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Ageing society and the role of social media. Educational needs of aged and the role of social media in their learning

Starzenie się społeczeństwa i rola mediów społecznościowych.
Potrzeby edukacyjne wieku i rola mediów społecznościowych
w nauce

Summary. The adult education need to be more prepared to open the possibilities for ageing citizens to learn more about the social media and train them in a user friendly method enjoy it. This is a challenging agenda for lifelong learning everywhere in Europe. On the pages below the author divides the text on the following sections: data on the usage of social media, focusing on the Facebook (practically it was not possibility to make an overview on all kind of social media tools, as it is a diverse and fast growing field), data on using the Facebook by age groups, the educational need of aged people internationally, educational needs in Hungary (based on a survey), points concerning to make more accessible the social media ageing people.

Keywords: ageing society, social media, lifelong learning, educational needs.

Streszczenie. Kształcenie dorosłych musi być bardziej przygotowane, by dać możliwości starszemu społeczeństwu, aby uczyli się więcej na temat mediów społecznościowych i szkolić ich w sposób przystępniejszy dla odbiorcy. To jest wyzwanie dla uczenia się przez całe życie wszędzie w Europie. Na stronach poniżej Autor dzieli tekst na następujące sekcje: dane na temat wykorzystania mediów społecznościowych, skupianie się na Facebooku (praktycznie nie było możliwości, aby zrobić przegląd dla wszelkiego rodzaju narzędzi społecznościowych, ponieważ jest to zróżnicowana i szybko rozwijająca się dziedzina), dane dotyczące korzystania z Facebooka według grup wieku, potrzeb edukacyjnych osób w wieku starszym na arenie międzynarodowej, potrzeby edukacyjne na Węgrzech (na podstawie ankiety), odnośnie uzyskania lepszego dostępu do mediów społecznościowych przez osoby starsze.

Słowa kluczowe: starzenie się społeczeństwa, media społecznościowe, uczenie się przez całe życie, potrzeby edukacyjne.

Introduction

Our association is member in the project entitled *Intergenerational communication and active ageing in a rural environment*. (I-CARE) We are all aware of the demographic trends in our countries and this Grundtvig programme would like to alleviate social challenges through adult learning programmes tailored for senior citizens. The general objectives of I-CARE are among others:

- to increase individual and minor community autonomy and action-capability,
- to address the problems of marginalisation through learning as well as community development,
- to increase openness to European practices and values,
- to recognise and support all forms of learning,
- to increase participation in learning,
- to recognise the role of learning in individual and family life, social role taking, employment and career planning.

(more on the project see: <http://www.i-ca.re/>)

The different workshops organised by the partner organisations focusing on different and specific topics. In Hungary this subject has been the educational needs of the aged people and the role of social media in their learning.

Social media refers to the means of interaction among people in which they create, share, and/or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein define social media as “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content”.

Furthermore, social media depends on mobile and web-based technologies to create highly interactive platforms through which individuals and communities share, co-create, discuss, and modify user-generated content. It introduces substantial and pervasive changes to communication between organizations, communities, and individuals (Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_media).

This workbook first version prepared and presented for the I-CARE workshop Hungary

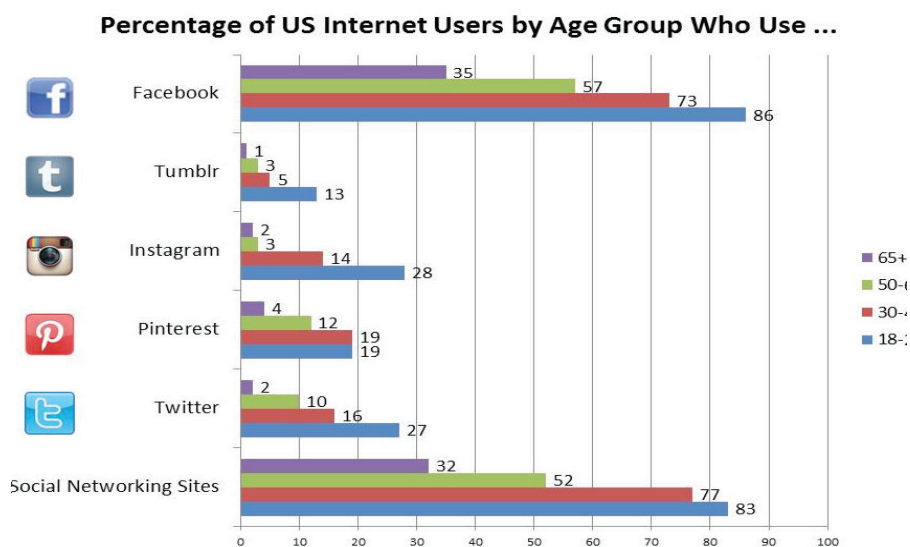
October 2013. Here it is an addition and completion for a wider circle of readers. The aim was to stimulate a discussion in the theme more deep: educational needs of ageing people and the role of social media.

