THE IMPACT OF THE INTERNET IN OUR DAILY LIFE

There is a big influence of technique on our daily life. Electronic devices, multimedia and computers are things we have to deal with everyday.

Especially the Internet is becoming more and more important for nearly everybody as it is one of the newest and most forward-looking media and surely "the" medium of the future.

Therefore we thought that it would be necessary to think about some good and bad aspects of how this medium influences us, what impacts it has on our social behaviour and what the future will look like.

The Internet changed our life enormously, there is no doubt about that. There are many advantages of the Internet that show you the importance of this new medium. What I want to say is that Internet changed our life in a positive way.

First we have to make a differentiation concerning the usage. You can use the Internet at home for personal or you at work for professional usage. Let's come to the first. To spend a part of our day on the Internet is for many people quite normal. They use this kind of medium to get information about all kinds topics. Maybe some of them are interested in chatting probably they are members of a community. Whatever you are looking for, you will find it. Even if you want to have very specific information, you will find it in a short time. Normally, you often have to send a letter, than you have to wait for the reception of the reply, or you have to make some telephone calls and so on. In any case, the traditional way is the longer one. To put your own information on the Internet is also possible. Create your own homepage, tell other users about your interests, what you want, that's no problem at all.

As we all know, software costs a lot, if you buy it legal. Free software, free music is available on the Internet. You just have to download the program, the mp3-file or whatever and that's it. Why do you want to pay more as you need to? Special websites are created just to give you the newest programs, or to tell you where you can get it from. Napster might actually be the most famous one.

The computer is a fix part of every modern office and the greatest part has also an access to the Internet. Companies already present their products, their services on the Internet and so they get more flexible.

The next advantage I want to mention is the faster development. Many universities and research institutions are also linked. They are able to exchange experiences, novelties and often they start new projects together. If they are linked, they can save time and money.

Especially at the business sector knowledge is power. If you are the leader of a product, of a technology or just of an idea you are able to make a lot of money. To get into this position, the Internet can play an essential part. Companies all over the world are online. If you want, it is no problem for you to exchange experiences, you will hear new things, you will see some facts from another point of view. For this reason you will find new solutions, new ways to go, so take this chance!

"Learning by doing", everybody knows this phrase and its still an essential part concerning the Internet. Children also use the Internet, most of the time they will "play" over the Internet, but they learn to work with the computer. There is only one way to learn something, you have to do it. Even it's the first contact with the computer, after a few minutes the person will know that the

computer-mouse is no animal running on the monitor. He or she learns to write on the keyboard, to navigate, to open and close programs, to save data... within hours. Try to do that on a normal computer course for beginners, you will need more time and the most important fact, it's not as funny as surfing on the Internet and so they participants are less motivated.

Let's change over to another positive effect of the Internet.

In any case, everybody's private situation is different. For many women their own children are the main reason for staying at home. Nowadays this won't be a problem any more, you can do work on your computer at home, called tele-working. Also men take this opportunity to work at home. What are the consequences, the advantages of tele-working? Sure, if you have a family, you can spend more time at home, probably you can spend more time with your children. Next is, that you can organize every day in the way you want to. Meetings at the company are reduced to a minimum. Tele-working is also an advantage for the owner of the company. Official studies substantiate that people who work at home are more motivated than their colleagues at the office. .

You see, the Internet is really a very positive medium. Use the Internet and discover the advantages of this new, forward-looking medium!

Another advantage of the internet is that you can join a community.

You can create new social contacts all over the world, which you could not do so easy without the internet.

Such communities can also help people who can not go out to find friends in the real life because they are disabled. Therefore they can chat with other people via the internet. Sometimes it is also easier for people, who are afraid to look into the other's face while talking, to chat with a person that they do not know. There is something between them which makes it easier for them to communicate. It also does not matter if you have a terrible appearance because you can pretend to be whatever you want. You can also change your gender and your age to talk about topics which you do not normally do.

However, there are no time and place limitations and there are no boundaries, both geographical and political. You can chat with people in Australia and you have freedom of your mind in a way.

