYI are acceptable to use, but less well-known abbreviations might be inappropriate or confusing to those who are new to the Internet.

Think before you hit the “send” button. Sending harsh, attacking, and otherwise abusive email messages is called “flaming”. It is very easy to respond to an email quickly without thinking about the ramifications of what you are saying. Misinterpreting an e-mail message and then firing back a flame response is very easy to do and only leads to confusion and further flame messages.

Sending a flame message to someone who has “flamed” you will only worsen the situation. The most agreed upon course of action is to not respond to a flame message.

Read the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ). Most mailing lists, discussion groups, and newsgroups have prepared a Frequently Asked Questions document that offers answers to the most commonly asked questions. Asking questions that are already covered in the FAQ is often considered rude.

Always “lurk” in message boards, newsgroups, and forums before making your first post. “Lurking” basically means that you are simply reading the posts of others without actually posting yourself. Many online forums have very specific rules of conduct and it is always suggested that you find out as much as you can about the general operation of a forum before actually posting.

Follow the rules. If a website, discussion group, or mailing list has posting guidelines in place, follow them. Failure to do so often irritates the administrators and could get you kicked out of the group or off of the website.

<https://www.ptd.net/help-desk/general/internet-etiquette>

Questions

1. Comment on different netiquette rules. Do you personally agree with and follow all of them?

2. Explain why we shouldn’t toss “proper etiquette” aside when communicating online. Compare the rules of netiquette and etiquette. To what extent are they same or different?

3. Why is the use of acronyms increasing these days? What acronyms should you know in order not to misunderstand online messages and comments?

4. Have you noticed any contradictory recommendations provided in the texts above? Or are netiquette rules basically the same? How can you account for the fact?

5. In what situations are netiquette rules obligatory and in what cases are they just “advisable”?

6. Are the netiquette rules same or different for all the websites? Which of the listed rules are “universal” and which are quite specific?

3. Some online resources, it transpired, call for specific rules of behavior. Read the following extracts and comment on the basic Instagram and Facebook rules. Compare the “perfect boyfriend rules” for online and offline behavior. To what extent are they the same?

“Let’s get down to business. The five steps of boyfriend bootcamp, your cannot-fail path to winning Elaine’s heart back and becoming the perfect partner.”

“Step one,” I scribbled as I wrote. My handwriting was appalling, I’d never make it as a teacher. “Listen. Which means—”

“Listening?” Sam suggested. I closed my eyes and took a calm, quiet breath in, the chalk hovering millimeters away from the board.

“Listening and not interrupting,” I replied as I continued to write, turning my back to my reluctant pupil. “Listening isn’t the same thing as waiting for your turn to speak. When she’s talking to you, I want you to really pay attention, even if you don’t especially care about what’s she’s saying.”

Sam looked at me as though I’d gone completely mad...

“Step two, show her how much you care.” I added “show her” to the blackboard. “Start small. Buy her flowers, make her bed, fluff the cushions, get in some of her favourite treats. This needs to be everyday stuff, not once in a blue moon. It’ll help her know you’re thinking about her when she’s not there.”

“OK.”...

“Step three is a fun one.” In my best scrawl, I wrote down “shared interests” on the board. “I’ve been looking at Elaine’s Instagram and it seems like she’s got lots of different hobbies. Now, how many of these do you do together?”

Sam took off his glasses and gave them an aggressive clean on the corner of his shirt. “Hobbies?”

“Yeah,” I said, kneeling beside him as well as my skinny jeans would allow and handing him my phone, pushing aside the slight separation anxiety that came whenever it left my person. “Obviously she’s a gym bunny.”...

“And it looks like she went to a documentary festival the other weekend.” I selected one of the pictures to enlarge it. “Did you go to that with her?”

“I was working,” he said quietly. “I wondered where she’d got to.”

I bit my bottom lip and kept quiet. Hmm.

“What’s she doing in that one?” Sam asked, tapping away at one of the older pictures.

“Good god, man, never double tap!” I pulled my phone away quickly. “Instagram cardinal sin. That picture is several months old and we do not go around liking ancient pictures unless we want to give ourselves away as a weirdo, all right? That’s lesson number one.”

I enlarged Elaine’s picture... “Show her what she’s missing. If she’s not taking your phone calls and she’s away on holiday, the best way to remind her you’re alive is to make sure you’re posting to Facebook on the reg. Consistency is key in social media... Consistency is key,” I went on, tapping the word on the blackboard... “You need to reactivate your Facebook account and you’re going to post something funny, funny and relevant to Elaine’s interests *at least once a day.*”

He actually gulped.

“Facebook is easy,” I promised. “Keep it cute or keep it mute. You’re not a troll, you’re not trying to stir the pot. You just want to remind Elaine you’re still here...”

L. Kelk. One in a Million

4. Do you agree that boosting computer literacy is essential for everyone, especially scholars, scientists, researchers, etc.? Read the text and consider the questions below.

The Value and Use of Social Media
as Communication Tool in the Plant Sciences

By A. Osterrieder

Social media now complements many parts of our lives. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and many other social networking sites allow users to share and interact with online content and to connect with like-minded people. Its strengths – rapid dissemination and amplification of content and the ability to lead informal conversations – make it a powerful tool to use in a professional context. This commentary explains the overall concept of social media and offers suggestions on usage and possible types of scientific content. It advises researchers on the potential benefits and how to take a strategic approach towards building a social media presence. It also presents examples of effective social media use within the plant science community. Common reasons for scientists to not engage with social media include the fear of appearing unprofessional, posting something wrong or being misunderstood, or a lack of confidence in their computer skills. With the rapid changes in academic publishing, dissemination and science communication, as well as the rise of “altmetrics” to track online engagement with scientific content, digital literacy will become an essential skill in a scientist’s tool kit.

Facebook, Twitter or YouTube make it easy to keep in touch with family and friends, to join online conversations and to have easy access to more funny animal videos than there are hours in the day to watch them all. As such, social media still carry the stigma of a frivolous time wasting activity and many scientists are reluctant to engage with it due to lack of time and not seeing the benefits of using it in a professional context. Other barriers include concerns around copyright and legal issues, different research discipline cultures or personal barriers. Yet social media is a powerful professional tool for scientists when used appropriately and efficiently.

What is social media?

The core principle of social media is the ability to share content with others. In order to upload content, users usually register and create a profile. Depending on the platform and purpose, users are free to choose whether their whole profile or selected content will be publicly accessible or only visible to selected audiences. Types of content might be short status updates, longer text pieces, links, images, audio or video files, publications or CV-related items. Other users can then subscribe to a profile to receive regular updates about new content. This connection might automatically be mutual or allow selectiveness depending on the platform. For example, becoming friends in Facebook or connecting in LinkedIn means that both users will see each other’s updates, whereas on Twitter users can decide whether they want to follow a new contact back.

Content can be indexed by using tags or hashtags (#). Tags are key words which, when attributed to photos, blog posts, etc., allow users to find content relevant to a certain topic more easily. For example, a micrograph of a rose on Flickr might have the tags “rose” and “microscopy” and will appear as search result together with all other photos carrying the same tag. The term “hashtag” describes a similar concept. Adding the hash symbol # in front of any word, phrase or abbreviation turns it into a link that when clicked displays all content containing the particular hashtag in one stream. The concept of a hashtag to initiate and collate conversations about a certain topic is now widely used, both in popular (e.g., TV shows or radio broadcasts) and academic culture. Examples of academic Twitter hashtags are #phdchat or #ECRchat (early career researcher chat), where researchers network, share writing and career tips and their general joys and woes.

Why use social media?

In the simplest case, social media can provide a highly personalized and relevant “Table of Contents” to keep up to date with current research, popular science and broader issues such as science policy, funding, publishing, or personal career development. Certain social media platforms can also be invaluable tools for professional networking, either within specific subject fields or across different disciplines and professions. Compared to purely academic sites like ResearchGate or Academia.edu, the value of entirely open networks like Twitter cannot be understated. These open platforms enable dialogue not only between scientists, but also offer opportunities for others to join the conversation: journalists, teachers, students, professionals from other disciplines, as well as other interested non-experts.

Actively participating in social networks allows scientists to disseminate research findings quickly and effectively as well as raise their own profile, of their research groups or institution. More importantly, the interactive nature of the medium can be highly beneficial for scientists by offering new perspectives on their own research through dialogue with peers and non-peers, and helping to establish new collaborations. Communicating science through social media can also help to improve essential scholarly skills such as reflecting, writing for different audiences and developing self-discipline to write regularly.

Where and how to start?

There are many ways to engage with social media. They require different levels of time investment but offer different benefits and rewards. It all starts with the same first step and that is the decision which platform(s) to use and for what purpose. It is worth thinking about the following questions and taking a strategic approach towards setting up a professional social media presence.

- What do I want to get out of using social media: Keep up to date with current trends and discussions? Expand my professional network? Disseminate my research more widely? Engage non-expert audiences?

- How much time do I want to invest and will the benefits outweigh my time investment? Do I want to use it daily or reserve a block of time regularly to read or create content?

• How can I incorporate social media most efficiently into my daily workflow? How could I connect accounts or automate things to save time? What other technologies or services can help me to manage my professional online presence?

• How will I be able to evaluate or track the impact of my social media presence? What would my metrics of success be (e.g., subscriber numbers, views, downloads, engagement, comments)?

Not only the intended purpose of use, but also the user personality can be a deciding factor when choosing one platform over the other. One site does not fit all and it is worth trying different services. For example, some people feel strongly restricted by Twitter's character limits, whereas others appreciate Twitter's brevity. User demographics and tone of discussion can differ significantly between social media sites and this is useful to keep in mind when creating and posting content.

