**CHARLES UNIVERSITY**

**Faculty of Social Sciences**

**Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism**

# Anonymity on the internet and its influence on the communication process

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MA Media studies

***Declaration of Originality of Dissertation***

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**Declaration:**

I confirm that, except where indicated through the proper use of citations and references of Harvard system of citation, this is my own original work (containing 247 645 characters incl. spaces / 106 pages). I confirm that a copy of this Dissertation may be placed upon the shelves of the library of the Charles University and may be circulated as required.

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Signed: .....

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# INTRODUCTION

Anonymity is not a new thing. It is as old as identity and goes along with humankind from the dawn of history. Anonymous threats, messages or attacks have been known for millennia. So why it should be any different with the arrival of the internet? How is it that anonymity and pseudonymity seem so important in the electronic world of information?

It's because historically anonymous behaviour has been of relatively minor importance. But the combination of the growing significance of the internet and the ease with which one can be untraceably anonymous while online make anonymity and pseudonymity the issue.

The internet user can become just anyone - no authentication, no name, no guarantees needed. Together with the ease of replication of messages, it makes this new medium quite a dangerous place for vicious anonymous players. Historically, the anonymous communicator could hope to reach a few hundred recipients at best, and usually at quite high costs. In contrast, outbound e-mail (or published web page) can be easily copied and circulated thousand and thousand times costing the originator next to nothing. The question is, whether an anonymous status on the net will inevitably lead to the spawn of antisocial behaviour in cyberspace or not. If it will be so, than it would probably shape public and corporate policies toward some kind of obligatory identification in cyberspace.

It seems quite likely that the pervasive spread of the internet will have profound effects on social organization and interactions. However no one could exactly foresee future development and all attempts to predict it remind me of the reading of tea leaves. As McChesney (1999, p.121) put it:

On the one hand, the internet is a quite remarkable and complex phenomenon that cannot be categorized by any previous medium's experience. It is a two-way mass communication, it uses the soon-to-be-universal digital binary code, it is global, and it is quite unclear how, exactly, it is or can be regulated. On the other hand, the internet is changing at historical warp speed. Any attempt at prediction during such tumultuous times is nearly

impossible; something written on the internet as recently as 1992 or 1993 has about as much currency in 2000 as discourses on the Wars of the Roses do for understanding contemporary British military policy.

There are many theories covering all the aspects of anonymity, I also found very deep theoretical background on identity. There are many books about social communities and virtual communities in particular. All those sources contributed to the first parts of the work, where I tried to summarize the current level of scientific knowledge in these fields. In the last, fourth part, I present my hypotheses (based on the theoretical framework from the former parts) and confirm or reject them on the basis of my own research.

When preparing for my PhDr. exam and during editing of this work, I took the advantage of one year delay and RECONFIRMED some findings and facts I discovered in my research in March 2004. Thus parts of the last chapter of this work are dedicated to the new research done in September 2005.

I am aware of the instability and volatility of the developing internet environment, so I do not expect my findings and result to be final and the only possible ones. The aim of this work is to make just a small contribution on this huge and still quite unexplored field.

# ANONYMITY AND PSEUDONYMITY VERSUS IDENTITY

In this chapter, I would like to answer some questions concerning the anonymity in general and on the internet in particular. I will start with the definition of anonymity (in comparison with different levels of identity). Then I will analyse a internet user's possibility to achieve a fully anonymous status. Later on I will summarize known social psychology theories concerning anonymity and will have a detailed look on anonymity and human behaviour on the internet. I conclude with the list of advantages and disadvantages of anonymity in general and then on the internet in particular. At the end of the chapter the section concerning identity can be found.

## ANONYMITY–IDENTITY SCALE

Before we can even start analysing anonymity in internet environment, we have to define, what anonymity is. Most of definitions conclude that anonymity is the state of a person being anonymous, i.e. the identity of the person is not known. So the definition includes other term – identity – as an antipode of anonymity. Since anonymity is lack of identity, let's start with categorisation on this topic. Gary Marx (2001) in the essay *Identity and Anonymity* looks on anonymity in broader context and defines following 7 types of identity knowledge:

1) **legal name** - Name usually involves connection to a biological or social lineage and can be a key to a vast amount of other information. This aspect of identification is usually the answer to the question **"who are you?".**

2) **locatability** – identification can refer to a person's address. This involves location and "reach ability", whether in actual or cyberspace (telephone number, mail or E-mail address, an account number). This need not involve knowing the actual legal/birth identity or even a pseudonym. But it does involve the ability to locate and take various forms of action such as blocking, granting access, delivering or picking

up, charging, penalizing, rewarding or apprehending. It answers a ***"where"*** rather than a "who" question

3) **pseudonyms** that can be **linked to legal name** and/or locatability - literally a form of pseudo-anonymity identification may involve unique alphabetic, numerical or other symbols such as a social security number or biometric patterns or pseudonyms which can be linked back to a person or an address under restricted conditions. A trusted intermediary and confidentiality are often involved here. These in effect create a buffer and are a compromise solution in which some protection is given to literal identity or location, while meeting needs for some degree of identification.

