

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL NETS IN THE MODERN SOCIETY

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Modern society is very hard to imagine without social networks. Having been created recently, social networks have already taken a major place in humans life and continue to develop. So why did they become so popular? Are they really as necessary for modern people as they are thought of? What is their role? In the paper these questions are going to be considered and answered.

Historically the first analogue of social networks the website «classmates.com» was created in 1995 by Randy Konrad. Its purpose was to give people ability to find their classmates and school friends. This concept appeared to be in demand, and became the start point of further rapid evolution of social networks. Until the XXI century they generally constituted systems of instant messages transferred online. In 2000s with appearing of such projects as Myspace and Facebook that provided users with new opportunities - to share photos, listen to music and watch videos the social networks popularity grew up significantly. The quantity of users has been growing up so fast that today it makes 1,4 billions of registered accounts in Facebook! That is comparable to China's population!

So what exactly gave the push to so rapid development of social networks? One of the main reasons is a natural humans wish to communicate each other. In addition, thanks to a British scientist Tim Bernes-Lee, the World Wide Web (or the Internet) became public and available to everyone. Besides, it was something new and very useful. Moreover social networks were easy and simple in use. They could immediately get a link with another person just staying at home and using only a keyboard and a mouse.

What are social networks today? These are a multifunctional platform that excites us by the diversity of its opportunities. And the most interesting thing is that communication doesn't seem to be its main function anymore. Because of lots of entertaining, cognitive and media content, and due to the growing amount of functions people don't use for its first purpose. This can be implied from a poll that was made among students of Siberian Federal University aged 17-22. Fig. 1 illustrates that apart from communication people spend most time on listening to music, watching news and films. People are ceasing to use special websites for that, because it's simpler to do the same in social networks. Why should one keep opened lots of web pages if everything needed has been already concentrated in one of them, just in a couple of «clicks» from a profile page? Moreover, many actions became possible to do simultaneously, and that makes one's leisure even more convenient. The latter seems to be the main reason of social networks popularity – they are covering more and more spheres of action in society.

What concerns the value of social networks, the answer is not a discovery. On the one hand it is useful and almost indispensable instrument for people, especially busy ones, because it includes all the functions for fast connection and spreading information. Moreover one can use them being far away from home, due to its integration in modern gadgets like mobile phones. On the other hand social networks are full of non-informative and unnecessary content, and its quality seems to get worse. Logging in an account starts to scroll feed. So, users have to face large amount of extra information that is hard to be filtered. The time one wastes elapses while searching what exactly needed. There exist two ways people deal with the problem: either they stop using social networks being tired of information overabundance or they consume all the extra information killing a lot of time. The second

way often bothers completing different tasks. Nevertheless one can't delete the bad influence of extra information.

