Internet and Traditional Media News – a Comparative Analysis of Use Patterns among Students/

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Abstract

With the assimilation of the mediums of communications in society, it seems that man in the western world lives, in a 'communication shelf'. Since the breakthrough of the internet, ample research has been done. Many studies are reporting as increase in internet surfing. There is no doubt that the internet is a communication medium that can interest anyone. This fact raises the question; can the internet fill in the space of the traditional communication mediums? The opinions are divided. Many studies claim that the internet will push aside the other media, while others disagree.

This new study, which has not yet been done in Israel, is interested in finding out if the internet has taken the place of traditional media (newspapers, television, radio) among students in Bar Ilan University, when news updated.

The research questions addressed the differences between students with different demographic background and it's effect on news updates. We speculated that students, who are more experienced in using the internet, would use it more for news updates and that sophomores will use the internet more than freshman. We speculated that the more the internet is considered reliable, the more it will be used.

As background material we described a number of studies that compare the internet, with the traditional media in general and in the field of news updating.

The questionnaire that was constructed especially for this study was handed out to 230 students from the University of Bar-Ilan, in three departments (Information Science, geography and political science).

The results of this study partially confirm the research hypothesis. We found that the medium most used by the students for news updates, was the newspaper. There were no differences between students with different income or of different gender, regarding the medium they choose top updates from. There was a

difference between the different levels of religiousness. The religious students used the television, newspapers and the internet much less than the no-religious students, for news updates. The relation between experience in internet use and the perception of the internet as reliable was partially confirmed. The hypothesis that more experienced students (Information Science) will use the internet more, was confirmed significantly. This study highlights the importance of a proper education to all of society, in computer usage. Students who were trained in computer and the internet usage experienced less 'computer-anxiety' and used it for news updating and other purposes. In light of the interest's great potential as a toll for locating information, it is important that using it will be an option available to all. It seems, however, that in this study many students are not yet prepared to make the change, excluding Information Science students. At this time it seems that the newspapers are still used the most in news updating.

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