

Reuters Study - internet addiction differences between generations

Written by Dr. Kimberly Young

Sunday, 04 October 2009 19:50 - Last Updated Sunday, 28 November 2010 12:02

New Generation of Information Addicts and Dataholics

Differences between Generations of Internet Users

Older - Digital Immigrants

Younger - Digital Natives

Prefer to talk on phone or in person

Prefer to connect via text, chat, Facebook, games, etc.

Text sparingly

Text more than call: 47% of teens can text with eyes closed

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Prefer synchronistic communication

Prefer a-synchronistic (sequential) communication

Accustomed to and like manuals with clear steps

Cannot relate to manuals - They figure it out intuitively

Assume they will work their way up the ladder in the workplace, in a linear fashion, in one career.

Try many careers, want balance among family, friends, activities, work. Prefer flexible hours, opportunity

Hang out in person, clubs, dinners, etc.

Hang out online in chats, social networking sites and games

Value 'proper' English

Use texting and instant message shorthand: cu tomorrow; luv ya, ru going to the game?

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Tell friends about a trip on the phone, or with an in-person slideshow

Tell friends about a trip by posting an album online

Use the Internet to gather information

Use the web to socialize, play, watch videos, shows, etc.

Think young people waste their lives online

Many aspects of life are happening only online

Think of the Internet as not "real life"

Internet is as real, and often more pleasurable, than offline life

One task or pleasure at a time

Several tasks or recreation activities at a time: Watch television, text, study.

Safety concerns: Physical kidnapping, assault, robbery

Safety concerns: Sexting, inappropriate pictures online, cyber stalking, identity theft, privacy invasions (h

Complexities, Differences, Problems

- Some young people spend too much time in front of the screen, up to 20 hours a day. Spending countless hours a day, every day, on the Internet or online gaming can interfere with young people's emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual development.
- Unlike older generations, the younger generations often socialize, hang out, and communicate online rather than in person. They usually text rather than talk on the phone, and often prefer to hang out on Twitter, Facebook and MySpace rather than in the local bar, on the street or at the town square.
- Unlike older generations, young people are highly capable of effective multitasking, which appears to the older generation as lack of attention and lack of focus.
- Around the world there are alarming reports of Internet Addiction. For example, in Korea there have been 10 cardiopulmonary-related deaths in Internet cafés. China reports 13% of its population is Internet-addicted. The U.S. and the west often show similar stats, with 9% of U.S. Internet users hiding their non-essential Internet use.
- While the older generations may primarily use the Internet to gather important information and follow up on important news, younger generations use the Internet for communication, fun and gaming, to find out about each other, information-gathering, view videos, listen to music, blog, chat, share links, read news, shop, and "surf."
- The older/parent generation, being digital immigrants, view all these online activities and multitasking as a waste of time and lack of focus. They do not understand the value of online social networking, the learning that takes place in online games, the capacity of young people to multitask, and the enormous fun, pleasure and sense of community that young people derive from these activities.