In the pages below you can see the following sections:

- data on the usage of social media, focusing on the Facebook (practically it was not possibility to make an overview on all kind of social media tools, as it is a diverse and fast growing field),
- data on using the Facebook by age groups,
- the educational need of aged people internationally,
- educational needs in Hungary (based on a survey),
- points concerning to make more accessible the social media ageing people.

Social media usage

This chart shows that the Facebook still dominant among the different social medias.

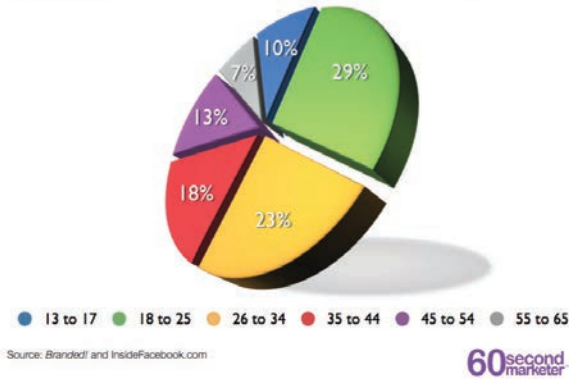


Source: Pew Research Center's Internet and American Life Project, February 2013
c2013 Creating Results, LLC www.CreatingResults.com

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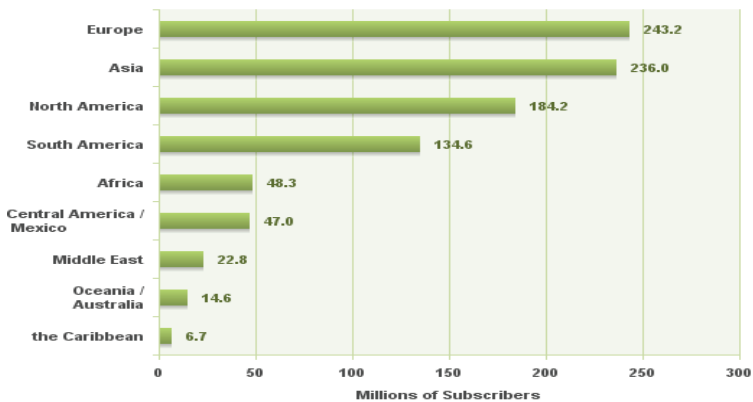
Facebook worldwide

Facebook Use by Age Group



It is also important to know – even everything is quickly changing – Europe leads the number of Facebook users. Going to the older age groups the usage decreases. In the meantime, in the age group of senior citizens the use of social media grows very dynamically.

