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Natalia Maria RUMAN

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7127-7651>

University of Silesia, Faculty of Arts and Sciences on Education, Poland

Contact: natalia.ruman@us.edu.pl

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The Dangers of Adolescents Resulting from Internet Use. A Reflection on the Example of Two Secondary Schools, in Pszczyna and Český Těšín

Abstract

The Internet these days has endless possibilities. It is used in virtually every human activity. The purpose of this article is not to demonize the Internet but to examine various dimensions of how young people function in the virtual world. The goal is also to determine what negatives students face and what positives result from using this technology.

The first part will present the most essential news in the new media field and, in particular, the characteristics of the Internet. Issues related to various aspects of Internet use will be addressed – from the psychological mechanisms of Internet use by young people through media education and the dangers of various online activities to the socio-practical phenomena occurring in the digital world.

The knowledge gained through the theoretical part will form the basis for conducting empirical research. The purpose of the research will be to determine the importance of Computer and Internet use in the lives of secondary school students. The results of this research discussed, together with their elaboration and the presentation of ways to counteract the threats and methods of positive use of the Internet, can be a valuable source of helpful knowledge both in the pedagogical work of those involved in education and valuable for parents, since they are most responsible for the education of their children in the use of media.

Keywords: Internet, computer use, cyberbullying, youth media use.

Introduction

The Internet "is the fabric of our lives. If information processing technology were to be considered today's equivalent of what electricity was in the industrial age, then the Internet, because of its ability to transmit the power of information to all spheres of human activity, could be likened to both an electric grid and an electric motor." as a well-known media scholar, Manuel Castells, describes the importance of the Internet network. It is hard not to agree with these words, given that the Internet has become not only a tool used by 2,3 billion people in the world (or about 33% of the world's total population) but also a tool that determines the organization of essential enterprises of economic, social, political and cultural dimensions. Navigating the areas of the Internet "creates almost unlimited opportunities to acquire various types of information and shapes several psychophysical functions: reflexes, motor coordination, and ability to focus attention. In addition, it develops knowledge and interests. It allows people to make new contacts." (Castells, 2003, pp. 23–24).

The Computer is an attractive tool, which is due to several factors, including the fact that excluding unexpected failures – it is always ready to work; it creates the possibility of repeatedly returning to the same content; it gives a sense of influence over what is happening; it helps in effective learning; for players who win with the Computer, it gives a sense of increased satisfaction, while for those who lose, it does not create a sense of great defeat; it allows one to relieve stress and emotions; it facilitates communication; and it allows one to meet some needs that are difficult to meet in real life. (Augustynek, 2010, pp. 8–9; Techmańska, 2019, p. 246).

Computers and the Internet are also tools for work, and no one needs to be convinced that they facilitate work in almost all fields. Computers also help people with disabilities. Of course, the use of these devices and media can be associated with many negative consequences, among which are Internet crime, excessive fascination with the Internet, verbal aggression, the destructive impact of computer games on the psyche of their users, as well as health problems resulting from excessive time spent in front of a computer screen (Kamieniecki et al., 2017, pp. 31–34).

As Ryszard Tadeusiewicz points out, "For psychologists dealing with personality issues, it is obvious that the personality traits of an Internet user are revealed (among other things) in the form of the ways he uses the Internet. It can also be thought that certain psychological traits make people more inclined to use the network, while others are more conducive to shying away from using the Internet. It is also related to gender, age, and education. A particular person's psychological profile and personality traits also have a lot to say here. Moreover, the relationship between the Internet and the psyche can be two-

way. On the one hand, a particular person's psychological silhouette may determine whether and how he or she uses the Web, but on the other hand, it can also be expected that Web use (especially long and intensive use) affects the psyche. However, it is not yet known exactly how." (Tadeusiewicz, 2002, pp. 18–19; Angielczyk, 2019, p. 58).

A symptom of Internet abuse in the life of an individual that is closely related to the perspective of cognitive-behavioural psychology is FOMO (fear of missing out). The fear of "falling out of the loop" is the feeling that something fundamental will be missed if we "disconnect from the network" for a while. The most vulnerable to the harmful effects of psychological mechanisms of Computer and Internet use are children and adolescents, especially those who use it regularly from an early age. As early as two years old, children demand to be allowed to use the Computer – they want to press keyboard keys, put on headphones, and watch photos or videos on the Computer. This activity requires the help of parents, but the child, observing adults at the Computer, on his initiative, insists on it (Laska, 2006, pp. 105–106; Skoczylas, 2023, pp. 118–119). The principles instilled in a child will directly impact their future Internet use. The Internet is becoming their source of knowledge on all sorts of issues. Young people make numerous friends on the Internet. They are very active on social networks, upload their photos to the Web without restraint, and express all kinds of opinions without restraint. At this time, virtual self-creation is as essential (or sometimes more important) as others' perceptions in the real world. Comparing oneself and one's ordinary life with the colourful world created on the Internet can make young people feel depressed and worthless (Chocholska, Osipczuk, 2009, pp. 33–34).

Functioning in virtual reality is related to the culture we can observe in today's society. Zbyszko Melosik pointed out the connection between popular culture, which is seen as a factor of socialization, and growing up in a media society. Modern culture is primarily characterized by consumerism, immediacy, the rapid pace of change, the disappearance of great ideals, the cult of the body, youth and sexuality, appearances and schematicity. These cultural features are compounded by the media, which promote a specific pattern of life even though people seem to be individual, diverse individuals (Melosik, 2000, p. 41; Witek, 2018, p. 40).