Moreover the internet is much cheaper than the real life, e.g. phoning a friend in Australia costs more than to chat with him.

From my point of view the e-mail has replaced the traditional letter. You do not have to buy stamps anymore and it is much faster and also for free. You can also add files to your E-mail and that's why a big data transfer is possible. Therefore you do not have to send disks with information around the world anymore and you have your information in a digital way.

Another free service of the internet is sending SMS. You can save a lot of money if you do not send it with your mobile phone especially from Austria to America. You also have the opportunity to register as a user. Then you can use more things, e.g. sending E-postcards, I-messages (messages between registered users), and lead an address book.

You can also place your digital photos in the internet. With a password and a login name your friends in America can look at your photos without sending them to them.

Another important part is online gaming. You can play with people from all over the world and share your knowledge. In my opinion it's more exiting to play with friends than playing alone.

Additionally, another big advantage of the internet is the easy access to information. Online reference books and dictionaries replace the way to the bookshop or to the library. It is again cheaper to search for information in the internet than to buy a book that is old after one year. In the internet a lot of information is renewed and up to date. You can also find information which is very new and a book does not exist yet.

Moreover you can read the daily newspapers from all over the world, sometimes for free. You do not have to buy them anymore. In addition, most newspaper sites have an archive in which you can search for old articles.

However, the internet is also a big "advertising company". A lot of enterprises have a homepage with ads and support opportunities. On some of them you can order products online. Then you do not have to go to the city anymore. You avoid waiting in front of the cash because of a long queue.

Moreover, you can get the newest stock exchange courses because the stock exchange in the Internet is always the most current one. You also have the ability to tell the computer to buy shares when the course is down.

Besides you can learn with the internet. CBTs (Computer Based Training) already exist but you can also join an internet course with other members.

Furthermore you can hold videoconferences which mean that e.g. your teacher is sitting in his office in America and teaching you in Austria.

This is very important in the medical sector because doctors from all over the world can join an operation. So specialists can give tips and help other doctors to complete the operation successfully. The patient has not to wait until a specialist will come from America.

But this is only available because of the internet 2 which is much faster.

The internet is a database full of information and offers us a lot of services, sometimes for free. This makes our life easier and sometimes also cheaper.

All in all I think that the internet is very useful especially for students.

Clicking on the Internet-Button is getting more and more thrilling nowadays.

Sometimes it is a real adventure not being sure if you have downloaded a virus or if it is only a hoax. You even cannot be sure to be alone if you are alone. Is there someone else working on my computer or is it only me? To have more security you have to install a firewall, buy anti-virus-programmes and update them regularly. So you have to spend much money only for preventing a virus-caused breakdown or hacker-attacks. It is annoying not being sure if the money you have spent will prevent all those things or if there is already a new virus and a new way hacking into computers. This is no more an investment into security it is a steady consumption which will not end. Some people even have to take up a loan to buy a computer. They are forced to buy one. Otherwise they maybe would not be able to stay in their job. What will the poor people do? They will be rarely informed about news and the space between rich and poor will become bigger and bigger.

Having downloaded the latest anti-virus-program it will not prevent meeting bad people on the internet. If you chat with someone you cannot be sure about the truth of his/her words. Most people cheat emotions, cheat about their appearance, age, job. That can be funny but if you want to meet someone talking to each other seriously it can be hard to do so. Is it a man, is it a woman or is it someone I already know? You never can be sure. Is that something on the other side already hacking into my computer reading personal information? If you get to a web site of a bank – is it a real bank or only a faked one? There have to be some signs which identify an original website reliably. How can I be sure if I want to buy something on the web and send my credit card-number that nobody will read it?