Consuming, connecting, curating and creating

The easiest, but also most passive way, is to purely consume content. It is entirely acceptable to just read, watch or listen before starting to post, and many people never post anything at all. Usually it is not even necessary to sign up for a social media service to access its content. Registering an account however makes it easier to keep track of content because it opens the possibility to add to favourites or create lists. These features can help with time management, as interesting content can be marked to return to at a more convenient time.

Social media users connect with others by following their updates, responding and commenting on them and by favouriting or amplifying content (e.g. by re-tweeting or re-sharing). With the exception of some websites, like Facebook or LinkedIn, it is generally not necessary to know or contact users with public accounts before subscribing to their updates. When using social media for networking, a professional and informative profile is necessary to be found by people with similar interests and to be recognised as an authentic user. The standard photo should be replaced with a personal avatar, which could be a portrait or a representative scientific image. The profile description or short biography should contain relevant keywords such as the subject field, university, location, profession or other interests. When participating in online discussions it is essential to remember that the Internet is a public space where comments are cached, shared and may be spread beyond your control. A good rule of thumb is to only put things online that you would be happy for the rest of the world to see, even if content is seemingly posted to a restricted number of people (screenshots can travel surprisingly far). Respect the social rules of the netiquette, the network etiquette, and be aware of copyright and libel laws.

Curating and creating content requires more time and engagement, but can be more rewarding and beneficial in terms of skill and knowledge development and dissemination of science to wider audiences. It is important to be realistic about one's existing skills and the time investment required. Writing a blog entry might take a few hours but will get easier with practice. Uploading micrographs or short videos might just be a quick additional step after curating existing data.

Tweeting an interesting paper takes only a moment. A larger or complex social media project however might benefit from working together with other scientists, professional designers, programmers or communicators.

Challenges

The power of social media lies in its interactivity and its strength to amplify the reach of content. At the same time this has the potential to quickly turn into a pitfall. It is therefore essential to be aware of basic rules for using social media. Some of these are included in the rules of netiquette and general professional conducts of behaviour. Others depend on the type of content posted and revolve around copyright, intellectual property or confidentiality issues.

With the changes in traditional academic publishing, a major development and yet still a considerable challenge is to identify the impact of scientific content beyond established measures such as citation counts or journal impact factors. “Altmetrics” aim to capture the online activity around a scientific publication by tracking metrics such as downloads, number of readers or amplification and discussion in social networks.

Even though specific platforms will change in the future, the concept of social media is likely to stay. As such it will become more and more important to engage with social media and become “digitally literate” rather than avoid or resist its use. There are still many grey areas surrounding social media in society. Unexpected new uses of the medium emerge constantly and carry various opportunities and challenges with them, one good example being citizen live-reporting during disasters. While we are starting to establish rules of good practice for some scenarios, society is still trying to evaluate the full impact of others. Understanding social media, and having the knowledge and confidence to use it appropriately and effectively for professional purposes will become essential skills to be included in a scientist’s skills tool kit.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3716900/>

Questions

1. Prove that social media do not only help like-minded people to connect with each other, but they also are a powerful tool to use in a professional context. Why is it necessary for researchers to build a social media presence?
2. What advice can you give to researchers in order to boost their digital literacy?
3. What are the benefits and rewards of different ways of engaging with social media?
4. Compare the popularity of purely academic sites and entirely open networks (Twitter, etc.). Can one site fit all the purposes?
5. What accounts for the popularity of hashtags both in popular and academic cultures?
6. Why are some scientists still reluctant to engage with social media?
7. Dwell on the role of such concerns as copyright and legal issues, different research discipline cultures, personal barriers, etc. in social media usage.
8. What is a better solution – to engage with social media and become “digitally literate” or avoid/resist its use at all?

5. Do you know people who believe everything they see on the Internet? Read the story and explain what you would do if you confronted a person of that kind.

Today, thanks to my estranged husband, I had three seizures at work. I came home yesterday to find that my seizure medications were completely gone. He'd flushed them down the toilet because he thinks I'm psychotic and "read on the Internet" that it's because of the meds.

6. Read the story and prove that browsing the Internet is not always a good way of boosting one's speaking (or writing) skills.

Today, I celebrated my one year anniversary with my boyfriend. Since I'm bad at writing, I took a list from the internet titled "100 Things That I Love About You" and gave it to him to read while I read what he wrote for me. It was exactly the same thing, taken from the same page.

7. Read the story and explain whether the story-teller is to blame or not.

Today, I said to a girl that I recently started dating, "I like you so far." My phone had other plans and decide to autocorrect *far* to *fat* as I hit "send".

Is it connected with being literate I general or computer literate in particular? Why do you have to double-check the messages you send?

8. Of course, blunders are made in online communication, as well as offline. Read the story and say what accounts for the mistake the main character made.

Today, I went to a job interview. At the end of it, after I had got the job, my new manager said, "See you soon." I then accidentally replied, "You too, love you."

A similar problem could have been encountered while communicating online. What solution to the problem could you recommend to the participants of communication?

- **Solution generation**

1. On the one hand, social norms of behaviour do not depend on the channel of communication. Read the following information and prove that online and offline behaviours are largely guided by the same ethical principles.

What do a positive attitude, respect online/offline, and acts of kindness have in common? Well, in my opinion, they are all great suggestions and practices in creating a very positive working atmosphere. The thing about working at a corporation, PR firm, university, or in a small firm – there are certain

things that you can do to create a dynamic, energetic, and positive atmosphere. All of these entities are their own communities, and in order to work best you have to create and maintain a strong corporate culture, in person as well as virtually.

In many ways, you may have to integrate these best practices yourself and take the leadership role for others to follow these practices.

Have good etiquette skills offline and online. Having manners and respecting others is absolutely key and needs to be consistently presented across all platforms and sites (online) and various business gatherings. These behaviors – both digital and not – are a reflection of your overall reputation both as a person and a professional. They are one and the same.

Bring the positive attitude to work. Life is too short to be sad or angry. Putting things in perspective and appreciating the beauty and opportunity that each day brings will help to create a positive attitude. This applies to online communication practices as well. There is already a lot of negativity online and in the news, so people do not want to hear negative comments or complaints on various social media sites.

Treat others as you would like to be treated – online and offline. Treat others with respect, be consistent with your interactions and don't let your emotions take over if you have any disagreement online. Make sure that you take your time to reflect and then act accordingly.

Little acts of kindness add up. Bring a smile to someone each day. Going and making coffee, bringing in donuts for the office, or stopping by to say “thanks” and “have a great day” are always appreciated. This can be done via social media as well. Posting a “hello” on someone's wall or thanking them for their help and hard work is always good.

<http://karenfreberg.com/blog/positive-attitude-proper-etiquette-online-offline-and-acts-of-kindness-suggestions-for-creating-a-fabulous-work-environment-manage-personal-reputation/>

2. On the other hand, online behavior is shaped by a specific set of norms and rules. Read the text and draw a line between the universal and the specific.

The advent of modern technology, social media and instant communication has brought a new set of rules on how we conduct ourselves in a digital world. *Netiquette* is a combination of the words “network” and “etiquette” and refers to the use of good manners in online communication.

A communications revolution. It is no exaggeration to say that the Internet has revolutionised our everyday communication. It has removed all physical barriers and opened up a new world of connecting with other people without the conventional constraints of time, space and distance.

From ordering a takeaway to buying a new television or sharing the first pictures of your newborn child, all it takes is just the click of a button. We can now send messages across the globe that land in the recipient's inbox in a matter of seconds and watch news stories unfold in front of our eyes in real time. However, with new opportunities come new responsibilities and how we behave online is now just as important – if not more so – as our behaviour offline.

Set clear boundaries. Just because we have the ability to communicate with one another 24/7, we shouldn't feel that we have to make ourselves available around the clock. While technology has made it easier to connect with friends, family and business associates in different parts of the world, the flip-side is that we are expected to always be "on".

This always-on work culture causes an increase in stress levels and disrupts employees' work-family balance. A couple of decades ago, it was also considered a social faux pas to telephone someone after 7 or 8 pm whereas now we're often swiping away Whatsapp notifications late into the night. We all need time to switch off and recuperate in order to perform at our full capacity and protect our mental health.

Social media etiquette. Social media has altered our personal space, completely transforming the way we interact with large groups of people and share information about our personal lives. While there are many positive aspects to social media, there is no doubt that the distractions of Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat et.al. are interfering with our face-to-face communication. A recent US poll of millennials (i.e. those born between 1981 and 1996) found that 76 per cent of women and 56 per cent of men checked their social media platforms at least ten times when they were out with friends.

The principles of netiquette aim to make us more deliberate in our social media use so that we can build a profile that represents who we really are. Everything you say on social media is in the public domain and once something has been posted you can never retrieve it, so it is vital that you are selective of what you post or share online. Try not to post comments on social media in the heat of the moment. It is far better to sleep on it and compose a more considered, measured response the following day when the intensity of the feelings has died down.

Netiquette in the workplace. Given that up to 90 % of our interpersonal communication is non-verbal, when you remove the face-to-face element of human interaction it leaves the field wide open for misunderstandings and embarrassing situations. It is important to recognise that the Internet is an extension of society and the same standards and values around courtesy and kindness should apply.

Be aware of the limitations of texts and e-mails as means of communicating effectively, especially with people you do not know well. If you are writing a formal e-mail, follow the same rules as you would for a letter in terms of salutations, titles and language. Avoid using slang and abbreviations such as *btw* (by the way), *imo* (in my opinion) and *fwiw* (for what it's worth).

