

UNDERSTANDING AND CRITICAL MEDIA LITERACY

Survey report

2017

Hiiumaa Gymnaasium, Estonia

Introduction

The aim of this report is to analyze the results of a recent survey about the young people's media literacy. The survey was carried out in Hiiumaa Gymnaasium. 54 students were asked about social media, their computer preferences, the websites they use, how good they are at protecting their computers from viruses, downloading photos, songs and videos from a website to the computer, how good they are at technical things, how new technologies can help them in their studies and how they prefer to communicate with others.

The students were between the ages 14 to 18 years. 77.8 percent of the students were 14 to 17 years old and 22.2 percent were 18 years and older. The percentage of male students is 53.7 and female students 46.3. The number of female and male students is almost equal in Hiiumaa Gymnasium. As expected 88.9 students live in town or in the village and only 11.1 percent in a city.

Some students consider our town to be a city, but it is not.

Computers, smartphones, tablets and laptops.

The majority of students own smartphones (98.1 percent) and only 1.9 percent have no smarphone.

This indicates that nowadays smartphones are very popular among young people. Laptop and computer are almost equally important for our students (laptop 77.8 percent and computer at home 72.2 percent).

The graph shows that students have had computers for a longer period (more than 4 years 63 percent) and smartphones 53.7 percent. These percentages can be explained with e-school in Estonia. It is very difficult to manage without a computer or a smartphone as all the homework, the grades and school information is in e-school.

Smartphones with 31.4 percent are the most important devices for the students and laptops with 18.5 percent the least important. This indicates that smartphones are small and easy to carry with. Tablets with 26% rank second.

Websites.

As expected 100% of our students have e-mail addresses, followed by Facebook account with 96.3% and Snapchat account with 92.6%. Only 20.4% of the young people in Hiiumaa Gymnasium use Blog.

It suggests that students do not have time to focus on one topic, they want to get news and information quickly. It also has negative drawbacks: writing skills, spelling and language structures need more practising.

The table shows that Google is most important with 33.3%, e-mail account is second with 29.6% and Instagram is third with 27.7%. The least important is Snapchat (14.8%).

The use of social media.

68.5% of the students always use Youtube mainly to watch music videos and movies, but never put their own videos on Youtube. It shows that more than half of the students who did the survey do not show their personal videos in public because they are aware of the dangers of Internet. Only 1.9% of the students have their own blog and write his journal on it all the time. When the students like the websites then they 13% always subscribe in it in order to

receive updates about this website. 18.5 percent of the pupils answered that they never subscribe in it.

The table shows that 65.9 percent of the students prefer going out with their friends instead of staying at home and using Internet. It demonstrates that young people like the company of other people more than staying at home and using Internet. Only 18.5% of the young people think that social media is good only for having fun and passing one's free time.

Media literacy.

Most students are media literate. This is illustrated by the fact that more than 90% of the students know the difference between Internet and a Website, „Google” and „Facebook”, „Sign up” and „Sign in”, an e-mail address and a website address. The meaning of the term media literacy seems to be complicated to understand (11.1% have no idea and 55.6% are not sure).

The students do not know the difference between software and hardware. 11.1% have no idea and 57.4% know the difference.

Everybody (100%) knows that Google is a search engine and Youtube is a website that allows you to upload your own videos, watch, and post a comment on videos posted by other people.

How good are the students at using technical devices?

The majority of the students are very good at downloading a photo, a song or a video from a website to one's computer (88.9%), creating and sending e-mails, searching for information on Google, changing the password of one's e-mail or Facebook accounts (94.4%). Half of the students (50%) are not very good at protecting his computer from viruses. This shows that there is a need for additional classes or courses in IT.

Our students are very good at creating a Power Point Presentation on a computer (94.4%), starting a SKYPE video Chat with friends or relatives (85.2%), changing the background photo on one's smartphone (98.1%) and finding the address of a location or a place using Google Map Search (94.4%).

A minority of students are not sure if they can erase inappropriate comment or photo from one's Facebook Page (1.9%).

96.3 percent of the students are good at searching for and connecting to WiFi networks and 90.7 percent are good at transferring photos from one's digital camera to one's computer. Only half of the students (50%) are good at installing a software on one's computer.

The students are familiar with the signs of a „new message” (98.1%) and a computer „Folder”(98.1%).

Computer literacy.

81.5% of the young people claim that a person who is media literate can read, analyze and critically evaluate information presented in a variety of formats (television, print, radio, computers) while 3.7% have an opinion that a person who is media literate can critically evaluate television programs and see through persuasion techniques.

92.6% of the students use an alias/invented nickname when communicating online to unknown people or filling out details on a website. 1.9 %of the students give his phone number. 94.4 percent of the students agree that in case of cyberbullying, you should block the cyberbully from your contacts list and talk to a trusted adult. Only 1.9% of the answered agree to wait until things get better. It is advisable to ask for help and not to wait until things are getting worse.

Three thirds of the students (75.9%) know what censorship means. This explains why we have so many inappropriate comments and photos in Internet.

New technologies for school and education.

Only a few (13%) of the students think that new technologies are not related to his real world and 7.4% have the opinion that they are not related to their field of studies. 44.4% of the students think that new technologies are not good for school and education because teachers are not good at using social media and digital media. This suggests that teachers can educate students about the use, benefit, and dangers of digital media (33.3% of the students) and train all the teachers on using digital media in school subjects (29.6% students).

Communication.

In communication 70.4 percent of the students use phones. When they want to communicate they first check their websites to find the phone number. 66.7% of the students always use only e-mails to communicate with their school or teachers.

The majority of the students (72.2%) in an urgent situation never first post a message about it on one's social media platform.

Unfortunately young people prefer using their smartphones to talking from face to face.

Conclusion.

The students of Hiiumaa Gymnasium love Internet and smartphones. As Estonia is an e-country we have our e-school, e-elections, e-government and SKYPE, the students are good at using them, too.

Despite the fact that students can use Internet, there are a lot of dangers. Students expect their teachers to be good at using social media and digital media and also use digital media in teaching school subjects.

Some people jokingly say that Internet is a curse. It has not changed not only our customs but also how we spend our free time. It has changed our social communication and how we express ourselves in our native tongue.

In Estonia we can speak about Facebook and Twitter literature. One of the top 10 sold books in Estonia is the collection of texts from social media, called „The First Estonian Twitter Collection” (2017). Twitter-swallow - e-Estonian national bird. One does not need a proof-reader, so new words are created and old words have come to use again.