Almost every member of society strives for social success – having a good job, prosperity, and position. "Social messages – propagated by the mass media – proclaim: "You can't be a failure." In doing so, there are two basic contexts for success. Pursuing power determines the first, position (standing) and money, the second by so-called popular fame." It means that there is only one fundamental path to happiness. Getting too deeply involved in ideas or ambitious activities is received with disapproval. Z. Melosik also introduced the concept of

"instant culture," which refers to the habit and necessity of living a life of "immediacy" typical of our times." According to the author, the "rule of immediacy" also prevails on the Internet – "any message can be entered instantly. Free movement through information, cultures and societies is also possible. The prism of immediacy in modern culture has a huge impact on the identity and lifestyle of young people. Modern youth expects immediacy. They don't want to and can't wait." It is why children raised from birth in a culture shaped by the media, and to a large extent by new media, are highly susceptible to all its negative influences. It is exploited by marketing and advertising specialists, TV producers, and manufacturers of movies, games, music, and equipment. Even the youngest children want to own branded products, to be "up to date" and in line with current fashion (Melosik, 2008, pp. 98–102).

Therefore, it is worth looking at the psychological mechanisms that occur while using computers, computer games and the Internet. According to neuroscientists, children's ability to absorb and process media content depends on their experiences, specific circumstances, cognitive maturity, social environment, or cultural placement. "The perception and processing of images is a complex process in which many factors must be considered. (...) The impact of images on the viewer is tremendously relativized, as both children and adults perceive the images differently. (...) Only images that have some significant meaning will embed themselves in the brain and be permanently stored in it." (Holtkamp, 2010, p. 48; Jastrzębska, 2020, p. 97).

Whether a particular image is vital to a child may depend on whether the child assimilates it alone or in a group, personal interests, age and maturity. Which images will be absorbed by children and adolescents, how their brains will process them, and whether this will trigger negative behaviour is therefore not obvious or straightforward to pin down (Griffiths, 2004, p. 43). Children born after 1980 are even referred to as digital natives, meaning people characterized by growing up surrounded by media and the ability to use many simultaneously (Forma, 2006, pp. 66–67; Jopek, Kinda, 2019, pp. 78–80).

It is essential in the modern world to educate audiences on the proper use of means of communication, to make them aware of the mechanisms of the media, and, in particular, to inform them about the dangers of their improper use. The urgent need to educate for the reception of the media (that is, in today's terms, the need to conduct media education) was taken up (even in the Church!) in the Vatican II decree *Inter Mirifica*, issued in 1963: "The special task of these offices will be to see to it that the consciences of the faithful are properly formed in the field of the use of these means, as well as to support and guide all actions that Catholics take in this field." (Denek, 2000, p. 22).

Literature review

R. Kośła wrote about cyber threats, stating that they are actions that block, distort or destroy information processed, stored or transmitted in ICT systems. He also points out that using these systems leads to disinformation, as the target of the attack is the information, not the system itself (Kośła, 2018, p. 18). I. Oleksiewicz, meanwhile, states that cyberbullying is one of the main threats to the world in the 21st century. (Oleksiewicz, 2018, p. 54).

The currently increasing number of young people at risk of addiction is becoming a social problem. Media reports and appeals from the scientific community are not indifferent to the growing threats to the development of children and adolescents. Thus, questions become topical not only about the causes and determinants of these phenomena but also about contemporary approaches and methods in diagnostic and therapeutic practice, i.e., the question of their effectiveness in the first place. The following article reviews contemporary theoretical approaches and trends in therapeutic interventions for children and adolescents (Kusztal, Piasecka, 2018, pp. 89–93).

Nomophobia and Phubbing are negative phenomena associated with the prevalence of smartphones and unlimited access to the Internet. Individual and social changes in behaviour conditioned by the ubiquity of smartphones require an analysis of these two types of problematic Internet use. Both types of behaviour are particularly prominent among teenagers. The article reveals the extent of nomophobia and phubbing among adolescents in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the link between these phenomena and well-being and the influence of the family on the style of smartphone use among young people (Tomczyk, Selmanagic, 2022, p. 46).

To guard against the disastrous consequences of cyber addictions, young people often conduct online searches for explanations of failures and crises experienced in everyday life. They find help by running sites that offer cybertherapy. This therapy is aimed at people who, for various reasons (e.g. lack of time, shyness), do not want to have a face-to-face session with a psychotherapist. Online psychotherapy comes in many forms (Jaroszevska, 2024, p. 5). It can be conducted via e-mail, live video sessions (Skype), chat or text messaging (SMS). The main advantage of e-therapy is its speed, which is focused on short-term contact. What is more, the price is also attractive compared to therapy conducted through traditional methods. On the other hand, it has disadvantages, such as the lack of emotional contact between the patient and psychotherapist, the impersonal relationship and the possibility of misunderstandings (Makara-Studzińska, Madej, 2017, pp. 23–24).

The Internet is a threat and a communication tool for young people. The article's authors presented the positives, showing Facebook as a tool for information management (Popiołek, Nierenberg, 2017, p. 96).

Adolescents form online groups, seek out authority figures, and form friendships. Contexts and structures of relating to others: how membership in different groups shapes the construction of interpersonal relationships, shows an article examining youth from Portugal (Brito et al., 2011, pp. 423–424).

Young people learn information literacy through technology (Koltay et al., 2011, p. 60).

It is essential to make classes or lessons more interesting with various technological innovations, as shown by the article's authors on blended learning (Spanjers et al., 2015, p. 61).

For a discussion of gender similarities that increase students' motivation to participate in STEM, see the article titled Focusing on gender similarities increases female students' motivation to participate (Jaško, Dukąła, Szastok, 2019, pp. 474–476).

Another article aims to demonstrate the importance of subjective reinforcement value when applying gamification elements in developing mobile applications and their use in educational and health promotion work. (Łosiak-Pilch, 2018, p. 202).