If your job requires you to keep a social media account with your name on it, try to keep your personal and business accounts separate and do not divulge sensitive information. In addition, make sure you don't post pictures or videos of other people without their consent.

Be a role model. Children and young people learn the rules of acceptable social behaviour from their surroundings so make sure that you model the netiquette rules you would like them to follow.

A study by Bookatable found that a third of parents give their children iPads or other gadgets to keep them occupied whilst eating out as a family. While screens can solve short-term issues of keeping children quiet, it also limits their opportunities to learn how to engage confidently in social situations.

Young people often struggle to regulate their own social media usage and it is important to instill good habits as soon as they get their own mobile devices. These may include turning notifications off during mealtimes, leaving mobile phones in a different room during homework time and switching devices to airplane mode before bedtime.

Remind them that the Golden Rule of treating others as one would wish to be treated is just as important in cyberspace as it is in face-to-face interactions. Make sure that they are aware that everything they post leaves a digital footprint that can be seen by teachers, friends' parents and potential employers.

<https://thebritishschoolofetiquette.com/netiquette-good-manners-online/>

3. Speaking of netiquette, we should be able to maintain a separation between business and personal matters. What is specific about communicating in business settings? Read the extract below and share your point of view.

While conducting business online, you must maintain a professional and courteous demeanor at all times. Online business etiquette, not unlike offline business etiquette, calls for attention to grammar, tone and discretion. The difference lies in the fact that, once you put something on the Internet, you cannot take it back. Whether you're e-mailing a business prospect or updating your Facebook business page, make sure you're sending the right message about your company and yourself.

E-mail etiquette. E-mail messages should be professional and concise. Multiple-page e-mail messages are less likely to be read. Fill in the "Subject" field as accurately as possible, particularly when exchanging multiple e-mail messages with the same person. This will make it easier to find and file messages after receipt. Use correct punctuation and spelling to increase credibility. Work with black text and standard fonts to convey formality and reduce your chances of being blocked by spam filters. Salutations should be courteous, referencing proper titles, such as "Mrs." or "Dr." unless you've established a first-name basis. Most e-mail programs have a signature feature that automatically generates a professional sign-off. Include your full name, title, website and contact information, using five to six lines. Use a company e-mail address for work-related matters only. Refrain from sending jokes, chain letters and forwards, regardless of how cute, insightful or funny they may seem. Get permission and cross-check software compatibility before sending large files.

Social media etiquette. Maintain a separation between business and personal matters when using social media. Many networks, including Facebook, have privacy features that allow you to create audience lists for different purposes. This ensures a friendly audience for personal posts and a business audience

for professional matters. Include relevant details in your business profile, such as company news and contact information. Social media is an effective tool for connecting with customers, but avoid over-promotion. There are rules in place to protect members from spam, which prevent you from posting for commercial purposes on your personal page or in private groups. Avoid the use of excessive shorthand, emoticons and other Web-friendly nuances that create a less professional image.

Instant message etiquette. Instant messaging is best used for the quick exchange of a small amount of information. In business settings, it functions best for brief questions that require a one-word answer, to schedule updates or for lunch invitations. Never send confidential information, important announcements or disturbing news via instant message. For matters that require more in-depth conversation, resort to e-mail, face-to-face or phone interaction. Refrain from sending more than two sentences in a single IM post. Never use it to negotiate important matters, such as order processing or contract negotiation. Always begin with a polite request for a chat. Don't assume the other party has the time to IM at that moment. Be mindful of others' online statuses, which may include "Available" or "Do Not Disturb."

Etiquette concerning competitors. Avoid the use of negative online marketing tactics that focus on your competitors' shortcomings more than your own valuable assets. Consumers will find it difficult to establish loyalty to your company if your key sales technique is bashing your competition. Consumers who discover a sales pitch that includes false information will have a difficult time trusting you with their business. After all, they can easily do some online fact-checking of their own. If requested to compare your products or services with those of a competitor, offer a fair comparison using relevant facts. Thoroughly research the features and weaknesses of your competitors' products. Find ways to relate those weaknesses to your customers' needs and create a blog post or new discussion that explains how your product can meet those needs.

<https://smallbusiness.chron.com/business-etiquette-online-58760.html>

4. Consider the question "Why do people behave differently online as compared to real life?". One Internet user answered this question like that. Read the answer and compare your points of view.

Hello, interesting question. The answer is pretty simple actually.

Do people behave differently behind closed doors and in public events? Do people behave differently with a friend and an extended relative whom they meet once in a decade? The obvious answer is "yes", they do behave differently.

When it comes to Internet behaviour people are exposed. You must understand that social platform is like a house made of glass. They know that they are being judged. They know that everything they say is public and they try to respond accordingly.

But put the very same person in a social platform in which their identity is well hidden their behaviour changes. People try to hide their true nature and care too much about social acceptance. That is why they act differently. As I said, social platforms are like a house made of glass. Even though you're isolated, you have a constant fear of exposure because you can see everyone and their behavior, which means they can also see you.

In simple, people are afraid of being judged, be it online or offline. If you were to remove their fear of social judgement in any platform their behavior would reflect their true self.

<https://www.quora.com>

5. Here is an example demonstrating the differences in online and offline communication. Read the information and share your opinion about *thank you* etiquette. Which way of expressing gratitude do you personally prefer?

After reading the wonderful comments on my LinkedIn wall, congratulating me for my 30th year anniversary, I was humbled and inspired to write more about *Thank You* greetings in the business and social world. Seems like this subject, like many others, changed and developed greatly since I first started my etiquette journey 30 years ago, I find it fascinating and important to keep the old tradition of *thank you* cards as well as progress with the current online *Thank You* manners.

There are many ways and methods to thank someone, but the most important part of it all is to send gratitude out there in a way that the person accepting it feels it's a genuine and truthful wish, like it ought to be.

About 20 years passed since the commercial Internet has taken over our life and affected our communication methods forever. We will focus on the known custom of sending out *Thank you* note. Those notes used to be sent out to your mailbox as a handwritten personal letter, a note, a postcard, etc. (very rare nowadays!). The warmth of a handwritten *thank you* note is hard and almost impossible to replica in the online world.

Sending a *Thank You* greeting online only requires a few clicks and a few seconds of typing, it can never replace the personable feeling of opening an envelope delivered to your home and reading a handwritten note. A well-thought-of personal note with your gift is a gift on its own, a long-lasting memory from a fantastic event or celebration, crafted with respect and care. The Internet allows us to enjoy unbelievable speed and receive instant messages, but it takes away the feeling of browsing through old letters and notes, going through the papers in a box of notes, filled with memories. When the writer takes time to personalize the message and remind us of good times we shared, we can enjoy it over and over. Think of it the next time you write a personal note. Personal handwritten messages are rare nowadays, so make it memorable and unique.

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/thank-you-etiquette-online-offline-tami-lancut-leibovitz>

6. As it transpires, netiquette rules are often violated. Read the following information and say which violation is the worst one. Explain which of these violations occur in offline communication as well.

Bad Netiquette

Not including context. When commenting on a message thread or existing post, it is considered bad netiquette to not include relevant information from the original post in order to add context to your comment. This can make it confusing for other users.

Not proof reading. By not reading what you have wrote before pressing “post” or “send”, you could be saying something you didn’t intend to say! One typo or auto-correct is all it takes to change the entire sentiment of a message. This can potentially cause unnecessary distress or offense to the recipient.

Inappropriate jokes. It is considered bad netiquette to make jokes that would be deemed as inappropriate by others, especially when replying to a thread of messages or comments on an existing post. Making jokes that could offend others or placing a joke on an existing thread that has upsetting or distressing content would be considered inappropriate.

Ignoring people who need help. If someone asks you directly for help online, it would be deemed bad netiquette to ignore their request for help. Even if you can’t assist them directly with their problem, you could try and find some information or support groups that are able to help them with their situation.

Spamming others. It can be difficult to get noticed when using social media and online forums. The temptation to send continuous messages until you gain the attention of the company can be overwhelming – but it is deemed bad netiquette to send a chain of continuous messages to any company or individual online. This behavior can actually have consequences such as being banned from social media platforms.

Catfishing. It is considered bad netiquette to pretend to be someone else by using photos of another person or lying about your identity to others. Catfishing can cause serious psychological harm to the victim and can potentially destroy any relationships or friendships that have been made.

Not allowing others to express themselves. Everyone is entitled to their own opinion and not allowing someone their right to an opinion is bad netiquette. Even if you disagree with their thoughts and opinions, it is important to let them express themselves.

<https://www.cybersmile.org/what-we-do/advice-help/netiquette/examples-of-bad-netiquette>

7. Think of your “pet hate”. Which etiquette/netiquette violation drives you mad? Share your personal experience with the class.

8. Some etiquette and netiquette rules may seem ridiculous and even cause resentment. Comment on the following company rules and explain why employees resent them.

Companies need to have rules – that’s a given. But as our company has grown, so has our difficulty maintaining standards. There have been many instances where someone crossed a line, and we were tempted to respond with a new rule that applied to everyone.

But that’s where most companies blow it. When companies create ridiculous and demoralizing rules to halt the outlandish behavior of a few individuals, it’s a management problem. There’s no sense in alienating your entire workforce. It makes a bad situation much worse.

Here are some of the worst rules that companies create when they fall into this trap.

1. *Bell curves and forced rankings of performance.* Some individual talents follow a natural bell-shaped curve, but job performance does not. When you force employees to fit into a pre-determined ranking system, you do three things: 1) incorrectly evaluate people’s performance, 2) make everyone feel like a number and 3) create insecurity and dissatisfaction. This is an example of a lazy policy that avoids the hard and necessary work of evaluating each individual objectively, based on their merits.

