

JAMES Study: Young people are spending increasing amounts of time online

Young Swiss people are spending an average of 25 percent longer online on smartphones, tablets, etc. than two years ago. This is shown in the JAMES Study 2016 by ZHAW and Swisscom. Young people often watch videos on YouTube or Netflix, but they are also using social networks. For the first time Instagram and Snapchat have knocked Facebook off the top spot of social media networks.

Since the first JAMES survey in 2010, the time young people are spending online has increased by half an hour per day. During the week they state that they are spending an average of 2 hours and 30 minutes per day surfing the Internet (2014: 2 hours), at the weekend 3 hours and 30 minutes (2014: 3 hours). As almost all young Swiss people have a smartphone and are increasingly surfing the Internet with a flat rate subscription, mobile Internet access has become the norm. This is shown in the latest JAMES Study in 2016, which has been conducted for the fourth time since 2010 and is thus able to show trends. What is striking is that young people with a migrant background use the Internet more heavily than young people with Swiss roots. "One explanation is that they are able to stay directly in contact with their family and friends overseas easily via social media", says ZHAW researcher and director of studies Daniel Süss, who conducted the JAMES Study this year with co-project manager Gregor Waller and his team for the fourth time.

Smartphones and tablets – anytime and anywhere

Virtually all young Swiss people have their own mobile phone these days – almost always a smartphone. Only one percent do not have their own mobile. In addition, around 40 percent of young people have their own tablet, and four in five have one available in their household. As a constant companion the smartphone is used all the time and everywhere and is increasingly replacing the PC, laptop, camera, music player, radio, games console and watch. Around a third of those asked have more than five gigabytes of data available per month. The message is: less phoning and texting, more surfing the Internet and using social networks or messenger services such as WhatsApp. 97 percent of young people communicate via messenger app daily or several times per week. Nine in ten frequently use social networks when on the move via their mobile (2016: 87 percent; 2014: 76 percent). An increasing number of online videos are being watched on Facebook, YouTube, etc. via smartphone (2016: 78 percent; 2014: 69 percent; 2012: 40 percent). In comparison, regular phoning has plateaued at 71 percent, texting has dropped to 58 percent (2014: 69 percent; 2012: 93 percent).

Snapchat and Instagram overtake Facebook

94 percent of young Swiss people are registered on at least one social network. At 62 percent, for the first time since the first survey in 2010 Facebook is no longer the most popular social network among 12 to 19-year-olds. The front runner for many years has now been overtaken by Instagram (81 percent) and Snapchat (80 percent). The frequency of use also dropped the most for Facebook: in 2014 79 percent of young people used the platform daily or several times per week, now it is just 55 percent. Membership and usage frequency of Facebook are also strongly age-dependent: the younger the person, the less frequently they use Facebook. 12 to 15-year-olds have new preferences. They prefer to use new platforms, such as Instagram and Snapchat. In contrast, four in five 18 to 19-year-olds are still registered on Facebook and 83 percent use it frequently. "It is not so much that there has been a migration to other platforms, but rather a new user generation has emerged", says Michael In Albon, Youth Media Protection Officer at Swisscom.

Social networks are not replacing meeting up with friends

Everyday media use by young people is primarily dominated by the mobile phone: 99 percent use their mobile device daily or several times per week, often surfing the Internet (95 percent) or listening to music (94 percent).

Despite the smartphone, tablet, etc., participation in non-media leisure activities has remained stable since the 2010 survey: 76 percent regularly meet up with friends (2014: 79 percent), 66 percent regularly play sport (2014: 64 percent) and 58 also like doing nothing at times (2014: 60 percent). "It is true that young people can chat with their peers online at any time and anywhere. But this has an accompanying role and cannot replace the need to be together," says Daniel Süss. "Group chats and social networks can also be a burden and the omnipresent smartphone can be a distraction in day-to-day life. So families should restrict the use of media during meal times or discussions and schools should have clear smartphone rules."

Online videos take over the Internet

Computers and the Internet are heavily used by young people for the purposes of entertainment. Around four fifths (79 percent) of young Swiss people use video portals such as YouTube, myVideo and Vimeo daily or several times per week. Streaming music from the Internet (e.g. Spotify) has also become more significant than it was in 2014, with 68 percent doing this regularly (2014: 57 percent). Browsing profiles on social networks sits in third place (67 percent). The website preferences show that videos and photos are increasingly important to young people. For example, YouTube is by far the most popular website. Here young people consume videos and music or learn with videos. This trend towards the moving image is also demonstrated by the growing significance of video streaming services, such as Netflix and the image and video-based platforms Instagram and Snapchat.

Also noteworthy is a change in fan culture. 75 percent of young people can name a favourite YouTuber. "Young people now admire YouTube stars like they used to boy-groups and girl-groups," explains Süss.

Meeting Internet acquaintances

25 percent of young people in Switzerland state that they have already been approached online by a stranger with unwelcome sexual intentions. This phenomenon is known as cyber grooming. As in previous surveys, girls have experienced this much more often (34 percent) than boys (17 percent). 41 percent of young Swiss people have already met someone offline that they got to know on the Internet. The older the young people are, the more likely they are to have done this before. Among 12 to 13-year-olds it is around a quarter, among 18 to 19-year-olds around half. "Meeting an Internet acquaintance in person is not a risk per se," says Michael In Albon. "However certain rules must be followed. For example, you should meet in a public place and an accompanying adult should be present at the first meeting."

JAMES Study

The JAMES studies depict the media habits of young people in Switzerland. JAMES stands for "Jugend, Aktivitäten, Medien – Erhebung Schweiz" (youth, activities, media survey Switzerland) and is conducted every two years. In the representative study carried out on behalf of Swisscom by ZHAW Zurich School of Applied Sciences, since 2010 over 1,000 young people aged from 12 to 19, in Switzerland's three major linguistic regions, have been asked about their media habits.

ZHAW School of Applied Psychology

ZHAW School of Applied Psychology is the leading center of excellence for science-based applied psychology in Switzerland. It consists of the Psychological Institute and the IAP Institute of Applied Psychology. With its bachelor's and master's degree programmes, a research and development department, consultancy services and further education courses, science-based knowledge is interpreted for use by people and organisations in their living and working environments.

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Swisscom is the collaborative partner of ZHAW

Using media on a variety of devices is part of normal everyday life for young people these days. Media literacy and youth media protection are therefore important. Swisscom is heavily involved in both areas. Since 2001 the company has connected over 6,800 Swiss schools to the Internet, free of charge, and offers courses for secondary school students to promote media literacy. Swisscom commissioned the James Study, which is carried out every two years by ZHAW.

More information at:

www.zhaw.ch/psychologie/james

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