
IDENTITY REVEALING PROCESSES OF YOUNG INTERNET USERS*

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Abstract

As Internet use has expanded in young people's everyday life, there has been much speculation and some anxiety about the impact of its increasing prevalence. One area of concern has been the ease with which online communication (e.g., e-mail, instant messaging, blogs) permits adolescents to use their real identity. One of the greatest fears that our society shares is that the constant transgressions between online/offline identity will ultimately affect the real self. A complex questionnaire regarding the Internet usage was applied to 1806 children aged 10 to 20 from Cluj-Napoca. Our research question was: how do boys and girls differ in identity revealing process when they are involved in Internet based activities? We found that Internet usage is associated with different strategies of identity redefining. Most frequent teens declare another age and another educational status, and girls are more likely to use these kinds of strategies. This makes boys more vulnerable to any kind of Internet attacks because they tend to reveal their real identity while being online.

Keywords: *Internet, adolescent, identity*

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