Imagine the following scene: You are surfing through the internet and suddenly – you are just downloading the latest screensaver of Verona Feldbusch – the whole internet breaks down. What would you do? Trying to build your own internet? Worrying about the lack of Verona? Sitting in front of the computer waiting for hours and looking into a black screen? Seriously, what would happen? I think most of the people would wait an hour or longer. Some people would stop

existing because they have no real life. They only exist on the internet with their avatars in the chat rooms. They have given up reality for cyberspace. It is more practical for them because they do not need to ask someone to meet someone. The other one is just on the other end. Seriously speaking, I think people would not be glad about having to get out of their rooms. They feel uncomfortable about leaving their beloved computer. They do not know what to do. I think many even do not know any more how a book looks like or a typewriter. Besides losing our social abilities we are also losing our every-day-abilities. The computer is a nanny, a dictionary, an information centre, a job, a shopping centre. Nobody has to know anything about everyday business because the computer does it for us.

Internet user are becoming younger and younger. For children it is no problem to work with a computer. They just accept "him" as partner. But what do the older people do? Some even do not know how to switch the computer on. I know some people who are afraid of the computer. They think everything they do is wrong and the computer is breaking down on purpose. For these people the computer is already too complex. There has to be something like a computer for beginners. Otherwise there will always be some people who do not want to know how to use the computer because there is too much to know about it.

There are people who do not read the paper in the morning any more.   They are reading the e-paper. Even in the morning they are sitting in front of the computer and not talking to each other while drinking a cup of tea. In the future there will be more and more e-papers and the newspapers will disappear. Some are beginning to talk to their computer (Come on, let's work!) but they are not any more able to talk to each other. While chatting in the internet you are frequently using abbreviations, uncompleted sentences and so on. This leads to speaking disabilities in everyday life.

One of the most negative aspects of the impact of the internet on our daily life is, in my opinion, that it alters the social behaviour, habits and abilities of people.

Especially children are often badly influenced by the internet.

Therefore I want to deal with the impact of the internet on the social behaviour of children.

In our times, when nearly every household has a computer and access to the internet, it is only clear that also children deal with computers and the internet. They should learn how to use it, of course.

The world of the World Wide Web and virtual space is going to become more important with every year and everybody should be able to use this tool – even children.

They should know how to get information, how they can buy something on the web, where they can meet people online.

They should be able to use the internet because if they are not, they are going to have great difficulties with getting on in their lives without knowing how to use the internet later on. Simply because it is a very powerful media which is going to be the main medium in the future.

But what I am worrying about is that children will be very competent experts on using the internet – but not on how to live in the real world anymore.

The first point I want to mention is that I don't consider the internet as a suitable babysitter or friend for children.

As I have already said, I think that it is important that children learn how to use the internet but it is also very important that they learn to have the right attitude towards the internet.

The internet will never replace the real world and therefore it is important that children see that the internet is a great tool if you know how to handle it but it should not be a replacement for real friends, for a real life. It's the parents duty to tell their children so.

Parents should not just put their children in front of a computer and say "Oh well, that's the internet, go on, have some fun and be quiet." The internet was not made for children and so it should not be used as a babysitter.

You can never be sure what the child will get to see when it is online without an adult sitting next to it. There is so much harmful, offending and simply disgusting material on the internet, that it is – in my opinion – totally careless when you let your children surf through the net all by themselves.

By reading the emails from the discussion group I often heard that if you teach your children the basics of ethic and just tell them not to look at harmful material then they can go online and surf through the net alone. I'm not of the same opinion. Children are children and they are not adults. If you tell them not to look at – for example – pornographic sites, you can never be sure that they will not. Children are nosy ones – at least most of them are – and most children will go and have a look at pornographic materials on the internet. The only way to provide that children do not see harmful things on the internet is to sit next to them and supervise them.

I have a little brother, aged seven and when he wants to go online, then he has to ask my parents or me to come with him and sit next to him while he's surfing. Surely, it doesn't mean fun when you have to sit next to him and listen to the Teletubbies talking or see Mickey Mouse bowling but I am far more interested in hearing and seeing these things than in not being sure what he would see if I was not sitting next to him.

That's the one point why the internet should not be used as a babysitter.

The other point is that it is – in my opinion – not good for the children to sit in front of the computer all day.