Risks associated with computer use

Too much time spent in front of the Computer leads to disorganization of the day and a reduction in time that should be spent on other duties or more constructive leisure activities. In turn, the wrong time of day for computer use affects the child, preventing him or her from taking a light, media-free rest or interfering with the concentration necessary for learning. The range of content available on the Internet is also questionable due to its moral and social nature and huge volume. Too much information causes chaos, confusion and, in younger children, anxiety or fear. This mix of "content of widely varying social, moral meaning, lacking a reliable cultural basis, an explosion of advertising slogans leads to the child's perception of the real world through the prism of media images. (...) Abnormal relations between the child and the media can lead to destructive changes in the cognitive sphere of the child's personality." (Izdebska, 2008, p. 216; Siedlecka, Żukiewicz-Sobczak, Sobczuk, 2019, p. 35). In turn, watching violence leads to children acquiring "aggressive behaviours, increased levels of aggression, emotional desensitization, disturbed perception of the real role of violence in society, acquisition of impulsive and egocentric tendencies, stimulation of new aggressive behaviours, use of vulgarities." (Siemieniecki, 2012, p. 27).

The importance of two other dangers of improper media use is also worth noting. The first is the passive reception of content, which involves the unreflec-

tive absorption of messages (Szpunar, 2005, p. 378; Maj, 2019, pp. 144–145). It causes intellectual laziness, indiscriminateness, inhibition of creative activity and development of imagination, creativity, absorption of vulgarisms, and linguistically incorrect phrases, a generally negative impact on intellectual development. The second threat is adverse health effects – ophthalmic, neurological, and orthopaedic. Prolonged staring at a screen can result in myopia, conjunctivitis, burning, irritation, tearing, sudden loss of visual acuity, and changes in colour perception (Stunża, 2012, p. 29). In addition, the computer screen is a source of several types of radiation: ionizing, thermal, optical and electrostatic fields. Neurologically, on the other hand, excessive time spent at the Computer can cause anxiety, hyperactivity, feelings of restlessness and fear, and a tendency to aggression. In turn, limiting outdoor exercise at the expense of time spent in front of a monitor causes skeletal conditions, including postural defects, decreased physical fitness, scoliosis, decreased muscle mass, obesity, and neck and back pains (Ordon, Skoczylas-Krotla, 2003, pp.142–143).

Internet use is also linked to the danger of exposure to violence and pornography. Violence on the Internet is linked to the huge availability of computer games (downloadable or online), abounding in scenes of aggression. Through computer games, each person can test their skills in scenarios from horror movies or thrillers (Kozak, 2011, p. 34). "The Computer offers a beautiful world, an extension of the real play area. (...) Violent computer games can provide a model of aggressive behaviour here (...). However, as psychologists and sociologists emphasize, the decisive causes triggering violence lie outside the virtual world. They are to be seen in the truly experienced and psychologically unneutralized traumas from school or the family home." (Huber, Neuschaffer, 2003, p. 50–51; Kim, 2018, p. 668).

Children and teenagers are very eager to create accounts on social networks. The principle of "if you're not on Facebook, it means you don't exist" is being beaten. The space of social networks, especially Facebook, provides an additional social area for meetings, communication and social life (Borkowska, Witkowska, 2009, p. 10). Having an account comes with several risks. First, young people are all too eager to share all kinds of information about themselves on forums. Social networks encourage disclosing personal information, age, school, place of residence, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, instant messenger numbers, and Skype. "Children and adolescents quickly forget that their data is available to the general anonymous public, and the younger a community member is, the more private information he or she reveals." (Figurska, 2012, p. 29–30). The second aspect of the use of social networks is the posting of a vast number of photos, documenting travels, possessions, events, and often photographs showing oneself in an erotic capacity.

Meanwhile, such photos can be seriously harmful. After all, family, teachers, and strangers also have access to them. Possession of a compromising photo

can cause many problems, not necessarily in the present but also in the distant future, because one never knows whether the photo has not been copied and is stored somewhere (Barlińska, 2009, p. 107).

Based on the above considerations, it can be concluded that the use of the Internet, especially by young or inexperienced users, should be subjected to regular monitoring and combined with prevention at home and school. Awareness of the dangers arising from the seemingly most straightforward forms of Internet activity can protect children, adolescents, and their parents from many difficult and problematic situations.

Computer and Internet use – in the opinion of surveyed students

The subject of the research in this article is the collective of students of secondary schools in Pszczyna and Český Těšín, and their opinions on Computer and Internet use. The aim of the research, in turn, is to determine the importance of Computer and Internet use in the lives of adolescents. These studies were analyzed many times, contributing to many research concepts in articles on this topic.

Growing from the same Slavic roots, Poland and the Czech Republic are culturally similar. Centuries of development side by side have made us neighbouring countries. Young people in Poland and the Czech Republic think alike and have similar experiences using the Internet.

The theoretical goal was to deepen young people's knowledge about the use of the Internet and the problems associated with this phenomenon. The practical goal allowed for the development of practical tips for teachers and parents who observe the activities of children and young people on the Internet. Parents and teachers must bear in mind that the presence of young people on the Internet is inseparable from the changing technological reality. They should only be warned of the dangers and supported when they forget about the principles of anti-cyberbullying.

The research problems formulated for this paper have been posed so that answers can be found in the research process. Obtaining these answers will carry out the tasks – acquiring knowledge to determine whether modern teenagers can live without computers and the Internet, whether they have experienced digital violence, how vital the Computer and the Internet are to them and whether it is already possible to talk about the problem of Internet addiction or other problems associated with excessive use of computers and the Internet. The analysis of our research will also allow us to determine what is the level of media competence of adolescents, what is their awareness of the safe use of the Internet, the ability to select valuable content accurately and to determine the attitude of parents toward the amount of time their children use the Internet.

Material and Methods

Providing a comprehensive and factually correct answer to the formulated main research problem requires its decomposition into specific problems. Because of this, the following specific problems and corresponding specific hypotheses were identified. The research problem, which is the subject of the research undertaken, took the form of the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the most severe challenges and threats to youth cyber security distinguished?

