

# INFORMATION SOCIETY: SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF INTERNET RESOURCES ACTIVE USERS

## SOCIEDADE DA INFORMAÇÃO: CARACTERÍSTICAS SOCIO-PSICOLÓGICAS DOS USUÁRIOS ATIVOS DOS RECURSOS DA INTERNET

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**Abstract:** The relevance of this article is to study such a socio-psychological phenomenon as active internet users. Today we see that online communication's social practice has become a continuation of life as such, in all its dimensions and modalities. The purpose of the research is to study the modern Russian internet space and identify internet resource users' main socio-psychological features. As a research method, authors used a questionnaire survey to collect preliminary information, which allows them to identify the relationship between the use of internet resources and the development of certain socio-psychological traits of active users of internet resources. The article considers behavioral practices, worldview, social activity in groups with different levels of involvement in the online space, differences between active internet users and people who are not involved in the online space.

**Keywords:** Internet resources; socio-psychological profile; behavioral practices.

**Resumo:** A relevância deste artigo é estudar um fenômeno sócio-psicológico como os usuários ativos de internet. Hoje vemos que a prática social da comunicação online tornou-se uma continuação da vida como tal, em todas as suas dimensões e modalidades. O objetivo da pesquisa é estudar o espaço moderno da Internet na Rússia e identificar as principais características sócio-psicológicas dos usuários de recursos da Internet. Como método de pesquisa, os autores utilizaram o inquérito por questionário como método de recolha de informação primária, o que lhes permite identificar a relação entre a utilização de recursos da Internet e o desenvolvimento de determinados traços sociopsicológicos dos utilizadores ativos dos recursos da Internet. O artigo considera práticas comportamentais, visão de mundo, atividade social em grupos com diferentes níveis de envolvimento no espaço online, diferenças entre usuários ativos de internet e pessoas que não estão envolvidas no espaço online.

**Palavras-chave:** Recursos na internet; perfil sociopsicológico; práticas comportamentais.

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## Introduction

The internet as a mass media covers a significant audience of users, as other mass media. Of course, it should be borne in mind that the majority of internet technology users are the public under sixty-five years of age. Meanwhile, more and more people are connecting to the internet due to its accessibility and usability. The internet space is a kind of field for interpersonal communication, work, and study, especially in modern conditions of self-isolation, when it is especially necessary to distract from worries and concerns and transform your leisure activities (Usak et al., 2020). Communication groups with similar interests and unidirectional communications are beginning to form in the internet space. Moreover, what is important, these people are not separated by the boundaries of space and external conditions of life (Bazileva, 2002; Bondarenko, 2004; Wiener, 1984; Machnev & Cherdymova, 2019; Khanmurzina et al., 2020). As the fastest way to communicate, the internet changes the rules of information dissemination and perception habits (Zhebit, 2005; Klyuyev, 2002; Olkhovaya et al., 2019; Kagan, 1988; Cherdymova, 2010).

Social processes in the real environment are also subject to changes that begin in the internet space (Ivanov, 2000; Pospelov, 1998; Putilina et al., 2019). This relationship may also be related to the fact that internet technologies are constantly changing, developing and transforming, and by mastering them, users develop personally, which in turn leads to their changes in reality. Especially this transformation can be applied to the sphere of communication, as the most mobile and flexible. At the same time, users who are beginning to practice indirect communication more and more, replacing it with live and direct interaction, in turn, also affect the internet environment.

Such forecasts, according to which the internet will destroy the ability of people to establish and maintain real social contacts, are not confirmed and show the futility of creating models for developing a new sociality in the information society.

## Literature Review

The internet has become an integral, if not a system-forming part of modern society. In various theoretical approaches, it is understood as the main tool for social transformations, building an information society, or even a so-called network society (Markov, 2000; Arestova, Babanin & Voiskunsky, 2000; Voiskunsky, 2000; Khokhlova, 2006).

The degree of scientific development of the internet, as well as all actively developing social practices, is not comparable to the significance of its role in the modern world. Researchers rely on previously developed theoretical models and do not have time to solve the new challenges that the transforming society puts before them. At this stage, internet space research is very popular among scientists of various Sciences. Scientists study several problems most actively. This is the role of the internet in creating social capital and, on the contrary, isolating individuals; the influence of the internet on politics and elections, e-business and culture; the internet as a space of freedom and control, anonymity and openness, virtual relationships, and so on. In some areas, such as online communities, there are several materials that need to be constantly re-evaluated. However, due to the high speed of the internet network development, and the lack of a unified scientific approach based on existing data, it is not possible to comprehend and describe the modern Russian internet space and users of internet resources (Pleshakov, 2009; Inozemtsev, 2000; Beck, 2000).

