DIVSI U25-Studie: Euphorie war gestern – Die „Generation Internet“ zwischen Glück und Abhängigkeit

Engl. transl.: DIVSI U25-Study: Euphoria was yesterday – The "internet generation" between happiness and dependence

# Keywords

* Quantifying the web
* online trust and safety
* media usage
* behavioural patterns

# Details

## Year

2018

## Issued

2018

## Language

German

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## Type

Report and working paper

## Topics

* Internet usage, practices and engagement
* Risks and harms
* Literacy and skills

## Sample

suvery: n = 1.730
focus group: n = 80
all aged between 14 and 24

## Implications For Educators About

Digital citizenship

## Implications For Policy Makers About

## Other PolicyMaker Implication

Digital citizenship

# Abstract

My foreword for the first U25-study was written almost four and a half years ago. With the study, which attracted a lot of attention, we provided a well-founded insight into the digital lifeworlds of the upcoming generation for the time. We went far beyond pure usage statistics as we learned plenty about the behavioural logic of young people, about their attitudes towards the internet as well as about their motives and barriers, which influence their online activities.
The time span from 2014 to the present is relatively short but measured against the fast pace of the internet and the rapid technological development, it is gigantic. It's time to take a closer look, again. The study provides in-depth insights into the everyday life of the "internet generation" and shows how quickly digitisation is changing the reality of their lives. The title already signals a significant difference in the way today's 14- to 24-year-olds deal with the digital world compared to their peers four years ago: the times of unconcerned use of the available technical possibilities are ideas of the past. The results rather show that the hype is over, pure euphoria was yesterday. Offliners have now completely disappeared from the U25 map while at the same time, almost 100 per cent of adolescents own smartphones and are online every day. In 2014, more internet use also meant a more positive attitude towards the internet. Today, the attitudes of the so-called "internet generation" range from happiness to disillusionment to mistrust and fear of addiction.

# Outcome

"In Germany, all adolescents and young adults are online. Smartphones and mobile data are common practice. Four years ago, 2 per cent of young people between the ages of 14 and 24 were offline. Today, there are no more offliners in this age group – 99 per cent even use the internet daily. Compared to 2014, that is an increase of 28 per cent.

For young adults, the internet is always accessible and above all: it is practical. The vast majority of 14 to 24-year-olds views digital infrastructures and services as indispensable, while 68 per cent agree that a life without the internet would be unimaginable for them.

Using the internet is not always voluntary. Adolescents and young adults perceive no alternative to the internet. In 2014, the idea of a future that solely depends on the internet frightened almost one-fifth of 14 to 24-year-olds. The percentage nearly doubled to 41 per cent in 2018.

A fear of internet addiction is widespread: Not only the external but also the "internal compulsion" to use the internet, as perceived by many, is a cause of concern for young people. The fear of exceeding a reasonable level of use is widespread. Young adults discuss this in their age group under the catchword "internet addiction".

There is a fundamental change in the use and perception of social media. Compared to 2014, both the view of young people on social media and their use have changed significantly. More messaging, less networking: While the popularity of Facebook is declining among 14 to 24-year-olds, 99 per cent of those surveyed can no longer imagine life without WhatsApp. With a user share of 73 per cent, Instagram has also overtaken Facebook (67 per cent) in this age group.

In general, young people observe opportunities on the internet but also perceive risks more strongly. This perception is not associated with an increase in security measures. In particular, young people fear online attacks on their own identity. The fear of publishing embarrassing or intimate posts has increased, as has a fear of fake profiles. The systematic collection of data, e.g. for marketing purposes, is more of a side issue for young people.

Being a "digital native" is not a foregone conclusion: the idea that young people are digitally competent by their year of birth is firmly rejected by 14 to 24-year-olds. Adolescents and young adults emphasise that even those who have grown up with the internet have to acquire the necessary digital knowledge.

Young people feel inadequately prepared for a digital future. They mostly acquire skills through their own experiences and their peers.

Over the years, the attitudes of 14- to 24-year-olds towards the internet have differentiated, leading to a partial reshaping of the previously established internet milieus." (DIVSI 2018, 12-14; translated by the coder)