RQ2: What are the potential problems associated with youth Internet use?

RQ3: According to the youth, what are the parents' solutions to protecting youth from the dangers of Internet access?

RQ4: What health changes do adolescents see as a result of prolonged time in front of the Computer?

In response to the research questions posed, the following research hypotheses were formulated:

H1: The most severe challenges to youth cyber security are the increasing time they use the Internet and the associated strong attachment to electronic devices electronic devices and excessive online activity.

H2: Potential problems for young people are hate speech, sharing images without permission, and ridicule.

H3: The only action taken to protect youth by parents is the intervention of taking away Internet access as a punishment for bad behaviour or failure to keep one's word.

H4: Adolescents have trouble seeing changes in health and appearance as consequences of prolonged time in front of the Computer.

The research confirmed the hypotheses.

Unfortunately, the youth surveyed use the Internet excessively and become potential recipients of hate speech and negative opinions, including ridicule. Parents are not informed in schools on how to talk to their children about technology use prevention. Simply banning Internet use for some time does not help young people understand the risks. Even health problems that affect young people are not an alarming factor.

Procedure

The presented research uses the survey method. Surveys include all types of social phenomena of importance for upbringing, as well as states of social awareness, opinions and views of specific communities, the growth of the studied phenomena, their tendencies, and their intensity (Maszke 2008, p. 157). The

survey technique was used. It is a technique with a high degree of self-activity, and the role of the respondents comes down to distributing and collecting questionnaires. A survey is a standardized technique of receiving information in the process of communicating in writing without the intermediation of the examiner. In addition, the scaling method was used in the research. In the statistical literature, the Likert scale is treated as an ordinal or interval scale, and it seems that the more complex the scale, the greater the tendency to treat it as an interval scale. The advantage of this scale over simple scales is evident in the fact that individual positions on the scale cannot affect the final measurement result significantly. Considering the scale being constructed, these positions are supposed to balance each other.

In contrast, the specific properties of the simple scale can significantly impact the conclusions drawn from the research (Maszke 2008, p. 232). For this article, a 5-point Likert scale was used in the research. The task of the examined person is to respond to each question and select one of the five answers: 1 – I agree; 2 – rather yes; 3 – I have no opinion; 4 – I tend to disagree; 5 – I have to disagree.

The Internet Threats Questionnaire consisted of 10 statements containing an estimated scale with a five-point Likert scale. The tool consisted of one part related to knowledge and skills and referred to implementing and reflecting on preventive measures in everyday life.

The article uses the results of both the quantitative and qualitative parts of the survey, conducted from September 2023 to May 2024 among adolescents aged 15-19 in two secondary schools – K. Miarka District School Complex No. 2 and Albrechtová Stredni Szkola in Český Těšín.

Measures: The quantitative part involved surveying a representative sample of 1650 (1700 total questionnaires were distributed, but only 1650 returned) respondents at two Outposts.

The statistical breakdown of respondents by gender of the two schools

Table 1
Distribution of respondents by gender and place of residence

Category	LP	%
woman PL	364	22.06
male PL	342	20.72
woman CZ	436	26.43
male CZ	508	30.79
total	1650	100

Source: Own work

The group was pretty homogeneous in terms of place of residence, as it included only 87 people (47 from Poland and 30 from the Czech Republic) living in rural areas, who accounted for only 5.27% of the respondents, 2.85% among Polish youth and 1.82% among Czech youth. It makes it unwarranted to analyze further the relationship between the place of residence and the danger hidden on the Internet. Women accounted for 22.06% of the Polish group and 26.43% of the Czech group. In contrast, men in the Polish group accounted for 20.72% and 30.79% in the Czech group.

The research project had the following objectives:

- To determine the magnitude of prevalence and risk factors of Internet abuse among adolescents;
- To qualitatively analyze the phenomenon of Internet abuse among young people;
- raising public awareness of the problem of Internet abuse among young people.

The first objective was to be achieved primarily through quantitative survey research, while the second was to be achieved primarily through extensive qualitative research based on in-depth individual interviews.

For the quantitative survey, the research procedure was as follows: The schools were informed by phone about the procedure, and I asked for their consent to participate. To both schools, I delivered questionnaires. At each school, as the person responsible for conducting the survey, I participated in conducting the survey. The young people filled out the questionnaires during class (usually parenting lessons). Beforehand, the respondents were informed about the purpose of the survey and the procedure for filling out the questionnaire.

As for the qualitative research – the interviews took place at the respondents' schools, where they could have a one-on-one conversation with the researcher. (Most often, it was the office of an educator). The interviews were conducted on general dispositions developed jointly for all project participants. Most questions were open-ended, and respondents were encouraged to narrate freely. The interviews were recorded and then subject to transcription.

During the interview, the following questions were asked:

1. What websites do you most often view, and why do you use them? What do you use them for?
2. Describe a problem encountered while using the Internet.
3. Describe online anonymity and comment on it, pointing out the positives or negatives.
4. What health problems or bodily changes have you observed in yourself during prolonged Internet use?
5. What was your reaction to cyber-aggression encountered on the Internet?