According to many authors, the logic of network communications has become dominant and is destroying communication models that do not correspond to it. The role of traditional social communities in mass communications has begun to decline (Shcherbina, 2001; Grachev, 2001; Tikhomirov, Babayeva & Voiskunsky, 1986; Jacobson, 1985). The logic of network communications begins to form the nature of all communication processes, including mass communications, despite the fact that about half of the population is directly involved in network communications. First, this is determined by the fact that opinion leaders in the vast majority already belong to communities represented on the internet. Nevertheless, the most important thing is not even a formal affiliation to network communities, but a functional dependence on their language, codes, and communication organization. It is important to emphasize the

impact of increasing speed of network communications and redundancy of information arrays.

## Research Methods

The proposed study is a questionnaire survey that allows you to make statistically based estimates of the internet's current presence in the form of residents' distribution by their degree of involvement in the internet: from active users of the network to those who have never encountered it. Information about an increasingly significant part of society as active internet users is important for predicting the future development of society. The sample size is 200 respondents. The sample structure is a quota-based two-stage random sample. Quotas are set by gender and age of respondents, as well as the proportion of rural and urban residents. This means that phone numbers are selected randomly from the General telephone database, and the Respondent in the family is selected according to a quota sample (a Respondent of a certain gender and age). The sample represents the adult population by gender and age. The population over 15 years old participates in the survey. Respondents who meet the selection criteria are invited to the survey: gender-age characteristics (quotas related for gender and age); belonging to a certain type of settlement; permanent residence in this regional group (at least one year). The objectives of the study are: to determine the features of the socio-demographic portrait of groups with different levels of involvement in the internet space; to determine the motivation for using internet resources or the reasons for refusing it; to identify socio-professional orientations, self-assessment of social mobility opportunities in these groups; to identify forms of social and political activity manifestation, as well as apolitical; to find out the features of social behavior related to communication, building friendships and personal relationships; to determine the main habits and preferred forms of news information perception; to identify the features of cultural consumption.

Example of questions used in the study:

- When was the last time you used the internet? (It does not matter at work or at home).
- Do you use the internet only for work or in your free time for yourself too?
- Do you want to use the internet?
- How long have you been an internet user?
- On days when you use the internet, how many hours a day, do you use it?
- Do you prefer to use the internet on weekdays or weekends?
- Which of the following is more relevant to what you do online:
  - creating your own content;
  - leaving thoughts about other people's videos;
  - Secondary placement of other people's information on your page or wall;
  - Reading, viewing posted videos, etc.
  
- Evaluate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements regarding the internet space:
  - I like to encourage other users to react aggressively.
  - In the internet space, it is easy for me to express my views that I am shy or afraid to express in a real environment.
  - I suffer from internet addiction.
  - I use mostly the same sites every day.
  - In the internet space, I express my ideas and thoughts in the way I want, without limiting myself and without much control.
  - I listen to music mostly online.
  - The internet environment is a great field for finding like-minded people.
  - When choosing a movie or book, I focus on the recommendations of specialized sites.
  - The internet has replaced other media for me.
  - The internet allows me to meet my need for communication.
  - I prefer live communication to communication on the internet.
  - The internet gives new advantages for my career (business), hobby.
  - If I need specific information, I will search for it first on the internet.

- The internet gives me the opportunity to learn many new things.
- In the internet environment, I take an active position by registering on several platforms.

## Results and Discussion

This study assesses the volume of the audience with the question: did you ever use the internet resources? If so, when was the last time? According to it, one can estimate the volume of daily and weekly audience, the share of those who have ever used internet resources, and those who have not used it. It can be assumed that the lack of need to use internet resources and negative attitude towards them are common because those who refuse to use internet resources are in older age groups that are hard to accept new social practices.

A common view about the predominance of young people among the internet audience is confirmed. However, the share of users in middle-aged and older groups is quite high. The majority of people over 65 do not use the internet, and their share will decrease as generations change and technologies become cheaper. From the experience of Western countries, it is known that after achieving a high level of internet penetration, growth continues at the expense of the older age group. With limited opportunities for an active lifestyle, pensioners can get many benefits from using the internet space. However, in Russia, their standard of living and lack of opportunities to learn new technologies do not allow them to use this resource yet. Although recently, there has been an increase in advertising to strengthen the focus on the education of pensioners in the field of internet use. In addition to the age among active users, there is a large percentage of students who have studied at universities. Thus, the percentage of people who use internet resources among students at universities is 64%. In the group of people who used the internet just yesterday, the total share of specialists with higher than working qualifications is 61%, and another 15% in this group are students. In the group of those who do not use the internet, the share of qualified specialists is 14%; there are no students in this group. This can be interpreted in two ways. On the one hand, the use of internet resources is necessary for people who have a high professional status, on the other hand, we can consider the hypothesis that the internet affects ambitions, and, as a result, affects the level of professional achievements.