2. *Ridiculous requirements for attendance, leave and time off.* People are salaried for the work they do, not the specific hours they sit at their desks. When you ding employees for showing up five minutes late even though they routinely stay late and put in time on the weekend, you send the message that policies take precedence over performance. It reeks of distrust.

When companies are unnecessarily strict in requiring documentation for bereavement and medical leave, it leaves a sour taste in the mouths of employees who deserve better. After all, if you have employees who will fake a death to miss a day’s work, what does that say about your company?

3. *Restricting Internet use.* There are certain sites that no one should be visiting at work, and I’m not talking about Facebook. But once you block pornography and the other obvious stuff, it’s a difficult and arbitrary process deciding where to draw the line. Most companies draw it in the wrong place. People should be able to kill time on the Internet during breaks. When companies unnecessarily restrict people’s internet activity, it does more than demoralize those that can’t check Facebook. It limits people’s ability to do their jobs. Many companies restrict Internet activity so heavily that it makes it difficult for people to do online research. The most obvious example? Checking the Facebook profile of someone you just interviewed.

4. *Banning mobile phones.* If I ban mobile phones in the office, no one will waste time texting and talking to family and friends, right? Ya, right. Organizations need to do the difficult work of hiring people who are trustworthy

and who won't take advantage of things. They also need to train managers to deal effectively with employees who underperform and/or violate expectations (such as spending too much time on their phones). This is also hard work, but it's worth it. The easy, knee-jerk alternative (banning phones) demoralizes good employees who need to check their phones periodically due to pressing family or health issues or as an appropriate break from work.

5. *Draconian e-mail policies.* This is a newer one that's already moving down a slippery slope. Some companies are getting so restrictive with e-mail use that employees must select from a list of pre-approved topics before the e-mail software will allow them to send a message. Again, it's about trust. If you don't trust your people to use e-mail properly, why did you hire them in the first place? In trying to rein in the bad guys, you make everyone miserable *every* time they send an e-mail. And guess what? The bad guys are the ones who will find ways to get around any system you put in place.

6. *Stealing employees' frequent-flyer miles.* If there's one thing that road-weary traveling employees earn, it's their frequent flier miles. When employers don't let people keep their miles for personal use, it's a greedy move that fuels resentment with every flight. Work travel is a major sacrifice of time, energy, and sanity. Taking employees' miles sends the message that you don't appreciate their sacrifice and that you'll hold on to every last dollar at their expense.

7. *Pathetic attempts at political correctness.* Maintaining high standards for how people treat each other is a wonderful thing as we live in a world that's rife with animosity and discrimination. Still employers have to know where to draw the line. Going on a witch-hunt because someone says "Bless you" to another employee that sneezed (real example) creates an environment of paranoia and stifled self-expression, without improving how people treat each other.

8. *Shutting down self-expression (personal items and dress code).* Many organizations control what people can have at their desks. A life-size poster of a shirtless Fabio? I get it, that's a problem. But employers dictate how many photographs people can display, whether or not they can use a water bottle, and how many items they're allowed to place on their desks. Once again, it's the ol' "If I could just hire robots I wouldn't have this problem" approach.

Same goes for dress codes. They work well in private high schools, but they're unnecessary at work. Hire professionals and they'll dress professionally. When someone crosses the line, their manager needs to have the skill to address the issue directly. Otherwise, you're making everyone wish they worked somewhere else because management is too inept to handle touchy subjects effectively.

If companies can rethink their policies and remove or alter those that are unnecessary or demoralizing, we'll all have a more enjoyable *and* productive time at work.

<https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/290071>

9. If you could change some of the etiquette/netiquette rules, what would it be in the first place? Write a mini-guide “The new set of etiquette/netiquette rules”.

- **Solution implementation**

1. As a human resource specialist, explain that in every workplace there is etiquette to be followed. As well as netiquette.

2. As a common Internet user, prove that Netiquette is not rigid rules that people have to follow to the “T”. They are just general guidelines. The Internet police won’t come and get you for breaking these rules.

3. As a website administrator, prove that a good rule of thumb is to only put things online that you would be happy for the rest of the world to see.

4. As a psychologist, prove that social media carry the stigma of a frivolous time wasting activity. There are no benefits of using them either in a professional context or for personal reasons.

5. As a research project manager, explain that some scientists are reluctant to engage with social media for the fear of appearing unprofessional.

Unit VI. Effective and Safe Online Communication: Influencing Others vs. Being Influenced

- **Problem identification**

1. What makes an effective online message?
2. What can help you attract the audience's attention to your online message?
3. How can one become popular online?
4. What are the methods of online promotion (Internet marketing)? Are they similar to offline marketing tools?
5. How can people be manipulated via the Internet? What manipulative techniques are there?
6. What are the types of Internet fraud and how can we protect ourselves against them?
7. How can you make surfing the Internet more secure?

- **Problem analysis**

1. Read the text and explain what hallmarks of online popularity there are. Is being popular online the same as being popular in real life?

“We’ll need measurable,” Miranda said, scribbling down some numbers. “There are roughly twenty million Instagram accounts in the UK and the average user over the age of twenty has three hundred followers.”

“That doesn’t sound a lot,” Charlie said as he pulled up the app on his own phone. “Even I’ve got over nine hundred.”

“And you own an advertising agency,” she replied shortly. “You should be ashamed of yourself. Are you even verified?”

Shamefaced, he put his phone away.

“Then to win the bet, you need to what?” Martin asked. “Get them a million followers?”

“That’s not possible,” I replied. “Unless you’re going to knock up Beyoncé while starring in a new *Star Wars* movie, that is an impossible number. Generally speaking, twenty thousand followers makes you an influencer, meaning you can start making money off your feed. A hundred thousand, you can make a living from it...”

L. Kelk. One in a Million

2. Decoding a message largely depends on the sender’s image. Read the text and explain how common Internet users envisage a typical blogger. To what extent does this image correspond to reality?

“Do the menu cards go on top of the napkins or are we tucking them into the napkins?”

“On top,” I replied, attempting to hang Lil’s light-up neon logo on the wall without breaking it. Neon tubes shattered like nobody’s business. I would know. “And place the napkins on the plates so that the folds are downwards. Lily hates napkin folds.”

Lily hated a lot of things...

It was the morning of Lily Lashgasm’s annual summer beauty bash. Lily was one of our first clients and one of the biggest beauty bloggers in the world. She was also a stickler for details and liked everything done a certain way which was a really polite way of saying Lily could be a massive bastard when she wanted to be. Every summer she had a huge party for all her friends, a few chosen followers and most importantly, her enemies. It was beyond me.

People loved to slag off YouTubers and influencers and the like but in my experience, they were some of the hardest working, most genuine humans I’d ever met. All our clients worked every hour god sent, they had to be brilliant writers, fantastic photographers and self-taught filmmakers all rolled into one while being amazingly creative, thoughtful, caring and collaborative sweethearts at the same time.

And then there was Lily.

It was like when people said they hated cats because they’re all super anti-social and scratchy when really, they’d only encountered shit cats. I had to assume everyone who said influencers were all entitled, freebie-grabbing slackers with no real life skills had somehow come across Lily.

L. Kelk. One in a Million

3. Read the following extracts and comment on faking online and in real life. Which one is harder? Give your reasons.

“What’s his message?” Mir stuck out her tongue as she delved into *The Lord Lieutenants of Ireland* with renewed commitment. “What does he want people to know?”

I flicked through my own Instagram feed and pondered the question. What did I want people to know about me? My Instagram feed was full of pictures of me, Mir and Brian, my favourite views and a few carefully framed flat lays displaying my prized possessions, colour-coordinated, of course. That was the version of me I put out there.

It took me longer to make my escape and before I knew it, I’d sat through bathtime, bedtime and bedtime story time. Alan was already flicking through Netflix by the time I started faking yawns.

“Stay,” Rebecca insisted. “I’ll make up the spare bed.”

“Yes,” Alan echoed with zero enthusiasm. “Stay.”

“I’d love to but I can’t,” I said, picking up my handbag, tote bag and refillable water bottle. The holy triumvirate of Modern Women’s Things. “I’ve got a really early yoga class in the morning and it’ll be a nightmare to get across town at that time on a Sunday.”

“Oh, good for you,” Becks said, bundling me into a hug and a borrowed cardigan. It had turned cold after the sun had set. “Do you need Alan to run you to the station?”

“I’ll get the bus,” I said, much to Alan’s relief. “Or maybe I’ll walk, burn off that trifle. Wouldn’t want me getting fat, would we?”

He didn’t even look away from the TV.

“I can’t do lunch this week,” my sister said, buttoning up the cardi for me. “But we’ll see you at Dad’s party next week.”

L. Kelk. One in a Million

4. Read the text and consider the questions below.

Understanding Health Food Messages on Twitter for Health Literacy Promotion

Aims

With the popularity of social media, Twitter has become an important tool to promote health literacy. However, many health-related messages on Twitter are dead-ended and cannot reach many people. This is unhelpful for health literacy promotion. This article aims to examine the features of online health food messages that people like to retweet.

Methods

We adopted rumour theory as our theoretical foundation and extracted seven characteristics (i.e. emotional valence, attractiveness, sender’s authoritativeness, external evidence, argument length, hashtags, and direct messages). A total of 10,025 health-related messages on Twitter were collected, and 1496 messages were randomly selected for further analysis. Each message was treated as one unit and then coded. All the hypotheses were tested with logistic regression.

Results

Emotional valence, attractiveness, sender’s authoritativeness, argument length, and direct messages in a Twitter message had positive effects on people’s retweet behaviour. The effect of external evidence was negative. Hashtags had no significant effect after consideration of other variables.

