

The internet is changing our world

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Abstract. *This work aims to bring the importance of the internet into discussion, given that it has changed the way we organize the functioning of our social and economical lives, if this change is towards the better or the worse and how we could go about to make use of the internet to improve humanity's social and economical lives at a global level. The appearance and development of the internet has led to fantastically rapid changes to our world, from day to day or even major changes within hours, instantly changing our vision of the world, forcing us to adapt our thinking and beliefs to new tendencies and discoveries of a technical level, of a technological level and of innovation. Those which succeed in adapting to these global changes, from all points of view, it's them who will hold the key to success, and the internet is the gate house to success.*

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In the past few decades, our world has changed at a fantastic rate, even from day to day, and this has become more pronounced from generation to generation. If our grandparents and great grandparents lived their entire lives without having anything come up which would suddenly and violently change their vision of the world, today, such events take place over hours if not minutes. Such new information can jolt our understanding of the world and may undermine our whole mental construction, forcing us to review our thinking and beliefs.

Why have these changes taken place in such alert rhythm? As humanity progressed, its needs multiplied and grew varied, and people's desire to fulfil as many needs as they could, at an as high as possible level of quality and as quickly as possible has generated an unprecedented process. Science and knowledge have evolved have evolved at a rapid rate precisely so that they may keep up with the needs and wants of humanity, entailing a continually increasing consumption of resources and inputs, practically forgetting that resources are limited to the planet's potential. By ignoring that fact, humanity has made waste of resources, and the tension between needs and resources has not improved, but instead increased and amplified. All these changes have not made us happier than our great grandparents and grandparents, whom possessed but rudimentary means of satisfying their needs. We possess no more free time than them, we can't enjoy the fruit of our work quietly and peacefully anymore, we no longer have time to spend with our children and family, we no longer delight in joys of the soul, but rather material ones (cars, villas, yachts, luxury jewelry, etc.) lead in our decisions, etc.

What has changed the way we live the experience of change? Humanity's progress is tied in a direct manner to technical, technological and informational progress, in their desire to as better and as fast as possible satisfy their needs at a high level of quality, and why not, satisfy their needs too at a decent level. All of these have gone increase economic, increase associated with the innovation and technological change, i.e. tabbing internet subsidiary processes and changes in process of production on which this relatively new technology has brought them (Moroianu, 2012, p. 118).

Satisfying needs at a high level of quality has forced a certain ways of communication and the desire of people to relate to as many other people from different parts of the world. In this context, internet came into play. The internet is the greatest development of this century, producing profound changes in the the way our social and economical lives are organized. Today, a medic may perform surgery from afar, people can hold international conferences with participants from different corners of the world without the participants needing to relocate, you may shop online from any country, you may sign deals, you may advertise your company via publicity and marketing strategies, it allows even the smallest of companies to be everpresent on many markets and do business around the world etc.

The history of the internet has begun with the development of ARPAnet (Advanced Research Projects Agency), which has led to the development of the first communication networks, using point-to-point links and perforated paper to transmit information. The internet was born on the 1st of January 1983 when ARPAnet had successfully connected 500 centers together. In 1990, ARPAnet vanishes, all operation being moved over to NSFnet (National Science Foundation) which in turn was replaced in 1995 with a commercial bus. This moment has opened access to the internet to the masses of home users and as a result the internet has grown from year to year by 100%. If in the beginning the internet was being used exclusively for research and communication in universities and the military, today, the internet is present everywhere and its uses are unlimited, allowing for a series of services ranging from online shopping, to reading books, to administrating banc accounts⁽¹⁾.

Now we ask ourselves: Is this crisis a change towards good or bad? If we were to answer by making use of a popular saying, then it'd be "a kick to the behind is a step forwards" as any revolution brings about change, it is obvious that everybody wants that change to improve their lives, and for the vast majority these changes were for the better, yet there still being some who are put in an unfavorable position by these changes. Those hit hardest are those who are vulnerable from an economical and social point of view, those with low and fixed revenues, those who must take care of children, of the elderly, of disabled people, those with only low level training, those who refuse to accept such change or to adapt to the new situation and so on.

If the economical crisis is not properly managed, the global banking-financial system may crash and the world will be faced with protests and unbelievable violence, possibly degenerating into war and chaos in which personal freedom is limited and democracy possibly lost⁽²⁾. To this end, we must find rapid solutions to improve our economy, and George Soroş says that Barack Obama's proposition to increase taxes for the rich would work towards this goal. It is preferable that we lose some wealth as opposed to losing all of it.

Now that the internet has been developed, we've created for ourselves a new social structure and from this we try to furnish a new structure at an economical, social, political and security level. The internet and telecommunication systems represent the foundation of this new social structure, and everything else is furniture. In Romania, the internet has appeared as a means by which people have learned to use it, just as if someone were looking in shop windows to see that there's a new product and is curious to look at it closer. That's how Facebook, linkedIn and other socialization networks appeared, by which people try to relate and learn the secrets of these communication networks, by which business people

compare their levels of competence without fearing that somebody might steal their ideas and creativity because these programs are secure and protected.

