

## THE SOCIALIZATION BETWEEN THE EFFECTIVE AND VIRTUAL PATTERNS

**Delia NADOLU, Bogdan NADOLU**  
West University of Timisoara, Romania

**Abstract:** The *socialization between the effective and virtual patterns* – represent a sociological paper focus on the daily effects generated by the over-utilization of the NICT. The extensive utilization of the any devices dedicated for various kind of computer mediated communication can generate an alteration of the basic socialization skills, like direct interactions, face-to-face communication, empathize and so on. If the social interactions trend to be developed mostly into the technological mediated way, than this pattern will be reflected into the loosing of the classical abilities for living together with others. Are we approaching for a living model such in well known Isaac Asimov SF novel, "The Robots from Aurora", without any direct interactions? We will try not to find solutions, but only to show the contemporary risks.

**Keywords:** socialization, virtual space, computer mediated interactions.

### 1. Introduction

Socialization represents one of the most important processes of our becoming as social beings, sine-qua-non for the existence of any society, all over the world, in entire history of the humanity. Any disruption of the process of socialization can generate complex consequences over the entire social space for medium and long time. The new information and communication technology (NICT) represent a phenomenon with an exponential evolution during the last three decades. All around us we can find plenty of gadgets and applications that, by one hand solve a lot of problems and issues and, by other hand generate several new. It can be already estimated that the present young digital generation, has a significant different profile and life style comparatively with their parents or grandparents. In the following pages we will try to make an indirect sociological interpretation of the contemporary amount of NICT utilisation, as it is recorded into the available statistics. We are now high tech and also we have developed plenty of behaviours that are directly related by these gadgets and them infrastructure. This paper doesn't intend to be a sceptical approach but only a sociological interpretation of some social consequences of the over-digitalization of the everyday life. It is difficult to define these risks as treats (coming from outside) or as weakness (coming from inside) but it is quite sure that them can affect the humanity at least for several decades.

### 2. New patterns of socialization generated by the digital technology

#### 2.1. From values to behaviors

The process of socialization represents one of the most important phenomenon for the existence of the social space. The surviving of any society is directly dependent by

the content, coherence and sustainability of the socialization acts. Basically, the socialization represents an education process that assures firstly the sociability and sociality of the young generation. Secondly, the socialization assures the cultural and societal continuity. Since few decades ago the process of socialization had an approach at the scale of a generation. Nowadays, the socialization contents are changed more frequent, several times during a generation life. The society is evolving very fast so the pressure on the persons, as socialized and as socialization agent is really high. We can see plenty of deep segregations among generations. For example, into the area of the Internet there are a gap between the old generation, without digital abilities and the middle generation that was contemporary with the invention and the spread of the Internet and of the e-mail. Another gap is developed between these people and the contemporary young generation that consider the e-mail to be an old fashion tool. And all of these are generated by the technological improvement, so there are strictly related by the behaviors. With other words, it is a down-up evolution that soon or later will affect the level of values that define any mentality and personal manifestation into the social space. A serious question that can be formulated at this point is: *are we prepared to keep a sustainable configuration of the social space against the so fashionable digital technology?* It will be the present society able to find a reasonable way to use this so high performance technical development into a way that will don't affect the main structure of the human being? The first consequences are not quite optimistic but is not yet to late to rediscover the patterns of living together. Not only into a virtual manner.

## **2.2. Toward a digital social being**

In May 2015 it was recorded 3,125,000,000 Internet users, around 45% of the global population, with an exponential growing from 910.060.000 users in 2004 or only 25.454.000 in 1994, according to Internet Live Statistics. This is the main indicator of the NICT penetration around the world. If we correlate it with the generalization of the mobile phone that count in September 2014 an amount of 3.630 billion users and 7.142 billion active subscriptions (Internet World Stats) we have a quite extended preview on the digitalization of the nowadays society.

