

Abstract

**EU-Conference: Young People's Lifestyles and Sedentariness,
Essen, June 4-5, 2004**

Workshop B2 - Generation @-Hightech media: burden or benefit for young people?

The paper presents findings from selected surveys conducted for the Bauer Publishing Group on the youth target group (10 - 19 year-olds): KidsVerbraucherAnalyse 2003 and Bravo Factor Jugend 7, 2004.

"Simply a part of life: Mobiles, PCs and the Internet – a study of youth behaviour and attitudes".

Communication is an elementary youth requirement. The mobile phone is the ideal means of communication for them because it keeps them permanently in touch with their friends, wherever they are. Originally conceived as a prestige adult product, within only a few years it has become part of youth culture.

Mobile phone trends: Possession rates are growing, wants are high and continually increasing: In the year 2001, 41 % of 10 - 19 year-olds possessed a mobile phone, in 2003 the figure had already reached 64 %. 44 % in 2001 desired a mobile phone, in 2003 it was 45 %, although 64 % already had one.

Because new generations of devices are constantly entering the market with new features and innovations the model possessed quickly becomes obsolete and the owner is no longer up-to-date: for example, can take no photos or send them.

Entry to the computer world for boys is through action games. In the course of time the PC becomes less of a toy and more a tool. Girls use the PC from the beginning more as a means to an end– to write letters and text.

Internet trends: Whatever the computer is used for, usage rates are increasing. Example surfing: Whilst 41 % of 10 – 19 year-olds in 2001 surfed the Internet regularly or occasionally, in 2003 the number had risen to 59 %, and it is still climbing.

What are the most important activities in the Internet? Surfing, gathering information – for school and leisure, sending/receiving e-mails, and chatting.

High priced consumer goods with high operating costs (also for the parents) such as mobile phones, computers and Internet connection are an integral part of youth life.

Having a PC, a games console like Play Station, Internet and TV set in their own room means that youths spend more and more time in front of a screen or monitor – either alone or with others, e.g. LAN parties. The mobile phone is the only outdoor device.

Youths quickly take up new communication technologies. They are completely in line with their needs and desires.

Their knowledge of product categories and brand worlds are astonishingly good. Youths know exactly what brands they want and have a sense for future brand trends.

Expected higher expenditure on fashion, styling, shoes and mobile telephony indicates that technical progress need not lead to alienation, because most important to youths is their appearance and self-presentation in the peer group. Youths are outgoing people.

New communication technologies become part of everyday life, but this day-to-day will be individually different because not all youths have access to this world.

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