4) **pseudonyms** that **can not be linked** to other forms of identity knowledge - the equivalent of **"real" anonymity** (except that the name chosen may hint at some aspects of "real" identity, as with undercover agents encouraged to take names close to their own). Such identification may involve symbols, names or pseudonyms which can not in the normal course of events be linked back to a person or an address by intermediaries. This may be because of a protective policy against collecting the information. For example in some states those tested for AIDS are given a number and receive results by calling in their number without ever giving their name or address. Or it may be because a duped audience does not know the person they are dealing with is using fraudulent identification, - for example spies, undercover operatives and con-artists. This and previous kind of pseudonymity is largely used on the internet.

5) **pattern knowledge** - being unnamed is not necessarily the same as being unknown. The uncontrollable leakage of some information is a condition of physical and social existence. Therefore, for example, content or frequency analysis of the text can reveal author even against his will. Goffman (1959) uses term “expressions given off” for such leakage.

6) **social categorization** - Many sources of identity are social and **do not differentiate** the individual from others sharing them (e.g., gender, ethnicity, religion, age, class, education, region, sexual orientation, linguistic patterns, organizational memberships and classifications, health status, employment, leisure activities, friendship patterns). Simply being at certain places at particular times or associating with particular kinds of people (note the folk wisdom that "birds of a feather flock together" or "you are known by the company you keep") can also be a key to presumed identity.

7) **symbols of eligibility/non-eligibility**. Such identification may involve certification in which the possession of knowledge (secret passwords, codes) or artefacts (tickets, badges, tattoos, uniforms) or skills (performances such as the ability to swim) labels one as a particular kind of person to be treated in a given away. This is categorical and identifies their possessor as an eligible or ineligible person with no necessary reference to anything more (although the codes and symbols can be highly differentiated with respect to categories of person and levels of eligibility). This may be linked back to a unique person/place identity, but need not be. It offers a way of balancing control of personal information with legitimate needs such as for reimbursement (e.g., toll roads, phones, photo-copy machines, subways) and excluding system abusers.

Later on, Gary Marx in his recent work Internet anonymity as a reflection of broader issues (2004) discussed the relationship between anonymity and information technology. He observes different types and contexts of anonymity. As he put it: The dictionary defines “anonymous” as “not named or identified.” Thus the issue more broadly involves the availability or unavailability of a variety of kinds of information that may be known or identified about persons.

Marx indicates nine descriptive types of information about individuals which may be revealed or concealed

## Types of descriptive information connectable to individuals

1) **Individual identification** [the "who" question]

*Ancestry, Legal name, Alpha-Numeric, Biometric (natural, environmental) password, aliases, nickname, performance*

2) **Shared identification** [the typification question]

*Gender, Race/ethnicity/religion, age, education, occupation, employment, wealth, DNA (most), general physical characteristics (blood type, height) and health status, organizational memberships, Folk characterizations by reputation—liar, cheat, brave, strong, weak, addictive personality*

3) **Geographical/locational** information [the "where," and beyond geography, "how to reach" question]

*A.* ***Fixed:*** *residence, telephone number (land line), mail address, cable TV*

*B.* ***Mobile:*** *email address, cell phone, vehicle and personal locators, wireless computing*

4) **Temporal** [the "when" question]

*Date and time of activity*

5) **Networks and relationships** [the "who else" question]

*Family members, married or divorced; others the individual interacts/communicates with, roommates, friends, associates; others co-present (contiguous) at a given location (including in cyber- space) or activity including neighbors*

6) **Objects** [the "whose is it" question]

*Vehicles, weapons, animals, communications device, contraband land, buildings and businesses*

7) **Behavioral** [the "what happened" question]

***Communication*** *Fact of using a given means (computer, phone, cable tv, diary, notes or library) to create, send, or receive information (mail covers, subscription lists, pen registers, email headers, cell phone, GPS); content of that communication (eavesdropping, spyware, library use, book purchases)*

***Economic behaviour*** *buying (including consumption patterns and preferences), selling, bank, credit card transactions; work monitoring, employment history; norm and conflict related behaviour —bankruptcies, tax liens, small claims and civil judgements, criminal records*

8) **Beliefs, attitudes, emotions** [the inner or backstage and presumed "real" person question]

