

JAMES Study: smartphones are becoming increasingly important to young people

The Internet and mobile phones are an indispensable part of young people's lives – 97% of young mobile phone users in Switzerland own a smartphone, as shown by the JAMES Study 2014 carried out by ZHAW and Swisscom. Young people browse the Internet on their phones more frequently than they make calls, and use their smartphones as multimedia devices. However, despite the various multimedia options on offer, young people frequently meet up with friends in their free time and sometimes even do nothing at all.

The smartphone finally became mainstream among the youth of Switzerland in 2014: 98% have their own mobile phone, with 97% of this number owning a smartphone. In 2010, barely 50% of young mobile phone users possessed a smartphone, and this figure jumped to 79% in 2012. These statistics are reported in the current JAMES Study, which has been carried out three times since 2010 and is thus now able to distinguish trends for the first time. Every two years, ZHAW (Zurich University of Applied Sciences) interviews – on behalf of Swisscom – over 1,000 young people aged between 12 and 19 in Switzerland's three main language regions on their media habits.

Young people use mobile Internet more than they make calls

Since the introduction of smartphones in 2010, the way in which mobile phones are used has undergone a radical change. Young people do not just use their smartphones to make calls; they also listen to music, browse the Internet, take photos, check their e-mails and play computer games. “As mobile devices are able to perform more and more functions and are increasingly offering unlimited mobile Internet access, they are being used less frequently for their original purpose,” says ZHAW researcher and Director of Studies, Daniel Süss, who carried out the JAMES Study with co-project leader Gregor Waller and his team. The most drastic change has been seen in mobile Internet usage. In 2010, only 16% of the young people interviewed browsed the Internet every day or several times a week using their mobile phone, as opposed to 87% in 2014 (2012: 68%). By comparison, the number of people who frequently make phone calls dropped from 80% to 71% within the same period (2012: 81%).

Time spent surfing remains the same



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Young people in Switzerland who do not own smartphones are not without Internet access – 99% of households in which young people live have a computer or laptop with Internet access and two out of three households now also own a tablet. The roughly two hours spent surfing the web on a daily weekday basis has not changed over the past few years, however, nor has the three hours spent surfing the web daily at weekends. 75% of Swiss youth communicate regularly over social networks, while 89% have signed up to at least one social network. Facebook continues to be the most popular social network in 2014, albeit closely followed by Instagram. Google+ and Twitter have also gained in user numbers in recent years. “The supposed decline in the number of people using Facebook in some areas has also not been evident among young people in Switzerland in 2014. On the other hand, it is interesting that the youngest persons interviewed stated a preference for the photo and video-sharing network Instagram over Facebook,” adds Süss.

Young people generally surf safely

81% of the young persons interviewed have activated the privacy settings within social networks, while 56% check and update these settings on a regular basis. Despite there being a constantly high level of awareness as regards protecting personal data on social networks, the number of negative Internet experiences has not fallen in recent years: 22% stated that someone has wanted to bully them online (2012: 17%; 2010: 20%). Over 12% of interviewees have made offensive remarks or told lies online (2012: 3%; 2010: 10%). Furthermore, one in five young people has been approached with unwelcome sexual propositions on the Internet. “It is therefore important that young people receive supervision while using the various media and actively discuss their experiences. This is why Swisscom is strongly committed to promoting media skills,” states Michael In Albon, Youth Media Protection Officer at Swisscom.

Friendships not suffering

Despite the rise of smartphones, tablets, etc., the most popular non-media-based leisure activity has remained unchanged since 2010. 79% of the people interviewed continue to meet up with friends on a very regular basis, while 60% like to sometimes do nothing at all. “Media-related leisure activities supplement friendships and cannot replace the needs of young people to be in the company of their friends,” says Süss assuredly.

News portals closing the gap on free newspapers

There have, however, been changes in the rankings of the most popular leisure activities when it comes to newspaper readership figures – fewer people are reading the paper editions



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of newspapers and magazines. Only 35% of the young people interviewed still read free newspapers every day or several times a week (2012: 49%). Instead, daily newspapers are increasingly being read online, with almost one in three people frequently reading Internet news portals (2012: 26%).

JAMES Study

ZHAW (Zurich University of Applied Sciences) has been carrying out interviews every two years since 2010 on behalf of Swisscom, asking over 1,000 young people aged between 12 and 19 in Switzerland's three main language regions about their media habits. The representative survey focuses on the way in which young people spend their free time, with and without media. An in-depth analysis is also carried out on the use of smartphones, video games and social networks. This is the first time in which trends have been able to be identified, and this information is just a preview of the detailed report on the findings of the Study, which will be published in the early months of 2015.

ZHAW School of Applied Psychology

The ZHAW's School of Applied Psychology is the leading centre of expertise for the teaching and practice of scientifically based psychology in Switzerland. The university's IAP Institute of Applied Psychology, with its Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes, R&D, consulting services and further education courses, translates scientifically based knowledge into practical everyday applications for people and businesses. www.psychologie.zhaw.ch

Swisscom as cooperation partner of ZHAW

Using different electronic devices to access media is part of the everyday lives of young people today. It is also the reason why the issues of media competency and youth media protection are so important and why Swisscom is actively involved in both areas. Since 2001, for example, the company has equipped over 6,800 Swiss schools with free Internet access and offers media competency courses to secondary school pupils. The JAMES Study is commissioned by Swisscom and conducted by ZHAW every two years.

Further information:

www.psychologie.zhaw.ch/james

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