Conclusion

Online health food messages containing positive emotions, including pictures, containing direct messages, having an authoritative sender, having longer arguments, or not containing external URLs are more likely to be retweeted. However, a message only containing positive or negative emotions or including direct messages without any support information will not be retweeted.

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1757913918760359?journalCode=rshi>

Questions

1. What makes a health food message on Twitter effective?
2. In your opinion, do the same principles apply to other social media platforms?
3. In general, what makes an effective online message?

5. Read the following extract. What is a more effective way of promotion – Internet or offline marketing?

“OK, so, Charlie, say, you’re trying to think of a clever tagline to go on your thirty-second advert for a chicken cooking sauce?” Mir began, gesticulating wildly as she went. “And you’re dead excited because the advert is going on in the middle of *Coronation Street*.”

He nodded.

“You’re wasting your time,” she said, clapping her hands right in front of his face. “No one watches the adverts any more. They’re all on their phone, interacting with content *we* created instead.”

“There are twenty million Instagram accounts in the UK,” I said, picking up where she left off. “Our influencers alone have more than a hundred million followers between them. You couldn’t even dream of getting close to that many people with an advert these days.”

“I know social media is important, but you don’t really think what you do is more powerful than what I do?” Charlie said, his hackles somewhat raised. “I’m sure you’re very good at arsing about on the internet, but we all know real advertising, real marketing is still what matters most. Everyone knows social media is the paid-for opinions for kids.”

L. Kelk. One in a Million

6. Read the story and explain how the popular “before and after” Internet trick works. Do you think the main character should sue the company for misusing her private photos?

Today, I discovered that a company has been using a photo of me for one of those “she lost 50 pounds” online ads. I’m the “before” photo.

7. Read the story. Explain why the main character had problems with cancelling the contract and whose fault it was.

Today, I wanted to cancel my Internet contract. At the store, they told me I have to cancel by phone. On the phone, they tell me I have to do it via the Internet. On the Internet, it says they will have a customer support agent call me. Finally, he called me to tell me that the only way to cancel is to send a letter by post.

Do you agree that all Internet contracts, agreements, requests, etc. have to be dealt with via the Internet? Which channel is the most effective one for sorting out problems with the clients?

8. Read the texts and consider the questions below.

A

Criminals Hacked Into My Phone, E-mail and Drained My Checking Account.
How You Can Avoid Being a Victim.

By M. Ottenstein

To prevent criminals from opening bank, utility and phone accounts in your name, you need more than a credit freeze. Here's what to do.

Shame on me, one of the most organized and security-conscious people you'll ever meet, for logging onto the unsecured Wi-Fi at Miami International Airport last summer. I knew it was the wrong thing to do, but feeling impervious to hackers and somewhat cavalier, I figured: What could happen in 15 minutes.

It turns out a lot can happen. The criminals hijacked my e-mail and my mobile accounts and tried (unsuccessfully) to take over my Apple account, and that was just the beginning.

This type of cyber crime goes far beyond identity theft. It's called "account takeover," and TAKE OVER is exactly what they did. By hijacking my mobile phone and e-mail accounts, the crooks were able to circumvent numerous email and text alerts, which were being sent to me by my bank and credit-card company, as well as by the mobile and cable companies, as the criminals systematically drained my checking account and ran up thousands of dollars worth of fraudulent charges on my credit card.

All this happened in spite of the fact I had, and still have, security freezes with all three of the major credit bureaus and impossible-to-remember passwords, usernames and security questions, not to mention multifactor verifications and security blocks on all my bank and credit-card accounts.

Account takeover is a very real and very frightening issue and goes far beyond "transactional" theft (i.e., someone gets your credit-card number and you have to get a replacement card). To help others avoid what I went through, here are some basic things you can do that won't necessarily prevent fraud but can make you less vulnerable:

1. Never, ever, ever use public (unsecured) Wi-Fi such as the Wi-Fi in a café, hotel or airport. To remain anonymous and secure on the Internet, invest in a Virtual Private Network account, but remember, the bad guys are very smart, so by the time this column runs, they may have figured out a way to hack into a VPN.

2. If you or someone you know is 18 or older, you need to create a Social Security online account. Today! Go to www.SSA.gov.

3. Add multifactor verifications to ALL online accounts offering this additional layer of protection, including mobile and cable accounts. (Note: Have the codes sent to your email, as SIM card "swapping" is becoming a huge, and thus far unstoppable, security problem.)

4. Create hard-to-crack 12-character passwords. NOT your mother's maiden name, not the last four digits of your Social Security number, not your birthday and not your address. Whenever possible, use a "pass-phrase" as your answer to account security questions – such as "Youllneverguessmybrotherinlawsmiddlename".

5. Avoid the temptation to use the same user name and password for every account. Whenever possible, change your passwords every six months.

6. To prevent “new account fraud” (i.e., someone trying to open an account using your date of birth and Social Security number), place a security freeze on all three national credit bureaus (Equifax, Experian and TransUnion). There is no charge for this service.

7. Never plug your devices (mobile phone, tablet and/or laptop) into an electrical outlet in an airport. Doing so will make you more susceptible to being hacked. Instead, travel with an external battery charger to keep your devices charged.

Finally, avoid the temptation to share all the details of your life on Facebook, Instagram or other social media venues, especially when traveling. Crooks aren’t just trolling these sites to see if you’re out of town so they can break into your home; they’re also looking for information they can use take over your life.

Be smart. Be aware. Be careful. If it can happen to me, it can happen to you.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/personalfinance/2018/11/28/account-takeover-fraud-7-tips-make-you-less-vulnerable/2090537002/>

B

Account Takeover Fraud Is Rising Fast: How to Protect Yourself

By M. Cochrane

Account takeover fraud can be financially draining and emotionally stressful. Here’s what an economic-crimes detective says you can do to protect yourself.

While there are many advantages to living in a digital world, the connected life also has its drawbacks.

One of the biggest disadvantages is that it gives fraudsters numerous opportunities to gain access to our personal identification. Last year alone, 15.4 million consumers were the victims of identity theft, a 17.5 % increase from the previous year. With this information, thieves can open new accounts in our names, steal from our existing accounts, and use it as a veil of authenticity during the commission of scams.

Fraud and identity theft have become a fact of life in today’s world. This year, when the Global Fraud Index was released, one statistic stood out more than any other: Account takeover fraud skyrocketed by more than 45 % year over year in 2017’s second quarter and cost merchants a whopping \$3.3 billion in that three-month period. While exact figures are extremely difficult to come by, other studies confirm the overall trend. Javelin Strategy’s 2017 Identity Fraud Study, released in February, reported account takeover incidents increased by 31 % in 2016 with consumer losses reaching \$2.3 billion, a 61 % increase from the previous year.

As an economic-crimes detective, I see the financial pain and emotional stress this type of crime causes firsthand. And while this type of fraud has always been rampant, my own experience confirms the research results: This type of fraud isn’t going away and only seems to be growing more common.

What is account takeover fraud?

Account takeover fraud occurs when criminals gain access to victims' bank or credit card accounts and then make unauthorized transactions on the account. While this encompasses credit card fraud, when someone uses your credit card number to make a purchase, more insidious versions of this crime go deeper. After all, consumers enjoy far-reaching protection against permanent monetary loss when they are victims of simple credit card fraud, but bad cases of account takeover fraud can involve far more.

I've seen cases where suspects gain access to a victim's banking account and promptly change the account holder's phone number, physical and e-mail address, and online password. The legitimate account holders are effectively locked out of their own accounts, ensuring that they will no longer even receive texts or e-mails alerting them to the suspicious activity.

How account takeovers happen

Consumer information can be stolen in a variety of ways. Some of the most common methods of stealing data include malware, phishing, and data breaches. Indeed, it seems hardly a month goes by without another data breach at a major corporation where millions of consumers' payment information was stored. Earlier this fall, the data breach at Equifax was nearly unprecedented in scope and breadth, affecting 143 million Americans.

Phishing and malware attacks are also on the rise. Symantec estimates that 54.3 % of all email is spam and that there are nearly 1.6 million blocked Web attacks each day. In June, the company stated that phishing attacks increased to about one out of every 1,975 emails. With massive, high-profile data breaches making the news and phishing and malware attacks rising, the increase in account takeovers doesn't seem poised to slow down anytime soon.

What you can do to protect yourself

There is no silver bullet to stop fraud. With these types of attacks on the rise, it's almost inevitably just a matter of time before we're all victimized. We can, however, take definitive steps that will decrease our exposure to being targeted and mitigate the severity of the incidents when they take place.

1. Develop strong and unique passwords across all of your accounts. When most of us hear of a data breach that might directly affect us, we immediately fear the theft of our personal identification, including our name, address, date of birth, and Social Security number. What many of us fail to consider is whether we've used a password for that account that we used elsewhere.

Unless one is unusually savvy with memorizing odd word combinations or develops a highly sophisticated system, using unique, strong passwords (using letters, numbers, and symbols) across every single site where an account is kept is almost impossible. That's why I strongly suggest using software or websites that are designed to do this very thing. Doing so saves people the headache of performing this Herculean task on their own. Although most of these cost money, some will run their program across one device for free. A few things to look for when researching these services include two-factor authentication, automatic password capture, form-filling capabilities with multiple form-filling identities, and secure sharing.

2. Always pay with a credit card. Frank Abagnale Jr., the former conman turned security consultant made famous by the movie *Catch Me If You Can*, tells clients he removes 99.9 % of all fraud risk by using credit cards. Why? Because consumers are limited to \$ 50 of liability when credit card fraud is reported in a timely manner. That's far more legal protection than any other payment method offers. Likewise, consumers are in a position of strength because they're never without the money in their banking accounts; they're merely arguing over how much money they owe their credit card company.