Table 2
Survey results by gender of respondents

Q1 Do you use the Internet for more than 7 hours a day?	woman PL	%	male PL	%	woman CZ	%	male CZ	%
Definitely yes	32	1,94	41	2,48	15	0,9	14	0,84
Rather yes	68	4,12	72	4,36	68	4,12	101	6,12
I do not have an opinion	22	1,33	31	1,88	30	1,81	52	3,2
Rather no	163	9,87	102	6,18	198	12	181	10,97
Definitely no	79	4,79	96	5,82	125	7,57	160	9,7
Q2 You use a strictly scientific website to help you solve your homework	woman PL	%	male PL	%	woman CZ	%	male CZ	%
Definitely yes	113	6,85	129	7,82	223	13,52	309	18,73
Rather yes	85	5,15	104	6,3	134	8,12	121	7,33
I do not have an opinion	26	1,57	75	4,54	46	2,79	67	4,06
Rather no	108	6,54	26	1,57	22	1,33	4	0,24
Definitely no	32	1,94	8	0,48	11	0,67	7	0,42
Q3 You use social networking sites to establish relationships	woman PL	%	male PL	%	woman CZ	%	male CZ	%
Definitely yes	268	16,24	287	17,39	302	18,3	397	24,06
Rather yes	76	4,6	41	2,48	74	4,48	104	6,3
I do not have an opinion	11	0,67	2	0,12	38	2,3	6	0,36
Rather no	8	0,48	6	0,36	3	0,18	1	0,06
Definitely no	1	0,06	6	0,36	19	1,15	0	0
Q4 You go to erotic sites	woman PL	%	male PL	%	woman CZ	%	male CZ	%
Definitely yes	12	0,73	9	0,54	16	0,97	14	0,85
Rather yes	23	1,39	14	0,84	26	1,57	46	2,79
I do not have an opinion	33	2	24	1,45	51	3,09	52	3,15
Rather no	62	3,76	78	4,73	96	5,82	125	7,57
Definitely no	234	14,18	217	13,15	247	14,97	271	16,42
Q5 The problem you encountered on the Internet was hate	woman PL	%	male PL	%	woman CZ	%	male CZ	%
Definitely yes	326	19,76	285	17,27	361	21,88	430	26,06
Rather yes	32	1,94	49	2,97	54	3,27	57	3,45
I do not have an opinion	3	0,18	6	0,36	18	1,09	11	0,67
Rather no	1	0,06	2	0,12	3	0,18	4	0,24
Definitely no	2	0,12	0	0	0	0	6	0,36

Table 2 (cont.)

Q6 You have encountered that your photos or videos have been posted without your consent.									
Definitely yes	168	10,18	119	7,21	210	12,73	298	18,06	
Rather yes	146	8,85	180	10,9	171	10,36	144	8,73	
I do not have an opinion	28	1,7	34	2,06	41	2,48	40	2,42	
Rather no	13	0,79	9	0,54	14	0,85	17	1,03	
Definitely no	9	0,54	0	0	0	0	9	0,54	
Q7 The most significant danger on the Internet is the inability to be anonymous									
	woman PL	%	male PL	%	woman CZ	%	male CZ	%	
Definitely yes	286	17,33	237	14,36	214	12,97	250	15,15	
Rather yes	57	3,45	72	4,36	125	7,57	203	12,3	
I do not have an opinion	13	0,79	22	1,33	26	1,57	35	2,12	
Rather no	4	0,24	6	0,36	7	0,42	9	0,54	
Definitely no	4	0,24	5	0,3	64	3,88	11	0,67	
Q8 I would be able to survive 3 days without the Internet									
	woman PL	%	male PL	%	woman CZ	%	male CZ	%	
Definitely yes	13	0,79	10	0,6	22	1,33	16	0,97	
Rather yes	26	1,57	28	1,69	49	2,97	69	4,18	
I do not have an opinion	68	4,12	54	3,27	96	5,82	115	6,97	
Rather no	102	6,18	123	7,45	186	11,27	129	7,81	
Definitely no	155	9,39	127	7,69	83	5,03	179	10,85	
Q9 I have noticed changes in health or behaviour due to frequent internet use									
Definitely yes	130	7,88	114	6,9	111	6,73	102	6,18	
Rather yes	132	8	117	7,09	169	10,24	275	16,67	
I do not have an opinion	72	4,36	60	3,64	34	2,06	52	3,15	
Rather no	24	1,45	30	1,82	64	3,88	65	3,94	
Definitely no	6	0,36	21	1,27	58	3,15	14	0,85	
Q10 I opened a message from an unknown, harmful account at least once									
Definitely yes	46	2,79	68	4,12	71	4,3	31	1,88	
Rather yes	114	6,91	96	5,82	158	9,57	289	17,51	
I do not have an opinion	99	6	87	5,27	63	3,82	79	4,79	
Rather no	96	5,82	76	4,6	113	6,85	38	2,3	
Definitely no	9	0,54	15	0,9	31	1,88	71	4,3	

Most responses from Polish and Czech youth were placed next to the "rather not" opinion in question one regarding the amount of time spent on the Internet. On the other hand, when determining the Internet use to do homework, Polish and Czech adolescents admitted to using the technology; that is, 6.85% of Polish women and 7.82% of Polish men. Czech youth similarly declare doing homework with the help of the Internet – women 13.52% (definitely yes) and 8.12% (rather yes), 18.73% definitely yes men and 7.33% (rather yes), which is 47.7% of Czech youth.

Similarly, young people from Poland and the Czech Republic firmly admit to using the Internet for social media – 33.63% from Poland (16.24% of women and 17.39% of men) and 42.36% from the Czech Republic (18.3% of women and 24.06% of men).

At such a young age in both Poland and the Czech Republic, respondents also admit to using erotic websites – 2.12% of Polish women (combined definitely yes and rather yes) and 1.38%, while 2.54% of women and 3.64% of men from the Czech Republic.

Polish and Czech youths, unfortunately, equally encountered hatred on the Internet to a similar degree – 19.76% of Polish women, 17.27% of Polish men, 21.88% of Czech women and 26.06% of Czech men declaring a "definitely yes" answer. These results are also comparable.

Few respondents identified the situation of using their image without permission on the Internet. It is a problem that affects people regardless of their home country. As many as 19.03% of Polish female adolescents have encountered such a situation (the sum of answers definitely and rather yes), male adolescents in 18.11%, and Czech women in 23.09% and 26.79% of men. Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that Polish and Czech youth face the same problems.