In general, more than half (57%) of internet users have 12 years or more of online experience. At the same time, only 8% of users use the internet only for work, and 38%, on the contrary, use it only outside of work. Half (52%) of users use the internet both at work and at home. At the same time, users who make up the daily audience have more access to the internet at work. More than half (57%) of the weekly audience (not including those who were online in the last 24 hours) do not have access to the internet at work and use it only in their free time.

Every sixth Respondent (18%) takes a weekend break from the internet, while on weekdays almost a third (31%) uses it for 1-2 hours. Every tenth user devotes the weekend to the internet and uses it for more than 8 hours (13%), a third (31%) of the daily audience participates in creating it in their own. As for those who used the internet during the week, their share is one-fifth (19%). In addition, users can influence the formation of the internet space by commenting on materials and creating reposts. Two-thirds of internet users (67%) have at least one page in social networks. The most common social network was Vkontakte, with another 32% registered in Odnoklassniki. Each user creates and maintains more than one page, which probably indicates that each individual user has several goals for an internet presence, and they cannot satisfy them in just one of the social networks. Almost three out of every four girls who have more or less regular internet access (81%) created at least one page on social networks, but among men only slightly more than half (56%) did so. It is likely that men use the internet as a tool for searching and posting information, while women use it as a means of direct and personal communication.

Comparing the attitude to news and culture in a group of users with those who do not use online, you can see the following: in terms of social contacts and communication between different groups of internet users, the motives of users differ more markedly. So, if among

active users the implementation of the corporate motive, the motive of cooperation gets a neutral rating (i.e. it is possible for individual users and cases), then among those who used the internet more than a week ago, this possibility is denied. Social networks, which are considered a waste of time, also receive a negative rating in this group. In a group of active users, respondents tend to deny this statement. The attitude to the internet as a place of access to information, news and cultural products among active users is as follows: everything can be found on the internet; the internet gives me the opportunity to learn a lot of new things; if I need specific information, I will look for it primarily on the internet; I trust information on the internet more than in other media; it is important for me to discuss the news with other users and read comments; the internet has replaced other media for me; I listen to music mainly online; when choosing a movie or book, I rely on the recommendations of specialized sites. Among the habits of communication and social contacts of internet users, the following can be distinguished: on the internet, I find like-minded people to work together; I consider social networks a waste of time; thanks to technology, people have become more connected with each other; I do not seek to change my personality traits on the internet; I like to provoke other users to aggressive reactions; I Express my ideas and thoughts in the internet space as I want, without limiting myself and not controlling much; the internet allows me to satisfy my need for communication and understanding; the internet environment is a great field for finding like-minded people; I prefer live communication to communication on the internet; In the online environment, I take an active role by signing up on multiple platforms; the internet provides new benefits for my career (business); I don't know English very well, I find it hard to find information in English and use English language sites; for me the internet is the opportunity to relax; with the internet to do many things easier; I use mainly the same sites every day; in the internet space I find it easy to Express their views which I am too shy or afraid to Express in the real environment. In addition, the results of active users' statements of online resources about the way of life and consumption seem interesting; I prefer a quiet retreat; try to reduce the harm that is caused by my activity to the environment; it is important to continue to learn throughout life; emotional impulse does not affect me and I don't make useless purchases; I buy clothes only when necessary; try not to buy products which do not approve of; due to the busy lifestyle I badly look after my health; I am not a bad judge of medicine and can cope with my own ailments; I learn a lot of new things thanks to television; I read every issue of Newspapers and magazines (printed) that I used to buy; I have sufficient (complete) information about the news in the world and in the country; I follow the latest movies, new music albums and books. In addition, active users are characterized by a lack of tendency to change their features in the online space, a rejection of the practice of *trolling* and more rigid communication on the internet. Those who use it occasionally tend to seek understanding and support, as well as to satisfy the need for communication. Thus, we can say that the ideas in which an active user appears as a socially isolated individual who seeks to compensate for his/her social failures on the internet do not find confirmation.

## Conclusions

The relevance of the research is that the description of trends that are forming in the internet, and the characteristics of users, will allow us to assess the role of the internet in Russian society and the lives of individuals. The scientific value of the research consists in obtaining new knowledge about the actively developing sphere of the internet space and its impact on society and its various groups. The social benefit of the project is to gain knowledge about different, heterogeneous levels of social and communicative activity of social groups, which with the development of the internet can receive certain roles, including the role of the most active part of society, which has a great innovative potential for its change.

It should be remembered that by using internet resources for communication, work, and study, we change ourselves as well as change the internet environment itself. A new symbiotic structure has emerged that influences the real environment and the socio-psychological profile of active users.

The internet environment is quite a flexible and transforming structure, which in turn



dictates certain social and psychological consequences.

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