3. Avoid writing personal checks whenever possible. Think about the most damaging information that could be leaked to potential thieves and fraudsters and then consider what's printed on the front of your personal checks: your name, address, banking institution, routing number, and bank account number. That's a treasure trove of information for anyone wishing to defraud you. For this reason, if at all possible, only write checks to trusted friends or family members. Otherwise, run to the ATM for a quick cash withdrawal if you can't pay with a credit card, or use a digital payment service such as PayPal or Venmo.

4. Monitor your accounts closely. Finally, make sure you keep tabs on all of your accounts – checking, savings, brokerage, credit card – and immediately report any suspicious activity. Regularly make sure your account contact information is up to date and correct. Even watch out for small charges that almost seem inconsequential at first. Many times, fraudsters will use the account for small transactions first to ensure the information they have is working.

Account-takeover fraud can be draining affairs – both financially and emotionally. But people who take these steps stand to be affected much less if they're victimized.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/personalfinance/2017/11/18/this-type-of-fraud-is-rising-frighteningly-fast-heres-how-to-protect-yourself/107704222/>

C

Enraged by Endless Robocalls? Help Is on the Way

By K. McCoy

Your cellphone rings. You don't recognize the number on the screen, but the call appears to be coming from your area code – perhaps even your exchange. Maybe the display shows it's coming from your town. So you answer – and the unwanted recorded message begins. A voice wants to sell you an extended warranty for your car, or a timeshare in a vacation spot, a loan to refinance your home. It might even be a Chinese-language message about a purported package awaiting pickup at the local consulate.

Consumers, rejoice: An attack plan is nearing deployment against the billions of illegal robocalls that have made telephones and smartphones virtual weapons of mass frustration. Emerging from a years-long effort by government, telecommunications and computer experts, the plan will use a verification system to stop robocall companies from masking the true numbers of those billions

of unwanted and illegal calls. The tactic, known as spoofing, fools consumers by causing their Caller-ID systems to indicate falsely that the robocalls come from the phone numbers of familiar businesses, organizations, friends or acquaintances.

The verification system targets a problem that's a top priority for the Federal Communication Commission and the Federal Trade Commission. The FTC last year identified robocalling as the No. 1 consumer complaint category: More than 1.9 million complaints against the practice were filed during the first five months of 2017. U.S. consumers and businesses were barraged with roughly 30.5 billion robocalls in 2017, according to YouMail, a company that provides a service to block such messages. That broke the record of 29.3 billion calls set just a year earlier. And the company estimates the 2018 total will jump to roughly 48 billion. The pace hasn't slackened. U.S. phones received some 6.1 million robocalls per hour in September 2018 alone, YouMail reported.

Many robocalls aren't just annoying – they're illegal. Robocallers are not permitted to send telemarketing messages that haven't been approved by the recipients, or to dial numbers on the National Do Not Call Registry. One robocall executive who has been sued by the FTC acknowledged that the growing torrent poses a problem. "Obviously, the underlying issue is the calls are illegal," Aaron Michael Jones, affiliated with several robocalling companies, told an FTC investigative hearing in 2015. "We know that already." Some robocalls are permissible. Government regulators have carved out exemptions for charities, for example, and also for political campaigns.

Major U.S. telephone service providers are expected to start integrating the verification system with their networks in upcoming months, with a more complete ramp-up to follow in 2019. There's no agreement yet on what consumers will see in their Caller ID systems – a green check mark, perhaps, or another symbol to indicate the caller has the authorization to use the number that's displayed. Participants in the anti-spoofing effort predict it will produce a progressive drop in robocalls. "It will be an ongoing battle that will gradually get better," said Jim McEachern, principal technologist for the Alliance for Telecommunications Industry Solutions. He likened it to the effort that turned e-mail spam from a similar aggravation into a relatively manageable problem.

Consumer advocates say the effort represents a good first step – but call for stronger safeguards. Margot Saunders is senior counsel for the National Consumer Law Center. The verification system sounds promising, she said. But it's "just one piece of the overall robocall puzzle". McEachern says he's seen a demand for solutions. "The vast majority of my career, when I told people what I do, their eyes would glaze over," McEachern said. "Now, when I tell them what I'm doing, their eyes light up."

STIR and SHAKEN

The verification system is designed to correct an unforeseen problem that developed roughly two decades ago. During the late 1990s, the telecommunications industry launched a technology capable of transmitting telephone voice calls via a broadband Internet connection instead of a regular phone line. One of the support services to grow out of the technology was Voice Over Internet

Protocol. Robocalls use VoIP because it's inexpensive. It also enables users to enter anything imaginable as the source of the call. That identification, true or false, automatically is conveyed to consumers.

Jon Peterson is an expert in Internet and telephone operational protocols with Neustar, an information services provider with expertise in identity resolution. He has worked on the new verification system. "You get e-mail all the time from people who are not what it says in the header field," Peterson said. "You can kind of think of what we've developed as the next generation of Caller ID."

The developers have dubbed the system STIR and SHAKEN, a geeky engineering homage to fictional British spy James Bond's martini preference. STIR, or Secure Telephone Identity Revisited, is a call-certifying protocol. SHAKEN, or Signature-based Handling of Asserted information using toKENs, verifies the caller's right to use their phone numbers. When you make a call, your phone carrier will use your identifying number to create a digital signature, or token, that will accompany the call as it is being completed. At the other end, the system verifies that nothing was tampered with and ensures that the call came from "someone who has a legitimate right to use that number", McEachern said.

However, the attack plan is no silver bullet solution. It won't block any phone calls – including robocalls. Consumers eventually are expected to see an as yet undetermined signal that will indicate calls that have been verified, a feature intended to help guide decisions about whether or not to pick up. The system also is expected to aid the work of companies that provide call-blocking apps for consumers. They already try to block robocalls by looking for calling patterns to identify calls from suspicious numbers.

The Alliance for Telecommunications Industry Solutions on Thursday issued a request for proposals to get an administrator to apply and enforce the STIR and SHAKEN rules. "Everything we're doing today is just going to be infinitely stronger once spoofing is eliminated," said Jonathan Nelson, a member of the research team and the director of project management for Hiya, an app company that provides Caller ID and spam protection services.

The room where it happened

A team of telecom experts began discussing technological approaches to combating robocalls in 2013 with little notice from the outside world. The team included representatives of the giant traditional U.S. telephone providers, such as Verizon and At&T, and of cable and other companies that now offer phone services, such as Comcast. As public outcry over robocalls mounted, a turning point in the team's planning came during a September 2015 workshop at the Federal Communication Commission's Washington headquarters.

The session included several experts working on the verification system, along with others from the telecom industry and public and private sectors. Neustar's Peterson and Chris Wendt, Comcast Cable's director of Internet protocol communications services, recommended combining the STIR protocol started in 2013 by an international standards organization with the SHAKEN implementation system the team had started work on weeks before the FCC workshop. Other team members agreed. Wendt said the consensus emerged from a collegial debate over technology: "I think this will work," he said, and team

members agreed. “We have a plan to go forward.” Nonetheless, team members realized they needed the entire telecom industry, working together, to make the plan a working reality. “Each provider is only as good as the other in the industry in stopping illegal robocalls. We need to get buy-in and help from big and small providers to fix this,” said Martin Dolly, AT&T’s lead member of technical staff and a main figure in the anti-robocall effort.

The fears evaporated in July 2016 when the FCC spurred the creation of a robocall task force and directed major traditional and wireless phone providers to provide free call-blocking services to customers. “That changed, in many ways, what was a bunch of techno-weenies toiling away in relative obscurity,” McEachern said. “Suddenly the spotlight went on this activity as the most advanced effort to begin addressing the robocalling problem.”

The work advanced in recent months with the creation of a panel of telecom company representatives who will continue to update the verification system as robocall companies seek ways to beat it. The private sector approach would enable tweaks to be rolled out more quickly than if changes had to go through a lengthy government approval process. “This would enable tweaks to keep the robocallers from being three years ahead of you, all the time,” McEachern said.

Consumer advocates want the government to be more aggressive. “Why is the FCC, given the exploding problem of scams and spoofed calls, and unwanted robocalls generally, not moving to *require* phone companies to implement caller authentication services across the board?” asked Saunders, of the National Consumer Law Center. “This should not be a voluntary effort.” Additionally, Saunders said, YouMail data show that scammers are not the largest source of robocalls. More come from debt collectors for banks or other companies – some of which, she said, are ringing up the wrong people. “That also raises the question of should we be able to block other numbers, even those that are authenticated, that we want to stop calling us,” Saunders added.

Who pays?

The FCC says it does “not expect any carrier to directly charge consumers for the implementation costs of the service”. “While we are not mandating how carriers absorb these costs,” the regulator said in a statement, “it would be more expensive for the typical carrier to attempt to allocate costs and bill subscribers individually.”

The FCC also says it expects the system to reduce some carrier costs, “particularly with respect to customer service”. “These savings, as well as the goodwill from reducing the impact of robocalls on their subscribers, may more than offset the costs of implementation,” the commission said.

U.S. Telecom, the trade group of the nation’s broadband industry, does not expect major carriers will bill customers for the verification system. Kevin Rupy, the group’s vice president for law and policy, said some smaller carriers might need help with the cost and could seek assistance from the FCC’s universal service fund. Additionally, AT&T, Verizon, T-Mobile, Sprint and other major carriers have partnered with call-blocking and anti-spam partner companies to provide customers with increased protection, he said.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2018/11/15/robocalls-verification-system-ftc-fcc-telecommunications-caller-id-shaken-stir/1682591002/>

D

Black Friday Shoppers Beware: Scammers Likely to Use “Pick up in Store” Scam

By S. Tompor

We’re looking at 32 days of endless shopping from Black Friday through Christmas Eve – the longest holiday spending spree possible given that Thanksgiving falls so early in November.