An economical aspect of the technological and informational level is the how money and financial transactions may be performed with the assistance of the internet via online operations by making use of the communications infrastructure, which is conceived just like the human nervous system and which used to be the center of balance of society at some point. The internet may allow some banking operations to be performed in good conditions over the phone and is the answer to our needs and why not, to the discovered technological level by making use of fluent thinking capable of creating a functional infrastructure.

Bank and financial operations are secured and checked by a well thought out system and, because of this, information leaks and embezzlement are practically impossible if the accessing and trading procedures of operations and services available are respected. Those which refused the implementation of the new techniques and technologies are part of the old structures which are overdue and slow per what regards processing data and information at a national and international level. Many know that a change in the structure of institutions and their functioning in any economy would not do them good because they would lose a series of advantages given to them and gained by them in the old structure. The struggle for power and to keep the positions they held is quite fierce and, for some, change could mean a loss of goods, power and even loss of freedom.

Morse code and radio worked on low frequencies, and once television and the internet came into play, much higher frequencies were needed. The internet has the highest frequency and this allows for all types of communication and for the security such high frequencies require. This high frequency allows for the development of a spiritual society which allows paranormal humans to relate via the new energy.

In Romania, the internet is in a pioneering phase and is used to a fairly high degree to socialize via Facebook, linkedIn, e-mail and quite less to initiate and develop businesses. The online market is a free market, with hundreds of millions of users with rapid capacity to manage information and redirect it to other users. The level of communication is very rapid and the market itself is very big thanks to this, because we have the courage to start businesses on our own and to learn how to self-manage them. Sadly however, even if some realize and understand how things work, our general mentality does not allow the managing and use of information.

Marketing is a profitable internet business. For example, there are firms which promote some products or services by posting ads for the firms offering the product/service or by contacting other firms which hold the rights to publish in exchange for having certain conditions met or tasks done. If a natural or legal person desires to promote a certain product or service, they may go about the task

in varied ways. They either buy software and have their ad delivered to a great number of clients for a few days, multiple times each day, or wait to accumulate publicity firm credit points by performing certain tasks. To this end, the firm sends certain ads to those interested, which if opened and read (the website must stay active for a few minutes), each ad is rewarded with an amount of credit points. These credit points are then turned into money. These credits may be used to make ads or may be paid to be given access to the list of clients of the marketing firm. The online marketing policy is cheaper and it informs people of and promote the product in question faster, tens if not hundreds of times faster than traditional marketing. All this is learned and requires very much time to understand and manage the working mechanisms of the marketing strategies, but also how the virtual world functions.

The internet's apparition produced a new type of business and that is online shopping. Countless websites and companies appeared that deal with sales of products via the Internet; they organize auctions; they offer pages of information if you pay, in another words they deal with a form of online commerce, in an ever growing field.

In Romania the first online shop was opened by PCNet in 1997 and it was called CyberShop.ro – they were selling music CDs. On September 14th 2000 the first successful online shop is launched, followed by Rate.ro, MagazinulTau.ro, Okazii.ro and eMAG. In 2004 Visa and MasterCard develop the security standard 3D Secure, a moment in which card owners can pay online and we have the first official data regarding online shopping. This type of commerce is on the rise: in 2004 we had around 19,000 transactions with a value of 3.5 millions Euro and by 2011 the number of transactions was higher than 50,000/ month with a total value of 350 million Euro⁽³⁾. Today, the Internet is ever present in our lives and its use is unlimited .

The economic potential of online commerce can make the most of it if it is used both by the producers and the consumers. Studies of OECD⁽⁴⁾ indicates that e-commerce has strong potential in education and training: the demand of program studies with online classes through the usage of new technologies which gives a new challenge to the traditional model of academic accreditation. This creates new opportunities for teachers, entrepreneurs and students so that they can remove national borders and create a new dimension through the usage of information and communication technologies.

Trust is the base for every commercial transaction. The development of new types of business in the electronic environment is anchored in the security of the services offered to consumers and businessmen. The consumers want total control over their personal data, while businessmen need a framework which can be

applied to worldwide transactions. Currently we find seven types of e-commerce: phone, fax, television, e-payments, money transfers, electronic data exchange and Internet. The Internet made possible the worldwide spread of services, being used for publications, websites design, management, medicine, tourism – online reservations, electronic mail, research, etc.

The usage of e-commerce brings many advantages to the consumers: the transactions can be made at any hour of the day or night, all over the year and from everywhere; buyers can participate to virtual auctions; can interact with other buyers so that they can compare their experiences; they are well informed because they can access the latest news which are received in a couple of seconds; they can benefit from promotions based on coupons, bonuses or special offers; give more options to choose products and prices, etc. But we cannot point out some disadvantages in using e-commerce: security and safety of transactions; the impossibility of seeing, smelling and touching the products – elements present in the traditional commerce; difficulty understanding language and cultural issues; access is still very expensive for some potential clients; difficulty in the integration of Internet and e-commerce software with some applications and databases, etc.