Polish and Czech youths similarly express their opinion when asked about anonymity online. The most aware of the threat are women in Poland – 20.78% and men in the Czech Republic – 27.45%.

In the following questions, note respondents' high percentage of "I have no opinion" responses. Perhaps young people are unwilling to speak openly and honestly on this topic, particularly in the eighth question, where respondents were asked to specify the possibility of experiencing three days without the Internet. As many as 15.57% of Polish women cannot imagine such a situation, 15.14% of men, 16.03% of Czech women and 18.66% of men. The question is whether they are already pretentious addicts (e.g., phonoholism, phubbing). In the following question, respondents admitted noticing changes in their health – as many as 15.88% of Polish women, 13.99% of men, 16.97% of Czech women, and 22.85% of men, respectively.

The last question concerned opening a message from an unknown account at least once, which had caused harm to respondents. Unfortunately, men from

the Czech Republic were found to be the most irresponsible on this question – 19.39%, compared to their colleagues from Poland – 9.94%. Women are much more cautious in Poland – 9.7%- than female colleagues in the Czech Republic – 13.87%.

The survey shows that Pszczyna and Czech teenagers are in constant contact with the Internet. Here is a selected excerpt from the compiled survey:

Table 3
Respondent's answers to the questions asked

Categories	Definitely yes		Rather yes		I do not have an opinion		Rather no		Definitely no		Average measure	Standard deviation
	Lp	%	Lp	%	Lp	%	Lp	%	Lp	%		
You use the Internet for more than 7 hours a day	102	6.2	309	18.7	135	8.2	644	39	460	27.9	2.36	1.24
You use a strictly scientific website to help you solve your homework	774	46.9	444	26.9	254	15.4	110	6.7	68	4.1	4.06	1.12
You use social networking sites to establish relationships	1254	76.0	295	17.9	57	3.4	18	1.1	26	1.6	4.66	0.75
You visit erotic sites	51	3.1	109	6.6	160	9.7	361	21.9	969	58.7	1.74	1.08
The problem encountered on the Internet was hate	1402	85.0	192	11.6	38	2.3	10	0.6	8	0.5	4.80	0.56
You have encountered that your photos or videos have been posted without your consent	795	48.2	641	38.8	143	8.7	53	3.2	18	1.1	4.30	0.84
The most significant danger on the Internet is the inability to be anonymous	987	59.8	457	27.7	96	5.8	26	1.6	84	5.1	4.36	1.03

Table 3 (cont.)

Categories	Definitely yes		Rather yes		I do not have an opinion		Rather no		Definitely no		Average measure	Standard deviation
	Lp	%	Lp	%	Lp	%	Lp	%	Lp	%		
I would be able to survive 3 days without the Internet	61	3.7	172	10.4	333	20.2	540	32.7	544	33.0	2.19	1.12
I have noticed changes in health or behaviour due to frequent internet use	457	27.7	693	42.0	218	13.2	183	11.1	99	6.0	3.74	1.15
I opened a harmful message from an unknown account at least once	216	13.1	657	39.8	328	19.9	323	19.6	126	7.6	3.31	1.15

Source: Own work

The analysis of the first thesis is alarming because students are busy with their phones most of the day, not the natural world around them. Over 25% of respondents use the Internet for more than 7 hours, which is more than they sometimes spend at school or in class.

Another thesis: The authors were inspired by an article about the potential of young people using modern IT tools concerning and using scientific websites for homework (Kuźmińska-Solśnia, 2006, pp. 115–119). Most respondents favour using the Internet mainly for academic purposes, which is optimistic. During in-depth interviews, the research participants said they are frequent visitors to gaming websites, which they openly admit. Online therapy also appears in the answers, which gives the client more freedom and openness.

Respondents were also allowed to list other sites. Such statements appeared: Automotive – 216 (13.09%), promotional newspapers/shops – 167 (10.12%), language translators – 141 (8.54%), assisting in technology (for repairing, converting, et cetera.) – 75 (4.54%).

Of course, the respondents also use social networking sites, as well as what can be scary (!), erotic websites, which they openly admit.

The fifth thesis concerned the problems (the authors based their question on reading the article – (Tokunaga, 2010, pp. 277-287) of hate speech problems encountered by respondents on the Internet. Nearly 96% of respondents have

encountered hate, i.e. hate speech. Respondents could describe a problematic situation they experienced during the interview. Unfortunately, only the following answers appeared:

- Screens are shown as "on".
- Photos that have been processed for ridicule,
- misunderstanding of the content by others,
- lack of defence and consequences for the aggressor,
- the desire to erase something, to turn back time.

In the seventh thesis, concerning being anonymous on the Internet, the respondents consider this feature dangerous. During the interview, they gave the following associations:

Someone impersonates them, does not show their identity, has an illusion of beauty, "falls for shopping", unverified information, password theft, addiction (?) [question mark added next to it without explanation], viruses, charges for particular pages or files.

The following thesis concerned the respondents' future and whether they could survive without the Internet for three days. Surprisingly, more than 60% of those taking the survey have a positive attitude to such a situation and would easily cope. This result makes us optimistic because most young people consider online life natural. It is a generation in which the Internet plays an important role, like breathing water or oxygen. Of course, always being online does not necessarily mean that the user always pays maximum attention to the Internet. Usually, attention is divided between several activities and "jumps", such as doing homework and checking online news.

The ninth thesis concerned the changes in pathology and behaviour that the respondents noticed in themselves. During the in-depth interview, we received exciting answers. They mentioned: tears were pouring from my eyes, I do not want to sleep, I do not do my duties, I constantly think about what I have read or seen, I quote in everyday life what I have heard, or I try to do something in the way that was recorded.

