COMMUNICATION BY MEANS OF THE NEW SOCIAL NETWORKS

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Abstract:
In our days, the electronic communication media is important because the communication forms based on interactivity lead the participants in the act of sending and receiving information to become more than simply issuers, listeners or viewers, integrating them into a dynamic system.
In this approach, the study paper aims to prove the relationship between personal development and that of society determined by the new interactive communication instruments. At the individual level, training, education, health, interpersonal relationships are easier to be acquired and amplified. Also, the local communities, companies, educational institutions or non-profit organizations increasingly approach themselves to the citizens, receive their problems and try to solve them efficiently. On the other hand, the expansion of the modern means of communication became possible by the steadily decreasing costs of information and of the appropriate management technologies.
Virtual communities may, however, only partially replace the traditional communities and the direct physical interaction between people, because online connections are made between people, not between places. Moreover, a high degree of interconnection involves the spreading of ideas, links and various discoveries or improvements of some already existing equipment and processes.
The content of this study paper is created using secondary sources of information – with limited and also limiting feature – in an office research, the areas of analysis being studied separately. The result of the study paper is to evidence the fact that the interest for the interactive electronic communication is increasing.
We support the idea that such communication contributes to business development in a particular field, in the social sector, but it is better to be aware of its less desirable effects from which we can notice the loss of privacy, the identity theft, the aggressive promotion etc.
In our opinion, in this study paper we only partially achieved to highlight the increasingly strong relationship between communication, interactivity and electronic media and, therefore, we hope that this demarche will be continued in other research.
Keywords: interactive communication, social networks, virtual communities, multimedia, target.
JEL classification: D83, L86

1. Introduction
The present period is expressed not only by the increasing quantity of information, but also by diversifying the ways in which it circulates. However, bear in mind that profound changes occur in the way information is required and provided, in the way the information providers are organized and in the one the information depositories are functioning and are being organized (Tran and Stânciugelu 2003: 17).
Regarding the multimedia communication of information, this is an interactive one, the user being able to intervene in requesting or changing what he receives. The new multimedia technologies prepare the conditions of communication in virtual worlds. Multimedia will suppress neither the content nor the traditional supports of information. They will complete, enrich and appreciate them instead.

2. Elements on the interactive communication by means of Internet
By means of interactivity, people learn how to faster and better communicate, their personal and professional concerns, traditions and customs, being in a permanent change. Thus:
- „virtual communities”, based on common interests are formed or the contact and the collaboration between organizations are facilitated;
- contacts with people - individually or in group are initiated - in a more simple way, and new channels of collaboration can be developed;
- the access to information is made differently, it is important that they are received quickly, in various forms and from many sources.

Nevertheless, the most important aspect of the interactive communication is that it determines the participants in the act of sending and receiving information to become more than simply issuers, listeners or viewers, integrating them into a dynamic system. However, it is also a transformation of society and of many aspects of the human life which takes place. Local communities, businesses, educational institutions or non-profit organizations increasingly approach themselves to the citizens, receive their problems and try to solve them efficiently. At the individual level, training, education, health, interpersonal relationships are easier to be acquired and amplified.

On the other hand, the expansion of the modern means of communication became possible by the steadily decreasing costs of information and of the appropriate management technologies. Although many users still do not have enough money to benefit from the nowadays discoveries “at home”, it is relatively easy and not too expensive to use them in some specially designed public places, such as educational institutions, citizens information centres, Internet cafés etc.

Individuals and groups with some connections or interests to the organization can maintain constant contact, with each other and with its management also; they can disseminate knowledge and experience to each other. Using the modern interactive communication, a user can contact his family, friends, colleagues by e-mail, social networking, forums; a reporter may be up-to-date by consulting the websites of organizations and receiving a newsletter or reading the corporate blogs.

The modern communication systems are able to be considered a factor in boosting the world, as they expand the cultural exchanges, reduce the physical distances and offer a different vision of life - an optimistic one, in terms of various interests. We can consider ourselves being involved in a fundamental change regarding: the way of dealing with reality, the access to information and their processing, the manifestation of purchasing and consumption behaviours in various fields etc.

The issues outlined above have formed the basis for the emergence of an integrated concept – „new media”, which refers to the result of convergence between the traditional media system (television, radio, print), telecommunications, the digital technology and computer systems. These media are new both in terms of the technology development, and in those special features that require a different mindset on communication and society.