Really, you might even have 33 days, if you plan to shop on Thanksgiving, too.

The bad news: The fraudsters have more time to rip us off, as well. Oddly enough, much of the online fraud heats up right after Thanksgiving dinner, experts say, as con artists join consumers in trying to get a jump on those Black Friday deals.

“Fraudsters are in business to make money,” said Glen Goldstein, senior vice president of technology, retail and e-commerce markets at TransUnion.

So crooks will be tapping into every trick and tool that holiday shoppers use to save a little time and energy – ordering online and picking up in the store, using credit or debit cards (yours or someone else’s) and loading up the cart with quick gift ideas, such as popular electronics and gift cards.

They’re going to take advantage of a hectic season, distracted shoppers and the push to drive retail online.

More than 40 percent of holiday shoppers will make nearly all of their purchases online, according to a new survey on Holiday Shopping and the Impact of Fraud by TransUnion.

Millennials as well as higher income households are more likely to turn to their smartphones and laptops to pick up holiday deals.

Retailers, though, find themselves walking a fine line between setting up online security measures that will stop crooks in their tracks but won’t leave consumers so frustrated that they decide to leave the site to shop somewhere else.

One hot fraud is likely to be built around the popular “buy online, pick up in-store” model.

About half of consumers expect to buy online and pick up in the store this holiday season, according to a survey by the National Retail Federation.

Shoppers love the idea of being able to hunt for the best prices and coupons online, order their gifts and then make a quick trip to the store to pick them up to save time and money on any possible shipping charges. And honestly, you don’t have to worry about your child dragging you yet one more time through the toy aisle if you’re able to go on a short errand without them.

But crooks love the idea of using stolen credit card or debt card information to buy something online and then easily pick it up at the store so they can sell those goods for cash somewhere else.

The crooks, of course, want the same goodies as everyone else – smartphones, TVs, electronics, Tito’s Handmade Vodka.

“We’ve seen cases where people walk off with cases of Tito’s vodka,” Goldstein said.

As supermarkets promote ordering online with pick up at the store, the fraudsters are figuring out ways to crack into that new system, too, he said.

Fraudsters might pull out their mobile phones while in the store or sitting in the parking lot.

Once they order, they may quickly walk into the store or to the area created for online pick up to get their items. They move fast enough to make sure there is not enough time for the online system to fully connect and spot any fraudulent activity.

The store, perhaps unwilling to offend a customer, promptly fills that order before the online transaction has been validated. The crook might be asked to provide a driver's license. But that's not a hurdle.

"Anybody who has ever been a college student knows that a driver's license can be easily faked," Goldstein said.

One reason ID thieves are turning to the buy-online platform is that it's far harder to create a fake credit card to use at the register using stolen information, thanks to the use of chip-enabled debit and credit cards, according to Erika Dietrich, global director for payments risk for ACI Worldwide, a global provider of real-time electronic payment and banking solutions.

"It's very hard for fraudsters to create chips that work," Dietrich said.

In the past, a crook might be able to get credit card numbers, including a security code, to then create a phony plastic card.

Now, crooks are more likely to use that stolen ID information to place orders online.

The goal of a crook is to be able to mimic a real shopper – who is shopping online.

By shopping earlier in the season, fraudsters can keep an eye on items that are limited in inventory and later can easily be sold at a premium to desperate shoppers via Craigslist or eBay.

Fraud attempts are expected to hit 3.27 percent of transactions on Thanksgiving Day, according to ACI Worldwide's 2018 Holiday Season Merchant Fraud Forecast.

That's roughly double what's seen on a more typical shopping day. Online crooks are expected to be aggressive from Thanksgiving through Cyber Monday, as well.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/personalfinance/2018/11/19/black-friday-2018-fraudsters-likely-use-pick-up-store-scam/2023287002/>

Questions

1. What types of Internet crime are being described?
2. How can fraudsters gain access to our personal identification?
3. Explain why robocalls are dubbed "virtual weapons of mass frustration". Who is more susceptible to them – consumers or businesses?
4. Why are some robocalls permissible while others are illegal?
5. Why do online fraudsters favour the "buy online, pick up in-store" model?
6. How can you make yourself less vulnerable to Internet fraud and minimize losses? Is it enough to be security-conscious?

9. Read the following joke and comment on the problem of creating a secure password. Consider the questions below.

Sorry, but your password must contain an uppercase letter, a number, a haiku, a gang sign, a hieroglyph, and the blood of a virgin.

Reddit.com

1. What techniques of creating a secure password do you personally apply?
2. What other methods of protecting your privacy on the Internet do you know and/or use?

- **Solution generation**

Task A

1. Read the following information about clickbait and get ready to complete the tasks below.

In a general sense clickbait is associated with any content whose main purpose is to attract attention and encourage visitors to click on a link to a particular web page. However, a widely spread opinion is that clickbait is aimed at enticing users to read, view, or listen to a piece of online content which is deceptive, sensationalized or misleading. Clickbait headlines are deemed dishonest, as they do not reflect the content accurately.

2. Consider the pros and cons of clickbait. From your point of view, what prevails? What advantages and disadvantages can you add to the list?

1. Most clickbait links forward a user to a page that requires payment, registration or a series of pages that help drive views for a specific site. It can also point to any web content that is aimed at generating online advertising revenue. For instance, clickbait has become a big issue on YouTube. It does this at the expense of accuracy, quality and mostly relying on sensationalized headlines to attract click-through. Most clickbait headlines are focused on exploiting the so-called curiosity gap which provides just enough information to make any site visitor curious, but is not enough to satisfy the person's curiosity without clicking through to the content link. "You'll never guess what happens next" is a popular one.

2. The Internet did not invent clickbait, but it certainly adapted practices from yellow journalism to get results. Whether people accept it or not, click bait is a powerful tool. Its simple use of wording and appealing to our human sense of curiosity means that it works a lot of the time, even if it isn't good marketing or advertising practice.

3. The issue with click bait is that the reader or site visitor is being manipulated into clicking something that is misleading. Click bait is said to be more annoying as compared to the old ways of flogging newspaper stories because the readers are being treated as if they are stupid.

4. According to many marketing experts, clickbaits are truly effective at driving traffic and customer attention because they are like games. Sensational headlines call for the reader to guess what is happening next and then verify that guess by clicking on the link and reading the article. It will somehow create value because there will be a chance that the reader will be rewarded with the smug satisfaction of being correct.

5. The real issue with most clickbait is the sensationalized and clever headlines which often lead to annoying and disappointing articles.

6. Most forms of online and digital marketing are told that content has to serve a long-term goal, engaging the customer and attract rankings and SEO traffic to convert. Clickbait doesn't have any of these goals. The aim of clickbait articles is to get a person on their site and read as many pieces as possible. It's easy marketing and therefore sites will continue to use it.

7. Click bait will always have a negative connotation because of many websites having misleading headlines and catch phrases.

<https://xenlife.com.au/click-bait-internet-really-need>

3. As you have already learnt, in some cases clickbaits can become a powerful marketing tool. Discuss the so-called “clickbait secrets”. How do they work?

1. Content is secondary importance for most clickbait websites. Unlike traditional online or digital marketing, the aim of clickbait sites is to generate page views, which in turn generates into advertisement revenue. Clickbait sites don't usually sell any products or services or encourage opinions or a person's view. Clickbaits play on curiosity and tease you to make you click.

2. Most clickbait articles doesn't go for more than 700 words and heavily rely on video and images. Some of the successful click bait contents are barely 200–300 words with a short intro and a short conclusion.

3. Great content will always attract a good amount of external links. If you want to appeal and make people share your content, deliver value and not empty promises of interesting content.

<https://xenlife.com.au/click-bait-internet-really-need>

4. Consider the following clickbait techniques. Find examples of your own to illustrate each of them.

A recent study compiled frequently shared articles (those with hundreds of thousands of shares) and studied their titles to see what they had in common. The study found that 79 % of the articles had an element of shock in the title. 17 % were “listicles” and 29 % had “you”, “I”, or hinted to a personal story in the title. The study found the most common clickbait techniques include:

- listicles, which promise a specific number of “signs” or “tips” that you'll have to read, appealing to a low attention-span online reader base;
- “you” or “I” or a personal story;

- an animal;
- trending/breaking news topics;
- a pop culture or food reference;
- a new or unknown concept;
- an element of shock and excitement.

The study also found it is common for highly shared content to use multiple techniques within the same headline. 46 % of titles included at least three of the above techniques.

So, clickbait works – plain and simple. But is it right for *your* business?

<https://www.launchdigitalmarketing.com/are-clickbait-titles-good-or-bad>

5. Read the following commentary. Is it possible to create clickbait headlines that are *not* annoying the readers?

Want to drive droves of traffic to your social posts? Use clickbait headlines.

Want to potentially annoy your followers and readers? Use clickbait headlines.

That’s the catch-22 that so many modern marketers face when it comes to their content. They don’t want to contribute to the clickbait epidemic, but they know that a snappy title might be the difference between a flurry of clicks and yet another failed post.

<https://sproutsocial.com/insights/clickbait-headlines/>

6. Write a short article of 200 words for a popular Internet resource and think of a catchy title for it. Use 2–3 clickbait techniques in the title, aimed at grabbing the attention of your target audience. Explain why you think your article will be effective.