Facebook Users in the World by Regions - September 2012

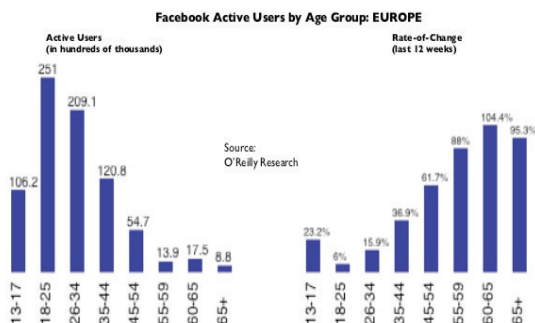


Source: Internet World Stats - www.internetworldstats.com/facebook.htm
 The total number of Facebook subscribers in the world is estimated to be 937,407,180 on September 30, 2012.
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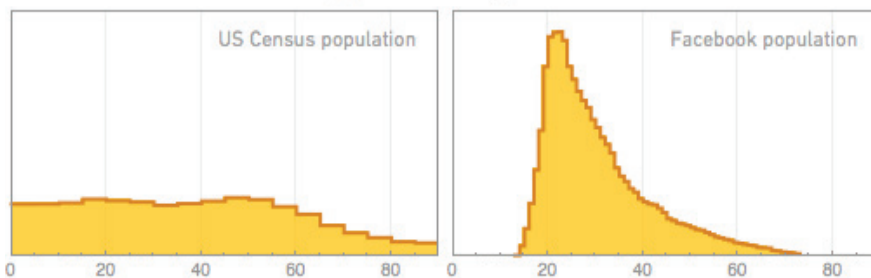
Source: Internet World Stats - www.internetworldstats.com/facebook.htm

The total number of Facebook subscribers in the world is estimated to be 937,407,180 on September 30, 2012. Copyright © 2012, Miniwatts Marketing Group

Europe - Active Users By Age Group



population vs. age



Source: O'Reilly Research

72% of Online Adults are Social Networking Site Users¹

We need to introduce a new term called online adults. A rising percentage of older adults are using social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, and Google+, according to a Pew study.

¹ Resource: 72% of Online Adults are Social Networking Site Users – www.pewresearch.org (access: August 5, 2013).

Forty-three percent of people age 65 and older use online social networking services, according to survey results released by the Pew Research Centre. A mere 1 percent of people in that age group were active on social networking sites in 2006. Since 2009, adoption rates for those 65 and older have tripled, according to the report Pew Research Centre.

Five benefits of Social Media for Seniors²

There has been carried out a research dealing with the benefit of social media use of senior citizens which are by Barry Brikett as follows:

1. Social Media Can Keep Families Close

The first reason social media is for seniors are to stay closer to family.

2. Social Photo and Video Sharing

3. Coupons(!) and other Discounts

Social media provides access to many opportunities to save money, whether it's discount offerings by companies.

4. Peace of Mind

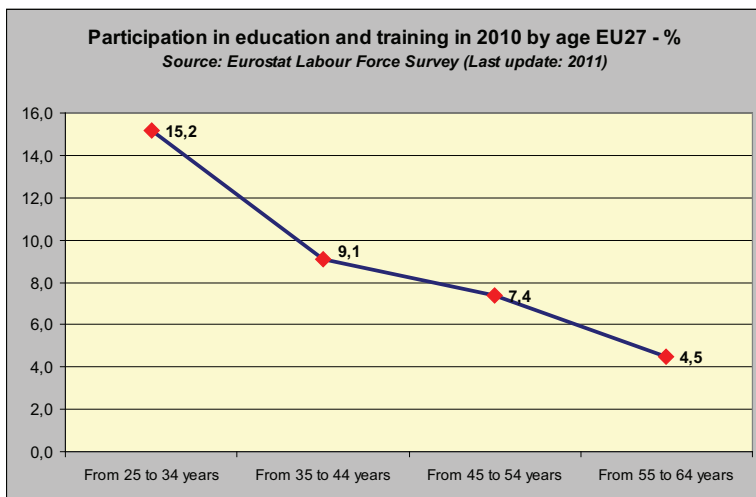
Social media gives seniors and their families a convenient way to check in daily, or on whatever frequency is desired, creating peace of mind on both ends of the communications.

