

BOOK REVIEW

**Robert Zheng, Jason Burrow-Sanchez & Clifford Drew (Eds.) (2010).
*Adolescent Online Social Communication and Behavior: Relationship
Formation on the Internet, USA: Information Science Reference (280 pages)***

Raluca Buhaş

Scientific reports all over the world indicate that the use of social online media by adolescents register higher rates every year. Data enable us to state that this is a new emerging social phenomenon that requires specialized attention, taking into consideration all the benefits but also the risks associated with digital communication and human interaction.

Published under the guidance of Robert Zheng, Jason Burrow-Sanchez and Clifford Drew – teachers at University of Utah, USA, the work entitled *Adolescent Online Social Communication and Behavior: Relationship Formation on the Internet* aims to approach the adolescents use of online social communication from a two-sided perspective: first, by setting an aggregated theoretical background, and second, by presenting recent research findings on the subject. In this regard, the contribution of various researchers from different domains of study was unified.

The volume is structured on 14 Chapters organized on 3 main Sections.

Section 1 is constituted from the first five chapters and synthesises concepts and theories regarding adolescent online social communication, from online relationship development to Internet addiction or adolescent online sexual identity.

Chapter 1, signed by Robert Z. Zheng, Jason J. Burrow-Sanchez, Megan E. Call, Clifford J. Drew, and Stephanie Donnelly, explores from a theoretical point of view the influence of the social and individual determinants on online behaviors developed by adolescents.

Gustavo S. Mesch discusses in *Chapter 2* the motivations of the use of various social media applications (like chat rooms, social networking sites, forums, electronic mail and others) by adolescents. Also, the author suggests that the implications over the youngsters at behavioral, social and psychological level, should be posed to question and approached more closely.

Chapter 3 deepens in the study of Internet addiction. Reviewing the literature and the recent studies in this regard, Laura Widyanto and Mark Griffiths stress out relevant information about the development of addictive behavior towards Internet by adolescents.

In *Chapter 4*, Susan M. Miller, Kenneth L. Miller, and Christine Allison take a close look to the formation of online relationships by adolescents and to the way in which they maintain offline contacts with the help of the digital environment.

Bryant Paul and Lelia Samson continue in *Chapter 5* the insight of online relationship formation but from a different perspective, discussing the process of adolescent online sexual identity construction.

Section 2 of the volume consists of two chapters and brings into attention the legal framework of the adolescents' online social communication issue.

In *Chapter 6*, Larry L. Burriss analyses from a juridical point of view the social networking sites in relation with expression, civility or speech, while Zheng Yan presents in *Chapter 7* the legal aspects regarding the protection of children in cyberspace.

The last seven chapters are unified under the topics of **Section 3**: psycho-social consequences of Internet use, motives that determine adolescents to use online interaction or risk factors associated with online social communication.

Louis Leung describes in *Chapter 8* adolescents' personal motivation in using Internet and the way particular characteristics of youngsters impact their online behavior, referring especially to online games, instant messaging and presence in forums.

The relation between computer use and its impact over adolescents' social networking and integration is subject to discussion in *Chapter 9*. Myron Orleans, the author of the chapter, draws the attention upon the risk of exaggerate Internet consumption that predisposes early adolescents to social isolation.

Megan E. Call and Jason J. Burrow-Sanchez analyse in *Chapter 10* cyberspace as a medium that prone adolescents to online victimization, by identifying risk factors in what regards digital interaction. Authors emphasize how important correct information is for parents and mental health professionals in order to protect children against online abuse.

Chapter 11 takes a different point of view in what regards Internet use. Sharmila Pixy Ferris investigates how Millennials (the new generation that is connected permanently to digital media) develop social responsibility and implication by undertaking online activities. The author's findings show that Millennials develop social, political and charitable action via Internet, increasing the social participation of youth.

Ikuko Aoyama and Tony L. Talbert draw attention in *Chapter 12* upon cyber bullying phenomenon among adolescents. Youngsters can generate or be a victim of online harassment through the use of electronic mails, cell phones or online social networking sites. The chapter also presents strategies for eradicating and preventing such deviant acts.

Maja Pivec and Paul Pivec discuss in *Chapter 13* the role that media through online gaming as a modern way of teaching, has in the process of learning. The author's conclusion is that there are not notable differences regarding learning process between students who have a direct contact with digital teaching context and the traditional generation that did not benefit from this technology.

Chapter 14 brings into discussion information and communication technologies (ICT) and their role in adolescents' daily life. The authors, Muhammet Demirbilek and Berna Mutlu, analyse chat-rooms, a popular form of ICT, as a "two-way real time communication tool" (p. 223). ICT can favour the development of adolescents' second language and can increase social interaction.

By presenting various aspects of adolescents' online social communication, the volume reunites interdisciplinary contributions from specialists all over the world, aiming to provide useful information for researchers, teachers, parents and students.