This picture is not uniform distributed around the world, and thus, the density of the information technology into the developed countries is significant higher. Here, the electronics devices and the digital contents are almost all over around us: computers, smart-phones, smart-watches, domestic gadgets, the cars, public hot-spots, street lights, a large part of industrial facilities, urban services, banks and so on all of these have a direct connection with an microprocessor and with a dedicated software or routine. The daily life into the post-industrial society can't be imagined without this technology. And this is not only a fashion, it is happening for around two decades. So, we can already formulate a very pertinent question: *what are the impacts of this addiction by technology over the humanity?* What happening with the human race beyond of all these technological gadgets? We will be capable to survive disconnected?

These are not only philosophical questions, but also very deep sociological issues. The digital born generation is growing up and spread all over the world very fast. They cannot understand the life without digital technology, without computers, without

Internet, without smart mobile phone, without touch-screens and so on. The image with a child that tries to touch an old TV screen and is confused why nothing happening is already a classical one. For this generation a computer without net access, a mobile phone without touch screen, a video game without social-media interface is all a non-sense. And as the information technology is developing faster and faster we can estimate that the gap between the digital generation and us will become more incomprehensible. Ironically, this risk was formulated by Marshall McLuhan around half of century ago, but without any serious taking in account. In his famous book, *Gutenberg Galaxy* he wrote the following parabola:

*“During the time when Tsi-Gung was traveling by the countries from the North of the Han River he has seen an old man that working in him vegetable garden. He has made an irrigation moat. He has descend himself into the moat, feel an bucket with water, carry out with him arms and flowing into the moat. Even he has working very hard, he has low gain. Tsi-Gung say to him: <There are a proceed that allow you to fill 100 channels into one day without so hard work. Do you want to learn you?> The gardener ask: <How so?> Tsi-Gung say: <You have to take a wooden bare, heaviest at one end and easiest at the other. This, you can take out water more easy!> The face of the old man is blushing because angry: <I have heard my teacher that when a man use a machine, he become to make everything like a machine; the person that made everything like a machine get to have an heart like a machine, and who has an heart like a machine is losing its simplicity. The person that has losing him/her simplicity become unsure in the moving of its soul. The unsure on the soul moving cannot be related with the honor. I know the tool about you are talking to me, but I'm to shame to use it. (McLuhan, 1969: 65)*

It is so obvious here that, all over the history of humanity the technological tools have solved problems but also have generated some new issues by transforming the human being. And these, is not necessary a matter of honor, but as a weakness of our potential. In the same book McLuhan point that: *“The price that we have to pay for the special technical tools, even it is about the wheel, alphabet or radio is that all these massive extensions of our feels are closed systems. Our feels are not closed systems, but there are all the time translated one in each other into these experiences that we are called conscious”* (McLuhan, 1969: 30). Did we lose our unlimited horizons due to increasing of the technological addiction of the daily lifestyle? Can we estimate how deep and complex is this lost? It is a very high probability to can't made it. If our eyes are closed by the huge amount of technological gadgets is almost impossible to see the colors and the shadows of the reality. And this is not just a melancholic conclusion, it's a trend that can be observed all over around us.

### 2.3. The born digital generation

For a better understanding of the nowadays technological existence we have to take a look on the global statistics and trends concerning the live into the digital universe. So, what's happening in 60 seconds of Internet today? Following several commercial statistics (Social Times) it is estimated that, in every minute of the day (Table 1):

Google	over 4,000,000 search
@	over 204,000,000 messages by e-mail
Youtube	over 72 hours

Facebook	2,460,000 contents shared
Tweeter	277.000 tweets
Pandora	61,141 hours of music is listened
Amazon	83,000 USD from selling
Skype	23,300 hours of connections
Apple	48,000 applications downloaded

**Table 1.** What's happening in 1 minute of Internet

These entire contents make a quite detailed description of how intense are the activities into the digital universe. And how huge amount of energy and creativity it is involved. If we try to focus only on the Facebook (FB) activities (Statista), there are already 1.441 billion users in the first semester of 2015 with an average time spend of 21 minutes per user per day (Digital Marketing). This means that the daily activities of the entire Facebook's users cumulate 30.3 billion minutes, and that's represent 57,574 years. With other word, if we stop using the FB for one day, and use this time for any voluntary activities Terra will have 57,574 years of work for a non-profit activity! With a so huge amount of time for voluntary activities can be done plenty of activities all around the world. But, even to quit the FB for one single day is not a so big issue that it will don't happened. A question directly related to this values is where are coming from this time? Did you stop doing other things or we just increase the daily agenda? Before FB, how it use 21 minutes daily these 1.4 billion people? Some says *in a better way*...