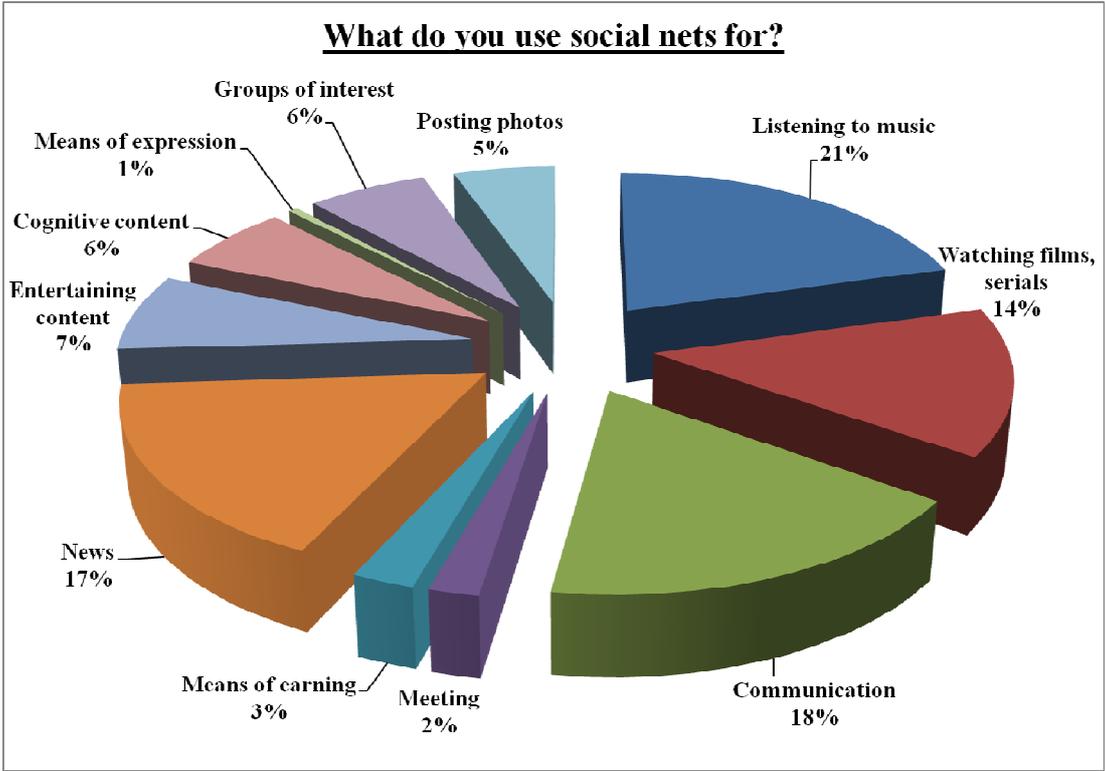


Fig.1 Aims to use SN

A question concerning a daily time spent on social networks was answered as follows (Fig.2):

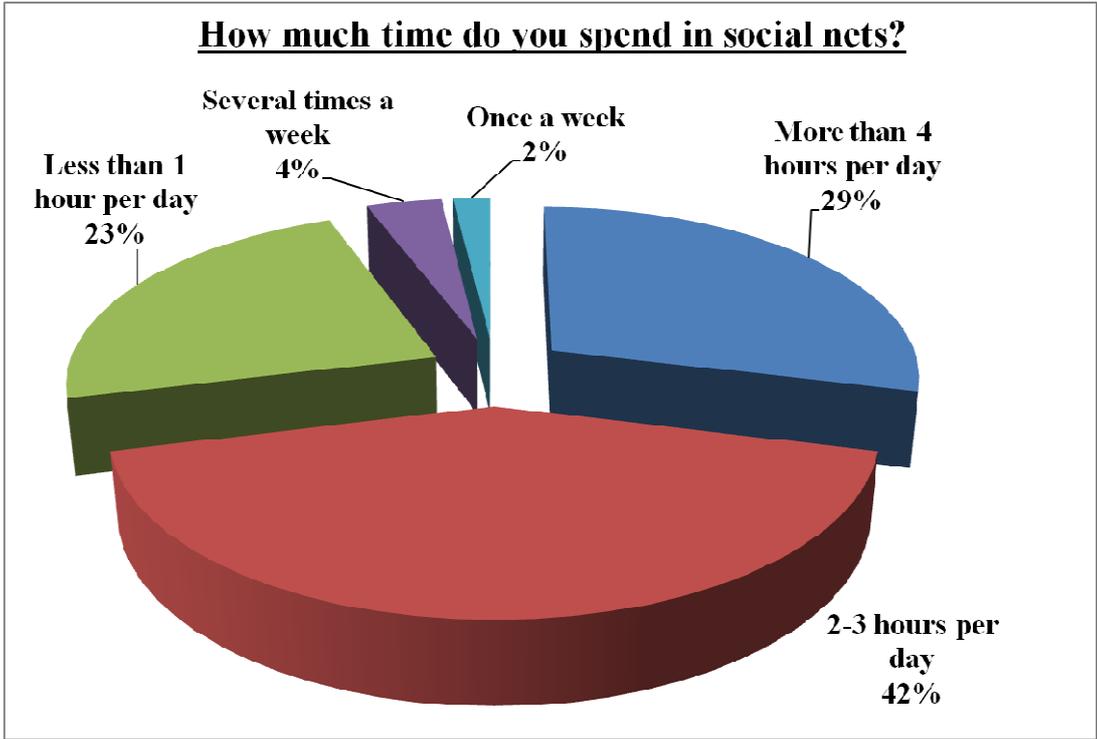


Fig. 2 Time spent to use SN

It is seen that up to 70% of respondents spend two and more hours a day using SN. It is obvious that people fill their time differently: someone just wants to listen to music, the other looks for something interesting and special in his infinite news feed. That makes suppose the coming future is going to see the fight between networks for the quality of their content. Some new and more functional info-filters that will be able to choose individual media content for every person according to his interests may probably appear.

All in all, contemporary social networks are still definitely at the start. They are not going to lose their relevance in the future but on the contrary they will experience a powerful enhancement. Gradually they will turn into multifunctional complete platforms to meet demands of different user areas. Their full integration with human daily activities can be ably merged and eventually unnoticed.