“New media” establish contacts between million people, in different regions, using computer networks connected to the Internet, telecommunications equipment etc. The computer performs, in this context, the function of receiving, storage and management of various information (text, sound, image) in digital form. It facilitates, subsequently, their transfer by digital telephone lines, optical fiber cables, communication satellites etc. (Manovich 2001: 19).
Thus, the online behaviour is determined by the way in which the virtual environment features interact with the features of those involved, so that we can refer to the users’ traits such as: computer use skills, knowledge of the motivations for the Internet use and of the applications for which it provides support and information, demographic features (age, socio-economic status, occupation etc.).

Therefore, the Internet becomes an encouraging factor for interaction and success of the socio-economic plan because of its open standard for digital data transmission - voice, video and text - from one user to another, from one to many others remote.

Internet and World Wide Web are some extremely effective ways to accommodate and transport digital information around the world, presenting three important characteristics:

- **Global coverage.** The Internet and the Web sites have become the main platform for national and international contacts. They are landmarks for the educational institutions, which may present their offers of educational services to a world „market”; they give people from different countries an opportunity to exchange information and ideas and to learn about different cultures and social systems.

- **Convergence.** The Internet supports data transmission by electronic equipment used by the educational institutions, from the telephone to television systems for distance learning so that it creates a bridge between the continuous flow of information (TV model) and the facts oriented search (the website model).

- **Innovation.** Above all, the Internet has become the most powerful promoter of innovation. Due to its open and flexible protocol, many companies earn large amounts of money by developing new ways to use it. By means of the Internet, new ideas can be developed and launched quickly, the potential recipients can be found more easily, and the effects can be easily identified and tested. No other mechanism can provide such instant links between investors and their clients.

3. **Research on the extension of social networks**

Social networks are „maps” of relations between individuals indicating ways in which they are linked from casual knowledge to strong family ties. In the online environment, the social networks refer to a category of online applications that enable connection to friends, business partners and interest groups (Mitruițiu 2005: 5).

Thus, in these online communities, an initial set of founders send messages inviting members of their personal network of contacts to join the network. New members repeat the same process and help increase membership and ensure some global links. The sites provide services such as the online business cards updating which contain the email addresses of their acquaintances, the viewing of the members’ profiles, the creating of some new contacts by providing services (Mitruițiu 2005: 27).

As the social interaction is increasing in the online environment, it was taking into account the question of an adequate management of virtual relations, such networks being more efficient as the number of participants increases. Individuals can become members of many different online communities based on the diversity of interests manifested in personal and professional life.

Statistics show that the number of the users of social networking sites internationally soared in the recent years, and their influence was confirmed in every major event, by benefiting from the continuous Internet access by means of wireless Internet and smart phones. For example, according to www.ziare.com the largest social networks have a total of over one billion users, the most popular being Facebook (845 million), which is followed by LinkedIn, with 150 million and Twitter, with 127 million.

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We can notice that a growing role in media is supported by users - as producers of audio, video or text, while the Internet provides platforms underlying the change on patterns of behaviour in this area. The new culture on the Internet is a consumer content creation, consisting of things such as the 30 million blogs existing today or the about 80 million photos available on Flickr.com. Thus, the audience itself (estimated to one billion users) creates a new type of social media.

The phenomenon under review already led to the creation of a more promising „business” for the next period Internet, such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and MySpace, Hi5, Pintrester - to name just a few sites with the most growth rates on the Internet. They provide daily information, propose millions of photos and videos (some made by a user) for viewing and bring many people together. All these sites are free of charge, just a few generating profits. Their goal is to create communities and draw their attention to them and when they turn into companies, most of them will be purchased by the current „giants”. And the phenomenon is expanding, Google competing, recently, with the social networks by adding to its email service, Gmail, some functions that allow users to change their status and share content with friends online (Google +).

Moreover, the expanding of the social networks has led many consumers to try to use them for promoting their business. The web technologies as well as the mass attraction offered by the opportunity to create online connections transform, thus, the social networks into some attractive means for businesses seeking to increase their popularity, credibility and influence (Radu 2010).

The social networks are growing not only in economics but also in health care - Sickweather will be a social networking service to monitor diseases in the circle of users’ friends and to predict epidemics. Basically, the service collects public data from social networks like Twitter and Facebook as well as from the users, in order to provide information on trends in the disease. People can use the information to decide if their symptoms fall into the patterns of a certain disease and deserve a more attention or to prepare a healthy diet (Dulămiță 2011).

In its turn, Microsoft has launched a social network called So.cl (read „social”) which is available only to few people, but the representatives of the company have said that So.cl will be a social network for students, to help them to share information quickly, to build pages or to obtain information quickly, to transform the existing social networks in a large classroom (Nedelcu 2011).