If we look from the point of view of those who are offering to the buyers all the necessary information needed for online shopping, they also have advantages and disadvantages. Advantages: by creating websites which are virtual shops, the costs for creation, processing, distribution, storage and retrieval of information are lower; expansion into international markets and promoting the goods and services offered; they can test in the most efficient way the taste and preference of customers through online questionnaires; enabling staff to work at home thus reducing fixed costs and other expenses, having only online support services and after-sale service, covering a large number of potential clients as there is no limit geographically speaking, etc. Disadvantages: internet's technology can create the possibility of fraud because in the absence of a direct contract, a client can cheat the retailer about its identity or actual payment possibilities; Romanians are still skeptical about purchasing products online, so a low degree of safety is being exhibit in the use of electronic commerce; the infrastructure, mentality and ignorance are other disadvantages that prevent many traders to make their business known on the Internet.

To highlight the role that the Internet plays in our lives we conducted a survey based on a questionnaire consisting of 15 questions, on a sample of 300 subjects among students aged 18-24 years, i.e. first year students of Faculty of Commerce at the Academy of Economic Studies. In quantitative analysis we can draw the following conclusions:

- A majority of 96.5% surf daily and only 3.5% few times a week;
- 45% of those interviewed surf for more than 35 hours a week (an average of five hours a day), 33.5% surf for periods ranging from 21 to 32 hours, 17.3% surf for periods ranging from 16 to 20 hours a week and 4.2% surf for periods of 11-15 hours a week;
- Reasons to surf the internet: 37.5% socialize and keep in touch with their friends, 33.2% spend their time relaxing (music, movies, games), 13% get informed and documented on things, 10% work on their education, 6.3% work in business and commerce;
- To sort out school problems and other issues, 75.6% inform themselves over the internet very often, 22.3% do it often and only 2.1% only do it from time to time;
- 83.6% hit the internet to download books and study papers very often, 14% do it often and 2.4% do it from time to time;
- 26.5% of those interviewed surf the internet 0%-25% of their spare time, 51.3% anywhere between 26%-50%, 19.4% spend 51%-75% of their time on the internet and 2.8% spend 76-100% of their time on the internet;
- The most accessed websites are : Facebook (100% of all interviewed), Google (87% of all interviewed), YouTube (68% of all interviewed), Yahoo! (56% of all interviewed), Messenger, Skype (32% of all interviewed);
- The most accessed websites are entertainment, music, sports, education, personal pages, commerce pages;
- Checking information: 18% of all interviewed check their info by making use of other sources, 27.5% check one more source before proceeding, 38.6% do not check their information and 15.9% have never asked themselves if what information they've come across is correct;
- Do you believe that the internet can change the way we organize our social-economical lives and how it works? 65.4% say that things will evolve in an increasing direction but do not know how and what radical changes the internet can bring, 23.6% believe that electronic commerce will bring upon major changes in commercial transactions while the rest 11 % do not know what to say.

As expected, young people give special importance to internet access because it is a rapid source of information and documentation for any domain of activity. It is an easy and cheap means to socialize and communicate with your friends. The speed at which information travels is fantastic, and access to the international network is easier and more visible. Young people, with their attitude towards the internet, can change something in the way we think and manage our informative potential transmitted via the internet network.

Conclusions

The Internet has changed and will continue to change the organization, development and operation of economic, social, cultural, educational and political life etc.. Thus, the emergence and development of the Internet has led to changes in the world at a fantastic pace, suddenly changing world view and forcing us to adapt our thinking and beliefs to new trends and discoveries in art, technology and innovation. The Internet connects us to the reality of global life, information flow at a fantastic rate and the communications are at a high level. The online market is a free market, with hundreds of millions of users thus being conducive to business development. The Internet is also the base for electronic commerce and in Romania it took a tremendous boom since 2004. Marketing activity has taken a tremendous swing speed increasing the promotion and marketing of a product or brand. Internet is the front door to success and for success we should be able to find the right key. Internet can change the world but the world must change their mentality entrenched in unprofitable habits for society. Change in the institutional structure and functioning of an economy would be beneficial but it is not desirable because the fight can be very fierce and change can mean for some a loss. Young people can transform the world; they can change the current institutional structures that no longer meet the requirements of the new society.

Notes

- (1) Tabbing and evolution of internet, article available online www.scribd.com, accessed 2.10.2012.
- (2) George Soros, *We're headed for war and chaos*, article available online at the address www.ionesi.blogspot.com/02/2012, accessed 15.04.2012.
- (3) The Appearance internet, article available online at the address www.Cultura-generalala.com/aparitaiinternetului, accessed 3.11.2012.
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