9) **Measurement characterizations** (predictions, potentials) [the "kind of person" question, "predict your future" question]

*credit ratings and limits, insurance ratings, college readiness/acceptability scores, civil service scores, drug tests, truth telling, psychological tests and profiles, occupational placement tests*

## ANONYMITY–IDENTITY SCALE ON THE INTERNET

When we focus just on the internet the scale of Anonymity-Identity is different:

- ***Fully anonymous status***

This status is quite difficult to attain and maintain, and therefore it is almost nonexistent. Can be achieved when even some data necessary for TCP-IP protocol are suppressed or forged. Thus it's usable just for one-way communication, since there is no way to trace back the originator to deliver reply.

- ***Almost anonymous status***

Just basic data required by technical communication protocol are provided - without any intervention (or intention) of a user. The user just abstains from providing any useful information about himself by himself, but lets the computer give away its IP address, physical Ethernet address of network device, DNS name, etc (see http://www.somebody.net/someother.html for detailed list of variables transmitted during connection). This is the most common conception of anonymity between regular internet users. However

providing these sensitive information means that we cannot talk about anonymity any more.

- ***The usage of assigned single-use disposable nicknames or generic nicknames (guest, anonymous, etc.)***

This allows the user to be addressed and communicate at the moment, but prevents long-lasting or repetitious contact – so such accounts serve just for ad hoc purposes. System administrators usually grant to such accounts also restricted rights with lower priority.

- ***The usage of permanent nickname***

Into this category belong things like anonymous account on freemail servers (hotmail.com, yahoo.com, post.cz) as well as nicknames on chat servers or "screen names" of direct instant message systems. These nicknames are usually protected by password an only one user can access them. This is the highest level of anonymity that allows continuous communication over the longer period of time. In other words, it is **pseudonymity**.

- ***Corporate identity***

The usage of corporate identity provides a strong link between the internet persona and real world entity (corporation). Every corporation, government department, non-profit organisation, educational institution, health-care facility, banking or financial organisation etc. covers its own employees (computer users) with its own reputation. Once the user uses corporate e-mail address (or just registered corporate computer), it's understandable that after some effort can be discovered and reached in real world reality. The same applies to the corporate web pages and information displayed there. That's why the information found on corporate web-pages are usually more reliable, because they are backed up by the organization.

- ***Identity (proved by providing information)***

This is the most common way how to identify oneself on the internet today. No special tools or programs are needed. The possession of some knowledge is sufficient. You can identify yourself for instance by providing a phone number

where you can be reached, your social security number / student login name / credit card number, address where you can be located, or some other personal information, which is known only to you. This method is easy and usually free of costs, but has some serious disadvantages. It leads easily to information abuse and identity fraud/theft. This occurs when one person gains control of credentials, which belong to another, thus becoming able to masquerade as the "stolen" identity.

- ***Identity (proved by electronic /digital/ signature)***

This is used to authenticate the identity of the sender of a message or the signer of a document, and possibly to ensure that the original content of the message or document that has been sent is unchanged. Digital signatures are usually protected by password, cannot be imitated by someone else, and can be automatically time-stamped. A digital signature can be used with any kind of message, whether it is encrypted or not, simply so that the receiver can be sure of the sender's identity and that the message arrived intact. A digital certificate contains the digital signature of the certificate-issuing authority so that anyone can verify that the certificate is real. The certificate-issuing authority guarantees the link between the digital signature and real world person. Unfortunately, digital signature is still quite expensive, so it's used mainly in the corporate sphere. However, recently (starting September 1st, 2005), Czech Post Office (Česká pošta, s.p.) launched it's own Certification authority (http://qca.postsignum.cz) and issues Electronic signatures for only 190 CZK/per year (less than 10 USD). So the price should no longer be a trouble, we will see in the near future, if the digital signature will be spread across the Czech internet space.

## ANONYMITY

Above-mentioned are not the only ones concepts of anonymity. With another definition comes Jacob Palme (Palme 2002), according to whom anonymity means that the real author of a message (which could be any communication unit) is not shown. Anonymity can be implemented to make it impossible or very difficult to find out the real author of a message. Thus pseudonymity he sees just as a common variant of anonymity, where another name than the real author's is shown. The pseudonym is sometimes kept very secret, sometimes the real name behind a pseudonym is openly known, such as *Mark Twain* as a pseudonym for *Samuel Clemens* or *George Orwell* as a pseudonym for *Eric Blair*[1].

A person can even use multiple different pseudonyms for different kinds of communication (e.g. different e-mail accounts).