4. Effects of the social networks extending - the appearance of Pinterest

The examples given above on the extending of the social networks are not unique; a proof of it being another social network that constantly attracts users, but also creates social media discussions. We refer to Pinterest, which already attracted 11 million unique visitors (according to compete.com) only in the United States by January 2012, increasing 9200% over the same period of 2011, when there were about 120,000 unique visitors (Crăciunescu 2012).

The idea of this network came in 2009 and belonged to a Google employee, who wanted to create a virtual environment where people could upload photos, where they could exchange recipes and advice regarding raising children and organizing weddings (Sergheiu, 2012). But, with the passage of time, it has become increasingly obvious that Pinterest working tools can be used both for the personal use and for supporting companies, evidenced by the brands that are already present on this social network.

Specifically, Pinterest is a virtual panel which allows users to share pictures and links that they find interesting and inspirational, with others. After being transferred to other users, these images become “pins” which can be arranged on themed “boards” that can be customized according to any theme. If something was “pinned”, then it may be repined by other Pinterest users. If the account was created, traffic can be made on a page of a product on its own website and its...
Pinterest users are allowed to transmit these „pins“ on Facebook and Twitter. This network slogan is „Organize and share things you love.” Considering the analysis of comScore - a company that measures the digital world, Pinterest created a great stir in the United States and it seems to be growing ever more on the large markets in Europe. Thus, on our continent, the market with the largest growth in May 2011 - January 2012 was Germany, where the number of the unique visitors to the site increased by 2956%, and in January 2012 reached 67,000 visitors. Spain ranked second with an increase of 1348% over the same period and with 62,000 visitors reached this year in January. Pinterest increased by almost 80% in the UK, which has become the largest market for this social network with 245,000 unique visitors in January 2012. Dividing by gender shows that the majority of the Pinterest users are women, with 68.2%, half of them having family or having reached the middle-age (Crăciunescu 2012). The concerns of these users are directed towards the interior design, cooking, child care, but also towards their physical appearance, different from that of girls.

In order to become a member of the network, there is needed an invitation, which can be requested from the Pinterest or may be received from a person who already has an account on the site. After receiving the invitation, the user can register either via Facebook or Twitter.

Among the sections of the network website they may find one for businesses, with suggestions of best practices for brands as well as a section where they are taught how to add the button „pin it” or how to give, if they wish, „pin” to the images on their own website or any other site. By pressing the „repin” button the interaction with others is allowed, each user being able to create his network of followers also.

Also, users can define as many panels covering a wider range of interests of the target audience, in order to avoid uploading images belonging to different themes only on one panel. This is important when you want to highlight the lesser known aspects of the life of an organization, but which may point out the target audience.

In order to make a brand better known, in the Pinterest network it was accomplished a staging of the actions required by the members of the „Mashable” social media platform (Nicholls 2012):
- reservation of space - ensuring the user name even if there it did not yet move to posting the content on the profile;
- using the brand values as an element of inspiration with the help of the pictures and promotional catalogues;
- using themes in the promoting of the products and in the interests grouping, by creating mood boards (state boards) relevant to a particular brand as well as its style and values;
- permanent including and updating of prices - that help customers identify certain items which are for sale;
- using hash tags - that offer support in organization, becoming important as the network expands;
- adding the „pin it” button on the e-commerce website of the brand, next to the “Facebook Like” button;
- interaction with the community - brands have to allow community members to post, on their boards, some content appropriate to the message that the organizations are trying to convey;
- focusing the brands attention on the copyright for the used photos.

However, the popularity and fast increasing of the Pinterest network use led to the emergence of some security threats specifically created for this. One of the weaknesses of the network is related to the use of some tools that promise an artificial increase in traffic by using robots that automatically post and re-post a series of images. In this case, the Pinterest users could increase their notoriety and, thus, earn money from advertising in this social network (Nedelcu, 2012).

Sometimes, some gift-cards issued by famous companies (Visa, Ikea and so on) are forcibly promoted, so that when people click to get the offer and agree to post notice on the gift-cards in their own account, the users are attracted to complete a set of questionnaires, without ever
reaching the promised card. Moreover, the completed details can be later used for more complex attacks.

5. Conclusions
The presence on Pinterest is not, especially for companies, a guarantee of the turnover growth, but is at least necessary as an additional test to enable consumers to increase their interest in this social network because of the many advantages it offers.

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