The last thesis concerned the opening of a message from an unknown source, which caused harm to the respondents. It turns out that less than 45% of respondents made a mistake and fell for unknown incoming messages. Moreover, it is enough to avoid connections to untrustworthy sites, in particular not to enter IDs and passwords on them, make sure the connection is encrypted when we are to provide essential data, change passwords to Internet devices and applications, do not open e-mail attachments from unknown sources, as they may contain viruses or harmful programs. Let us read the regulations of the Internet services we use. If the Computer works slowly and crashes, it does not always mean some failure. Let us check if it is not infected, make sure it has an anti-virus program, and if we fall victim to a malicious program, let us not send

a ransom to recover data, but with the help of an IT specialist, let us restore a backup copy.

During the interview, teenagers listed the following websites they use:

- those that help write essays, artificial intelligence is better than I do after all (boy, age 16, PL)
- those that help explain how to solve homework well, providing calculations and formulas (girl, age 17, PL)
- gossip and entertainment (girl, age 16, CZ)
- sports and more sports (boy, age 16, CZ)
- I like movies, especially romantic ones. Netflix is in first place with me (girl, age 16, PL)
- stock market tables (boy, age 16, CZ).

The above statements were paltry, as most youths answered: "variously, depending on the need" (98 PL and CZ women – 35.6% and 134 men – 35.26%).

When asked about the problem they encountered online, respondents listed the following:

- I played and did not associate that so much money from my dad's account was taken for it (boy, age 16, PL)
- I sent a friend a short video, and it turned out that she sent it out to everyone in the class. It was not very comfortable (girl, age 16, PL)
- Inability to undo payment and purchase decisions (girl, age 17, CZ)
- Hate speech, insulting, challenging (girl, age 16, CZ)
- dangerous acquaintances, thought he was my age (boy, age 16, CZ)
- I did not even know my friends had pictures of me like that and started a group making fun of me (boy, age 16, PL)

The above statements show the dangers faced by the respondents. As can be seen, similar dangers affect young people from Poland and the Czech Republic.

For those surveyed, anonymity exists on the Internet. The youth described it in this way:

- you write whatever you want, the most made-up things about a person or yourself and others believe it, unfortunately (girl, age 16, PL)
- it is cool because, without consequences, you are hidden under a nickname (boy, age 16, CZ)
- you can come out of the mask you wear; if someone is shy, then on the Internet, they can check themselves and speak out without any problem (girl, age 17, PL)
- this is the advantage of the Internet: without fear, you give vent to your emotions (boy, age 17, PL)
- anonymity is to protect yourself. I never give my actual data (girl, age 16, PL)

Unfortunately, only a few of the people quoted above answered this question. This question probably caused the most significant difficulty for respondents.

In interviews conducted, Pszczyna and Czech teenagers stressed that they often respond to electronic aggression, which takes place most often on social networks:

- I do not report it to anyone because it is just verbal text. What can happen to me? One day, they will finally stop writing (boy, 16, CZ)
- I get concerned, I cry, then I have to talk about it to a friend, and I get over it (girl, 16, PL)
- sometimes, someone does not know the limit of a joke, and that is it, you have to let it go (boy, 17, PL)
- the fact that there is freedom of speech does not mean that we should accept everything; I report to whom I can an act of aggression (girl, 17, CZ)
- I have a thin line of tolerance towards evil. If you allow once, there will be more of it, unfortunately (girl, 17 years old, CZ)
- I have had depressive states because of such situations, I am very emotional and approach everything in this way (girl, 16, CZ)
- I'm anxious, fussy, cannot focus and see everything in black colours (girl, 16, PL)
- I wrote back even worse to the one who wrote to me like that, and he detached himself (girl, 16, PL).

These are only selected statements. Indeed, more girls (146 – 53%) than boys (108 – 28.42%) took over as a result of experiencing electronic aggression. So, not only are girls more likely to be victims of online aggression, but they are also more likely to be concerned about it.

It was also interesting to ask the youngsters about contacts in the real world after making contact online. It turns out that girls have more courage, or perhaps hope, that the person claiming to be a friend/friend is truthful. Here is a description of some of the youth's experiences:

- well, it worked out that we had fun writing, and then she proposed to meet, but it turned out that she was a bit lacking the ideal from the photo, she was fat, and that was it, that is, she lied (boy, age 17, PL)
- we played together, then in the vacations, we said that together we could maybe for a pizza and something to jump, but he did not come in time and make contact even when the game stopped (boy, age 16, CZ)
- I had a difficult time with my family, so it was easier for me to write than to talk, and so I met a friend from Czechowice-Dziedzice, then my mother told me that maybe she should come to my place that we should go out together, but when we met, her looks and style did not suit me, I could not open up like that (girl, age 16, PL)
- I wrote to my boyfriend, who is Pole but lives in the Czech Republic, I wanted to meet him, because on the Internet it is a little weak, and he disappointed

me, all the time at the meeting he kept his nose in the phone, failure (girl, age 16, CZ)

- we met 1 year and 2 months ago, then she lied that I was older, then I confessed, and now we see each other regularly, I can say that I found love on the Internet (girl, age 17, CZ)
- I have a cooking blog, and I have many friends who first only wrote with me, and then we met and are still friends, and with one individual, I am going to his prom (girl, age 17, PL)

The results of the quantitative survey show that girls (174 – 63.27%) more often make new contacts on the Internet than boys (212 – 55.78%). Based on the analysis of the survey results, it can be concluded that despite the relatively high awareness and significant level of knowledge about media education among parents and teachers, media education in Poland is downplayed and almost wholly ignored in family upbringing and school education. There is a lack of formal organization of classes in this area in schools.

The study described here provided insight into this diversity and attempted to identify the complex processes shaping an individual's Internet use. Most young people can find information, but it should be remembered that they do not have a fully developed media awareness and culture. A large proportion declares knowledge of online safety, but this is not enough to use the Internet consciously, to distinguish true from false content, or to choose the valuable ones in a flood of useless information.