5. Community Belonging

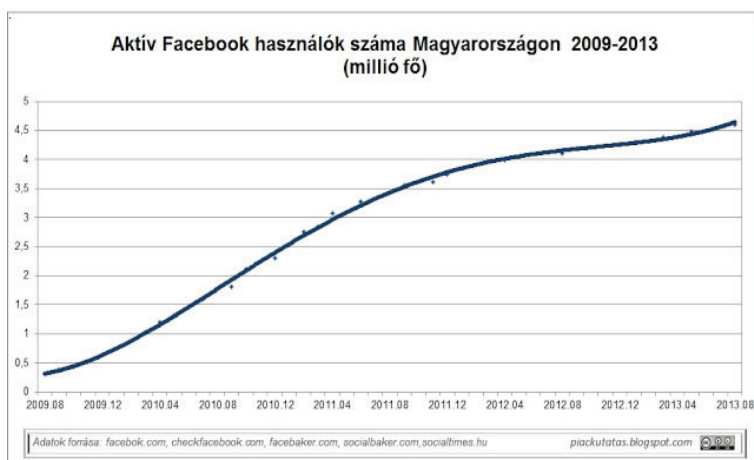
The importance of socializing as part of a community cannot be overstated, particularly for seniors spending much of their time living isolated at home. The list seems to be acceptable, aside from the point three. To my own personal experience there are a lot aggressive advertisements disturbing you're your surfing on the Internet and social media platform which is practically balk in your journey and communication. The use of social media in the group of senior citizens important also as the EU survey pointed out in lifelong learning researches that the intensity of learning decreasing as seen below in the table about participating in adult learning by age. It is only 4,5% of the age group 55–64.

Below you can see the active number of Facebook users 2009–2013 in Hungary which shows a significant grow. In 2013 exceed the 4,5 million persons.

² Resource: <http://seniorcarecorner.com/5-benefits-of-social-media-for-seniors> by Barry Brikett.



Source: Eurostat Labour Force Survey (Last update: 2011)



Based on that dynamic increasing – shown above – it is very interesting question, what is the position of the senior citizens in this big group of growing Facebook users. We could use only an empirical data collection of a survey which is not fresh enough and applied an out dated categorization of age groups. It has focused on the 45+ which is today not acceptable. Currently in Hungary it is used also the 65+ group and there is a new, more dif-

ferentiated categorization. This survey same time valuable as pointed out the visible strong interest of aged people in digital world included social media. Let us see a short summary of the survey which focused on the educational needs of the ageing population in Hungary.

Educational needs of ageing people in Hungary³

The National Employment Fund supported a series of conferences nationwide together with a survey on the educational needs of ageing people 2008–09 (45+). In the events attended 613 people who were asked about their need in lifelong learning. 358 persons answered to the questionnaire. The result can be considered representative meanwhile it seems to be more positive as the participants of conferences were more active and open aged people.

QUESTIONNAIRE:

The answer to the question, did they hear about the concept of lifelong learning 92% answered yes. To the second question, whether they feel to continue learning 96% said yes.

Dealing with the subject they have listed a very wide range of programmes, 72 different topics as for example: informatics, using of Internet, language, writing application, digital photos, visiting library, organising programmes for retired people, consumer protection, law, technic, health, caring of elderly, gerontology, work beside the pensioner, community work etc.

Analysing the inputs of inquired people the informatics, Internet using is a topping subject. This means not only the necessary training but also the development of the accessibility for the Internet as well. In the population of Hungary 3,58 million people are above 45+ from which every 7th person use the Internet. There are more and more aged – survey says – who recognized the importance of the Internet to preserve the social contacts and their mental virility and condition. The Internet use is popular as its usage informal and unattached. Informatics 38% and language 18% altogether 56% seems to be significant.

Other interested topics are:

- personal development;

³ Resource: Hazai körkép az idősek tanulási igényeiről National overview on the needs of the learning needs of aged Author: Szabóné Molnár Anna PhD Budapest University.

- social issues, intergenerational problems, family issues;
- community work, programmes for elderly.

The last question dealing with the topic asked about the time. There has been asked how much time the aged people would pay for learning. The dominant category has been the 2–4 hours a week.

Experiences of the discussions at workshops of survey

There have been held workshops to discuss issues with the target group. The general opinion in the society included the adult educators: the aged people like to learn for the pleasant party, being together. The talks at workshops about the issue showed something else. Expectation of aged people seems to be more serious. They want to have a better quality of life, and way of life, want to compensate their disadvantages of their age, to keep their identity and conditions in their changing age. They feel not being prepared to explore the learning opportunities suits to their needs. They emphasised the importance of the motivational impact of community.

In our conclusion we need to emphasise that adult education need to be more prepared to open the possibilities for ageing citizens to learn more about the social media and train them in a user friendly method enjoy it. This is a challenging agenda for lifelong learning everywhere in Europe.

Netography

www.pewresearch.org (access: August 5, 2013).

www.seniorcarecorner.com/5-benefits-of-social-media-for-seniors (access: August 5, 2013).

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