The recent evolution of the technology increases its portability. We can take the digital universe everywhere, on laptop, notebook, tablet, smart phone and smart watch with an affordable price. We become more and more connected and thus, the classical question *how time did we spend on the Internet?* becomes an outdated one because technically, we are now full-time on-line. The content and the configuration of the daily agenda is deep related to the Internet, to the digital world, to the social media and web 2.0. Following the McLuhan parabola cited above, with so many gadgets and applications its looks that we become weaker and unsure. We are in contact with thousands of people by social media without knowing too much about them. We can access anytime an incredible amount of data, documents and information all over the world. We can exceed the social and geographical distances, we can even cheat the time. Are we stronger, or not? Despite all the appearances, actually, we aren't...

We spent a significant amount of time in front of personal computers doing various intellectual activities, interacting with people that are aloof, sharing information and generating contents. Meantime, we are doing less physical activities, we become strangers for the peoples that are close by us and, more important, we lose the ability to use our memory. Day after day, the over utilisation of the informatics technology transform as into a social autistic person, with limited capability to talk with other real person and with a quite limited memory, but with an excellent computer mediated communication skills, ready to explore anything into the digital universe, to find and to access any kind of data, and, more important, to interact with any person from any society, cultural area and geographical space. We trend to express ourselves into relations with other better by writing than by talking. Of course, all of these can be considered only simply speculation, there are not yet made any dedicated research toward these transformations. But there are very complex and deep transformations, the process is ongoing and it is happening very fast. We can see all around children that

trend to touch any screen, including the old TV screens because they are expected to be reactive (as any touch screen for tablets and smart-phones). We can see frequently people that are together around the table into a restaurant or terrace and each of them are focus on personal smart-phone (usually sharing to the other friend that they are outside, with "friends"). We can see all the time people looking for Google for any basic content, including the orthographic rule for some words. We do not need to keep reading in a foreign language because the modern browsers can translate almost everything in a large amount of languages.

There are already voices that ask for actions against the globalization of the iconographic civilisation. Italian sociologist Giovanni Sartori is one of the most strong of them. His manifesto toward the returning to the read instead of watching TV is very difficult to be ignored. We already have an extended part of young generation grown up with at least 2 or 3 hours of TV daily, with a very poor reading exercise, and that are interested only about images (in all format) against the text. They are preparing to become parents and their low interest for literature will be transmitted by socialization to their children. Soon, to read a book will don't be only an old fashion activity but it will be complete useless. And of course, the imagination and all mental process associated with reading will be decreased. If several generations will use to look at video tutorial instead of reading a prospect did we will have the chance to rediscover the wonder of writing and reading?

To watch at TV can be a quite clear delimited activity. More or less accurate, anyone can say when he or she started to watch at TV and when he or she has stop do it this. But, accessing the Internet, using the Google, watching to Youtube, browsing the Facebook and so on trend to become a continuous all day activities. Of course, we do plenty of other things, but due to multitasking facilities we are almost all the time on-line. We can work on some project, writing a paper, making a presentation, drawing a plan and so on and keeping an open window for social media, or for news feeds, or for other specific portals from the Internet. Thus, the time dedicated to only one activity become smaller and smaller and thus the ability to stay *focus* on only one activity become more difficult. It is obviously that the multitasking capacity develops some kind of lateral thinking we are able to engage parallel conversation, analysis, thinking and so on. But, into the sometime, we trend to become more superficial, more flue and simple in all what we do. And thus is not necessary a desirable achievement.

The changing of the society is happening right *now*, and the reverse of the weakness will be very difficult. The further generation will be already socialized into patterns that where difficult to imagined only two decades ago. The internet is not a basic need for living, but it is sine-qua-non condition for to be integrated into the present post-modern society. Anyone can survive without the digital technology but it will do it almost alone. So, the denying of the weakness generated by the digital technology looks to be unavoidable, at least for the next decades. Maybe is time to start thinking about the actions and measure that can help us to counteract these consequences.

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