The Internet and the Computer are undoubtedly helpful in searching for information and collecting, storing, and processing it like no other tool. In addition, they enable cheap or free communication, which in today's society, where hundreds of kilometres of distance often separate family members or friends, can be invaluable. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that young people would not want to give up access to computers and the Internet, which does not mean how they use them is correct (Morbiter, 2006, p. 411).

Unfortunately, the respondents do not realize what further consequences their current abuse of Internet time may cause in adulthood. The most appropriate way to solve this problematic situation seems to be to organize compulsory media education as part of an already functioning school subject, such as computer science, or as part of parenting hours. Nevertheless, the programs for these classes would have to be formalized and standardized for all schools.

Attempts could also be made to educate parents, for example, during school meetings between teachers and parents, i.e. the so-called "interview sessions," or by providing parents with professional studies.

Within the framework of the topic undertaken, there are still many issues to be considered and explored in empirical research when investigating topics in other settings – such as elementary schools and even Universities (Wysocka-

Narewska, 2022, p.78; Skvortsova, M. Haran, 2018, p. 54-55). The collation of these data would make it possible to obtain a complete picture. It seems that addressing the topic of media education is extremely important. Technological and informational development means that introducing media education classes will soon become a positive, additional issue of school education and a fundamental necessity.

Conclusions

Analysis from our research shows that Polish and Czech youth spend too much time on the Internet. They use the Internet as entertainment, not just as a study aid. They do not see the dangers of improper use of new technologies despite the health problems that they experience.

The Internet has become part of the everyday culture of today's youth. Young people who use the Internet intensively exhibit different behavioural patterns, and there is a possibility of losing control over the intensity of Internet use. Young people most often communicate through social media. The Internet has also become a platform for young people to realize the need for self-expression. Users are often forced to construct an identity by building their profile. The other person is judged by how they construct their identity on the portal. The Internet has become one of the most essential tools for learning and communication. The widespread use of the Internet by children and adolescents has many advantages, but, like any tool, it brings risks to which young people are particularly vulnerable (Szpunar, 2005, p. 379). The phenomena brought by the expansion of the media and access to modern technology into areas of life previously reserved for traditional broadcasting were reflected upon. Furthermore, attention was also paid to the level of understanding of the digital world.

For the young, the Internet has also become a platform on which they can realize the need for self-expression. The other person is judged by how they construct their identity on the portal (Tapscott, 2010, p. 23).

Globalization creates opportunities to learn about the world, including education of different nations. The opportunities to raise awareness of the benefits and risks of mass communication are becoming almost limitless. It must become increasingly crucial for future generations to strive to equip themselves with the skills to use the Internet properly. Despite a different culture, the young experience the same dilemmas and problems, often due to under-information and lack of equipment with technological competence.

The authors realize that this article only contributes to further analysis, which will be deepened to include indicators such as Internet access at home or parental education. It would certainly be appropriate to look at the cultural dif-

ferences between the two countries and the relationship of these elements to technology education. This article is meant to inspire further research, which we should extend to other countries.

Future lines of research

Given these results, it is necessary to develop further and implement measures to make youth and their parents aware of the dangers emanating from the Internet. If this recommendation is followed, young people will be protected from the negative consequences of cyberbullying. This approach will consider parents' expectations of online safety during difficult times.

Limitation

The article presents the main areas of youth safety risks, where it is essential to educate them. The results of a survey on the risks associated with using the Internet by adolescents are presented to show adolescents' awareness regarding the safe use of the Internet and the ability to select valuable content accurately.

The Internet is an essential part of every teenager's daily life, so it is crucial to monitor the risks associated with it and educate young people about it so that they learn the secrets of looking critically reflectively at the content available online.

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Zagrożenia młodzieży wynikające z użytkowania Internetu. Refleksja na przykładzie dwóch szkół ponadpodstawowych: w Pszczynie i w Czeskim Cieszynie

Streszczenie

Internet w obecnych czasach ma nieskończenie wiele możliwości. Używany jest praktycznie w każdej działalności człowieka. Celem niniejszego artykułu nie jest demonizowanie Internetu, ale zbadanie różnych wymiarów funkcjonowania młodzieży w wirtualnym świecie. Celem jest również określenie, z jakimi negatywnymi skutkami spotykają się uczniowie i jakie pozytywne zjawiska wynikają z korzystania z tej technologii.

Pierwsza część stanowić będzie prezentację najważniejszych wiadomości z zakresu nowych mediów, a w szczególności charakterystykę Internetu. Poruszona zostanie problematyka związana z różnymi aspektami korzystania z Internetu – począwszy od psychologicznych mechanizmów użytkowania sieci przez młodzież, poprzez edukację medialną oraz zagrożenia wynikające z różnego rodzaju działalności w sieci, na społeczno-praktycznych zjawiskach zachodzących w cyfrowym świecie kończąc.

Wiedza pozyskana dzięki części teoretycznej stanowić będzie bazę dla przeprowadzenia badań empirycznych. Celem badań będzie określenie, jakie znaczenie w życiu młodzieży w wieku ponadpodstawowym ma korzystanie z komputera i Internetu. Omówione wyniki tychże badań, wraz z ich opracowaniem oraz przedstawieniem sposobów przeciwdziałania zagrożeniom oraz metod pozytywnego wykorzystania Internetu, może stanowić wartościowe źródło wiedzy przydatnej zarówno w pracy pedagogicznej osób związanych z oświatą, jak i użytecznej dla rodziców, gdyż to oni w największym stopniu odpowiadają za edukację swoich dzieci w zakresie użytkowania mediów.

Słowa kluczowe: Internet, korzystanie z komputera, cyberprzemoc, użytkowanie mediów przez młodzież.