

Assignment #2: Internet as a social media?

Comm 410 / Soci 409: New Media and Community Life

Prof. Keith Hampton

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Instructions

Administer the “Survey of Internet Use” to 20 full-time University of Pennsylvania students who are Internet users. The course instructor will assign you to interview either freshman, sophomores, juniors, or seniors. Half of your interviews must be with men, the other half with women.

Part I

Write a blog post (750-1000 words) answering the following questions. Base your answers on an analysis of your survey findings from the 20 surveys you administered. For all questions, be sure to discuss your findings in relation to the course readings. Your blog post is due by 1:30pm on October 10.

Questions

- 1) Score Young’s Internet addiction test for each of the surveys you administered using the following categories for interpretation:
 - 20-49 points: Average on-line user.
 - 50-79 points: Experiencing occasional or frequent problems because of the Internet.
 - 80-100 points: Internet usage is causing significant problems.What proportion of your surveys fall into each category? Is there variation in scores by sex? Is there variation by how long your participants have been Internet users? How participants rate the quality of interactions by communication media? If they have met people online? Are there differences between those who use the Internet a little compared to those who use it a lot? What explanation do you have for the patterns you observed?
- 2) What proportion of your participants have met someone online that they previously did not know? Do these relationships extend to other communication media? How strong are these relationships? Is there variation by sex, Internet use, evaluation of media quality, or score on Young’s Internet addiction test? What explanation do you have for the patterns you observed?
- 3) How much variation is there in how your participants rated the quality of interactions by different media? Is there variation by sex, Internet use, if they have met people online, or score on Young’s Internet addiction test? What explanation do you have for the patterns you observed?
- 4) Do you think the Internet is a “social media”? Do you think that it takes away from time that would otherwise be spent on social activities? Or some middle ground between these two points of view? What evidence can you provide from the class readings and the results of your surveys for and against your argument?

Part II

Bring your completed surveys to class on October 10. Print your full name and your blog username on the top of each survey and staple them together. Meet with the other students in the class who interviewed students in the same year (i.e. freshman, sophomores, juniors, or seniors). Combine your results and discuss the questions from Part I. Prepare a 10 minute presentation of your group’s findings. Hand your completed surveys in to the instructor.

Part C: Internet Addiction Test¹

1. How often do you find that you stay on-line longer than you intended?
(0) Never (1) Rarely (2) Occasionally (3) Frequently (4) Often (5) Always
2. How often do you neglect household chores to spend more time on-line?
(0) Never (1) Rarely (2) Occasionally (3) Frequently (4) Often (5) Always
3. How often do you prefer the excitement of the Internet to intimacy with your partner?
(0) Never (1) Rarely (2) Occasionally (3) Frequently (4) Often (5) Always
4. How often do you form new relationships with fellow on-line users?
(0) Never (1) Rarely (2) Occasionally (3) Frequently (4) Often (5) Always
5. How often do others in your life complain to you about the amount of time you spend on-line?
(0) Never (1) Rarely (2) Occasionally (3) Frequently (4) Often (5) Always
6. How often do your grades or school work suffer because of the amount of time you spend on-line?
(0) Never (1) Rarely (2) Occasionally (3) Frequently (4) Often (5) Always
7. How often do you check your e-mail before something else that you need to do?
(0) Never (1) Rarely (2) Occasionally (3) Frequently (4) Often (5) Always
8. How often does your job performance or productivity suffer because of the Internet?
(0) Never (1) Rarely (2) Occasionally (3) Frequently (4) Often (5) Always
9. How often do you become defensive or secretive when anyone asks you what you do on-line?
(0) Never (1) Rarely (2) Occasionally (3) Frequently (4) Often (5) Always
10. How often do you block out disturbing thoughts about your life with soothing thoughts of the Internet?
(0) Never (1) Rarely (2) Occasionally (3) Frequently (4) Often (5) Always
11. How often do you find yourself anticipating when you will go on-line again?
(0) Never (1) Rarely (2) Occasionally (3) Frequently (4) Often (5) Always
12. How often do you fear that life without the Internet would be boring, empty, and joyless?
(0) Never (1) Rarely (2) Occasionally (3) Frequently (4) Often (5) Always
13. How often do you snap, yell, or act annoyed if someone bothers you while you are on-line?
(0) Never (1) Rarely (2) Occasionally (3) Frequently (4) Often (5) Always
14. How often do you lose sleep due to late-night log-ins?
(0) Never (1) Rarely (2) Occasionally (3) Frequently (4) Often (5) Always
15. How often do you feel preoccupied with the Internet when off-line, or fantasize about being on-line?
(0) Never (1) Rarely (2) Occasionally (3) Frequently (4) Often (5) Always
16. How often do you find yourself saying "just a few more minutes" when on-line?
(0) Never (1) Rarely (2) Occasionally (3) Frequently (4) Often (5) Always
17. How often do you try to cut down the amount of time you spend on-line and fail?
(0) Never (1) Rarely (2) Occasionally (3) Frequently (4) Often (5) Always
18. How often do you try to hide how long you've been on-line?
(0) Never (1) Rarely (2) Occasionally (3) Frequently (4) Often (5) Always
19. How often do you choose to spend more time on-line over going out with others?
(0) Never (1) Rarely (2) Occasionally (3) Frequently (4) Often (5) Always
20. How often do you feel depressed, moody or nervous when you are off-line, which goes away once you are back on-line?
(0) Never (1) Rarely (2) Occasionally (3) Frequently (4) Often (5) Always

End:

Thank you for your participation. If you have any questions about this class project, please contact Prof. Keith Hampton at khampton@asc.upenn.edu or (215) 746-5724.

¹ Based on Young's Internet Addiction test www.netaddiction.com