Task B

1. Read the following quotation and comment on it.

“If your business is not on the Internet, then your business will be out of business,” – Bill Gates.

2. Regardless of what goods you produce or what services you offer, your business has to be presented online. Don’t forget that your competitors are stepping foot on this soil as well, which means you have to be fully aware of existing Internet marketing techniques. Read the following extract and prove the point.

After years of going to the same hair salon, my wife had grown dissatisfied with her stylist. She wasn’t sure where to go, so she asked for a few recommendations on social media, which turned out to be too expensive or the salon didn’t have a time slot that would fit her busy work schedule. She then turned to Google and did a local search for hair salons in town. She found a few familiar names of places that had been recommended to her but she also found a few locations she hadn’t heard of yet. One by one she visited their websites, comparing their

hours, pricing, if available, and hair demos of previous clients. She then made a choice based on the results she found AND the comparisons she made using the hair salon's website! And you know, she's been a regular customer ever since. One simple Google search turned into a long-term customer for this hair salon. How many customers could your business gain with an online presence? How many customers are you losing because you don't have a website?

<https://navii.ca/web-development/if-your-business-is-not-on-the-internet-then-your-business-will-be-out-of-business-bill-gates/>

3. Yet there is another point of view: your business doesn't have to have a website to succeed. Read the following information and explain which approach is a more productive one.

About half of U.S. Businesses don't have a website.

Yes. That's right. Despite the growing number of computer, smart phone and mobile device Internet usage, some businesses still don't see the value in having an online presence. In a survey conducted by CNBC, 45 % of entrepreneurs stated that they did not have a business website. Some businesses rely on Facebook pages for their online presence, considering themselves too small to have a website or short on budget to invest in one. But a quick look at any restaurant, shopping mall or public arena and you are sure to see countless individuals on their phones using the Internet. Many businesses are missing out on potential leads simply because they don't have a website. Are you looking for a sure fire way to beat some of your competition? Start with a website. Some of your competitors don't even have a website, so they can't be found.

<https://navii.ca/web-development/if-your-business-is-not-on-the-internet-then-your-business-will-be-out-of-business-bill-gates/>

4. Read the information and itemize benefits of having a website for your business. Add two or three items to the list.

Websites play a role of trust in business

Trust. It's the cornerstone of any relationship. It's especially true in business relationships. No one wants to spend money with a company they don't trust. If your business doesn't have a website, consumers are less likely to trust you as being the real deal. In a study, 84% of consumers believe that a business with a website is more credible than a business without one. This means that if a consumer happens to find your business in a white pages listing or maybe even a social media page, if you don't have an actual website for your company, they are going to have trust issues with your brand and will take their business to your competitor instead. Don't let your competitors take your business because you don't have a website!

A website will promote your company 24/7

A website will communicate your brand consistently over and over again. A website can provide hundreds of consumers with your company information all at the same time. A website can promote your company at any given location,

place or time. A website is your most loyal employee because they never quit and will always work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. A website's sole purpose is to talk to your customers and tirelessly promote your business. No employee will do that.

Yikes! I need a website for my business

Yes you do! Having a website is an integral part of your business strategy. Aside from the benefits we've mentioned above, marketing is the most important one. There are lots of ways to advertise your products or services. Printed materials such as business cards, magazine ads and flyers are easily misplaced. TV and radio commercials have a time limit and air at preset times. A website provides a permanent location, with infinite possibilities for the information it can convey.

<https://navii.ca/web-development/if-your-business-is-not-on-the-internet-then-your-business-will-be-out-of-business-bill-gates/>

5. Effective marketing should also rely on “the four Ps” popular theory. This theory was developed for offline marketing, but can be effectively applied to online marketing as well. Read the following extracts and explain how this theory works for online marketing.

What Are the 4 Ps?

The four Ps of marketing are *product, price, place* and *promotion*. The four Ps of marketing are the key factors that are involved in the marketing of goods or services. They are often referred to as the marketing mix.

The four Ps are constrained by internal and external factors in the overall business environment, and they interact significantly with one another.

Each of the four Ps has its own tools to contribute to the marketing mix.

- *Product*: variety, quality, design, features, brand name, packaging, services.
- *Price*: list price, discounts, allowance, payment period, credit terms.
- *Place*: channels, coverage, assortments, locations, inventory, transportation, logistics.
- *Promotion*: advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations.

<https://learn.marsdd.com/article/the-marketing-mix-in-marketing-strategy-product-price-place-and-promotion/>

Pertaining to online marketing, the marketing mix is modified as follows.

1. *Product*. These are not just goods or services sold online. It is a complex solution offered to the client. The owner of an online shop cannot affect the quality of goods on display, as they do not produce these goods themselves. But they can think of an appealing “package” while selling goods on the Internet. An accurate description of goods will work for your benefit and help to attract clients.

2. *Price*. This variable triggers the decision to buy a product in 30 % of cases. But an attractive price is not enough. The prices should always be on display at your website. In case the prices are calculated individually, examples should be provided. And if you offer something at a higher price, it should be really worth it.

3. *Place*. It is a platform where the goods are available to the customers. These can be catalogues, social media or websites. Web pages should be user-friendly and, ideally, your site should rank high in terms of Internet search results.

4. *Promotion*. It involves advertisement, PR-materials, native ads, SEO, special events, etc. All of these call for planning, implementation and control on the Internet. While introducing a new product to the market, you'd better stick to wide-scale media resources in order to attract a larger audience.

<https://tutby.com/news/5303.html>

6. Here are some more online marketing tips found in various Internet resources. Rank them in the order of their importance.

- Match the results to your goals. Select criteria carefully.
- Retaining old clients is cheaper than attracting new ones.
- Articles published on popular platforms draw attention to your new product.
- You shouldn't solely rely on your company's strengths. Don't neglect weaknesses.
- Trace your clients' comments, paying special attention to negative feedback.
- Watch out for your competitors and try to outperform.
- Whenever possible, use several ways of online promotion.
- Use different methods of generating traffic.

7. Choose a Belarusian company you know well and work out its Internet marketing strategy. Present these online promotion tools to the class and prove that they are an integral part of the company's overall strategy.

• Solution implementation

1. As a PR specialist, prove that decoding an online message largely depends on the sender's image.

2. As an economist, consider the question: What is a more effective way of promotion – Internet or offline marketing?

3. As a company's marketer explain why you use (or don't use) clickbait to promote your product.

4. As an IT technician, prove that there is no silver bullet to stop Internet fraud.

5. As a popular blogger, write a post on the topic "Be smart. Be aware. Be careful".

**COMPETENCE DIAGNOSTICS.
TEST YOUR ONLINE/OFFLINE COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

Always, sometimes or never?

Consider the questions and choose answers as appropriate.

1. Traditional and Internet communication are structurally and functionally equivalent.

Always – sometimes – never.

2. In Internet slang words are misspelled and used incorrectly.

Always – sometimes – never.

3. Observing someone in a particular emotional state is likely to trigger the representation of that state in the observer.

Always – sometimes – never.

4. Popular modes of asynchronous Internet-based communication are not original. They had precursors in offline communication (in the pre-Internet era).

Always – sometimes – never.

5. Women are more active on social media.

Always – sometimes – never.

6. In terms of sense impressions it can convey, online communication is severely limited when compared to face-to-face communication.

Always – sometimes – never.

7. Netiquette and etiquette coincide largely.

Always – sometimes – never.

8. Everyone adopts a persona on social media.

Always – sometimes – never.

9. All social networks are the same, and their users behave in a similar way.

Always – sometimes – never.

10. Using Internet a lot is a sign of Internet Addiction Disorder.

Always – sometimes – never.

11. According to the rules of Netiquette, you should reply to spams.

Always – sometimes – never.

12. Internet trolling is anti-social.

Always – sometimes – never.

13. People bring Internet hashtags into the real world.

Always – sometimes – never.

14. The way we communicate – the punctuation, the syntax, the abbreviations we use – is dependent on the medium.

Always – sometimes – never.

15. Catfishing is socially accepted behaviour.

Always – sometimes – never.

16. Executives can text during board meetings.

Always – sometimes – never.

17. Over-hashtagging is bad.

Always – sometimes – never.

18. Just reading (i.e. consuming) content on social media is prohibited. You have to post.

Always – sometimes – never.

19. Individuals who are highly social in real life are likely to continue this behavior online.

Always – sometimes – never.

20. Social media usage is important for marketing.

Always – sometimes – never.

21. The sender's image is more relevant for decoding messages offline than online.

Always – sometimes – never.

22. Clickbait headlines are dishonest.

Always – sometimes – never.

23. Internet-based communication is briefer and less formal.

Always – sometimes – never.

24. You should use the same user name and password for every account.

Always – sometimes – never.

25. The English language is being affected by the Internet.

Always – sometimes – never.

26. Online interactions are devoid of emotions.

Always – sometimes – never.

27. People should keep their personal and business accounts on social media separate.

Always – sometimes – never.

28. It is OK to write multiple-page e-mail messages.

Always – sometimes – never.

29. Emoji are straightforward and easy to read.

Always – sometimes – never.

30. Online presence is relevant for business.

Always – sometimes – never.

K e y s: 1) never; 2) sometimes; 3) always; 4) always; 5) sometimes; 6) always; 7) sometimes; 8) always; 9) never; 10) sometimes; 11) never; 12) always; 13) sometimes; 14) always; 15) never; 16) sometimes; 17) always; 18) never; 19) always; 20) sometimes; 21) never; 22) sometimes; 23) sometimes; 24) never; 25) always; 26) sometimes; 27) sometimes; 28) never; 29) sometimes; 30) sometimes.

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