Children need friends and they need to play with friends to learn how to behave and how to interact with others.

Human beings are not born with any social abilities – we have to learn all of these stuff.

And if children sit in front of the computer and don't play with other children – when and where should they learn how to behave?

Another question is whether the internet is a useful medium to educate children or not.

Well, in my opinion it is not.

Even for adults it is often a problem to say whether an information is right or wrong on the internet. So when adults are not able to be sure about it – how should children be?

The risk to learn wrong things from the internet is very big and so the internet should not be used to educate the child right from the beginning on.

But: You should try to tell your children how they can distinguish between "good" and "bad" information. (Be critically, try to figure out who has written the information, when was the last update, and so on….) Later on, they will have to get information for the internet and then they should be able to use it, of course.

But in my opinion there's no sense to teach them the basics with the help of the internet before they have learnt how to distinguish between good and bad information – they are simply too young to be sure about that.

It is very difficult to differ between the good and bad aspects of internet. There are good and bad things about every service of the internet.

If you chat you can meet many interesting people which come from all over the world. Distance is not important any more. You can meet people which are not able to find friends in reality because of their appearance. In cyberspace there is no appearance - the character of a person counts. But you also can meet people, who cheat on you and fool you. That can be funny, but it is not if you want to meet "real", divine friends. Sometimes, if you meet your online friends it can be very thrilling. You make your own picture of your chat-partner in your mind. And what about your friends in reality? There will be less time left for them, if you sit in front of the PC all the day. But there is also the possibility to make your real friends your online-friends.

Searching for information you will find a huge amount of it on every topic you are searching for. This can be very comfortable. You only have to type in a word and you will find everything about it. But be careful! There is also false information. Sometimes it is hard to distinguish between true and false information.

Often you have the possibility to listen to music on the internet. You may also download it for free. That is very cheap because you only have to pay the telephone-costs and the music is for free. What does that mean for the musicians? They will not get all their money they would normally receive.   That is not too dangerous for the well-known musicians but it can become dangerous to the little ones who cannot afford to lose a part of their income.

What about communicating with an online-friend? You will send him/her an email. It is faster than a letter, cheaper than a telephone call and easier to use than a radio set. But: Is the encryption-code secure enough? Many hackers will try to read the message you send to your friends.   This leads to the next problem of the internet: How can you provide privacy in a non- private world? Everybody wants to know everything about everyone. How can you say: "This is my private zone, nobody can get into it."   A few minutes later someone will try to get into the privacy-zone. Why? Everyone thinks there must be something very interesting and secret inside this zone. Nothing is more interesting than a forbidden place. There is some special anonymity about the internet. You may tell anything about yourself and everyone will believe you – if nobody checks the information.   You also may swap your gender and nobody will recognise it.

What will happen, if you are ill and cannot leave the house? No problem! You can do everything on the internet without leaving the house. You can do the shopping, meet friends and so on. The only problem is the way of paying. It is very easy, you only have to type in your credit card-number and the goods will be paid. But some transmission techniques are not very safe and so someone could read your credit card-number and use it to buy things himself. You always have to inform yourself about the transmission-techniques to be sure about security. Otherwise you may pay for being uninformed later on.

This leads to the costs of the internet. The only good about it is that the surf-cost are low (depending on the provider). But anything else is very cost-intensive. You have to buy anti-virus-programmes, software, computer … And that is not enough! Internet is developing very fast for this you have to update the programmes regularly. You will also not abandon the option to get a faster computer.

Conclusion:

Information is difficult to divide into true and false. It is too much information to be able to view on everything.

It is a strong positive argument that internet does not care about time or distance. Everyone can be online every time and communicate with everyone everywhere.

Though you have the possibility to meet many people on the internet frequent use of this will cause loneliness because you won't have real friends anymore.

It is very difficult to give children access to the internet. There are many things which are not suitable for children. Either you sit next to them during surfing or you believe in the internet that it will not show harmful things and in the children that they will not try to find harmful things.