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[1] Anonymity and pseudonymity played and still plays vital role in the art community. For instance, anonymous books were published since the dawn of history. There is a list of some very famous works published anonymously:

**Anonymous Books in history**

Numerous religious texts, including parts of The Bible., Beowulf, The Battle of Maldon, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, (11th Century Japan): Diaries of Court Ladies of Old Japan, (18th cent.): The Sorrows of Yamba, or The Negro Woman's Lamentation, The Federalist Papers, published anonymously at the time, now known to be written by James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay. Considered the third most important document in the development of the US government, after the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution / Bill of Rights, Democracy published in 1880, author revealed after his death in 1918.

**Recent Books**

Primary Colors, published anonymously but Donald Foster later revealed it to be by journalist Joe Klein. The Bride Stripped Bare Imperial Hubris: Why the West is Losing the War on Terror, Through Our Enemies' Eyes: Osama Bin Laden, Radical Islam and the Future of America

The last variant of pseudonymity, according to Palme, is **deception**, where a person intentionally tries to give the impression of being someone else, or of having different authority or expertise.

An advantage with a pseudonym, compared with anonymity, is that it’s possible to recognize that different messages were written by the same author. Sometimes, it is also possible to contact pseudonym (even without knowing the real person behind it) and get replies back. It is even possible to have long discourses between two pseudonyms, none of them knowing the real name behind the other's pseudonym.

A disadvantage, for a person who wants to stay anonymous, is that combining information in many messages from the same person may make it easier to find out who the real person is behind the pseudonym. This is what Marx calls pattern knowledge.

## SOCIAL THEORIES ON ANONYMITY

Social scientists have focused on anonymity (mainly its negative aspects) for quite a long time now. Early work on people in groups concentrated on anonymity as a root of the perceived frequency of antisocial behaviour. More than a hundred years ago, Le Bon in his book The Crowd (1895) – based on experience with the Paris Commune of 1871 and the later period of social turmoil and unrest during the 1890's – expressed believe, that “isolated, the man may be a cultivated individual; in a crowd he is a barbarian”. Le Bon also states that crowds are primitive and irrational. Because the individual members of the crowd become submerged within the mass present, “they develop a sense of anonymity whilst they lose their sense of responsibility”. He concludes that the anonymous members of a crowd show reduced inhibition of anti-social and reckless, impulsive behaviour. They are subject to increased irritability and suggestibility.

That should mislead us to the conclusion that anonymous and pseudonymous communications are *inherently* associated with an increased incidence of antisocial behaviour, which I believe is not true. Later social psychologist brought up the theory of deindividuation.

### Deindividuation theory

Deindividuation theory is a social psychological account of the individual in the crowd. Deindividuation is a psychological state of decreased self-evaluation, causing anti-normative and dis-inhibited behaviour. The theory of deindividuation stems from Carl Gustav Jung's definition of "individuation". He stated that individuation was "a process of differentiation, having for its goal the development of the individual personality".

According to deindividuation theory, the psychological state of deindividuation (characterized by diminished awareness of self and individuality) is aroused when individuals join crowds or large groups. This reduces an individual's self-restraint and normative regulation of behaviour. Deindividuation is a major theory of group behaviour: it provides an explanation of collective behaviour of violent crowds, mindless hooligans, and the lynch mob. Deindividuation has

also been associated with other social phenomena such as genocide, stereotyping, and dis-inhibition in other settings such as computer-mediated communication.

Theory asserts that being in a large group provides a degree of *anonymity*, which allows one to *avoid responsibility* for his actions - thus shaking off usual social controls and becoming more impulsive, irrational, aggressive and even violent.

### *Research of deindividuation*

The term "deindividuation" was coined by Festinger and later developed by the researches Zimbardo and Diener. Initially, it was argued that deindividuation occurs when individuals in a group are not paid attention to as individuals. Festinger (1952) found that individuals dressed in grey laboratory coats and sat in dim light were more willing to use bad language when discussing erotic literature than individuals who were not.

The relationship between anonymity and deindividuation was explored by Zimbardo (1969) who first outlined the observation that anonymity lowered the point at which individuals were likely to indulge in anti-social behaviour. He pointed out, that “Anonymity (lack of criticism by others) should reduce inhibitions of behaviour. The inhibiting effects of responsibility can be reduced if the behaviour is done by a group or if another accepts responsibility”.

In his study, some participants were sat anonymous by clothing them in oversized lab coats and hoods, compared with normal clothes and nametags of the other group. The participants' task was to deliver electric shock to victims. In confirmation of his theory, Zimbardo demonstrated, that anonymous participants shocked longer (and therefore more painfully) than identifiable participants.

Diener's (1976) study of children on Halloween is another classic case study. One group of children were asked for their name and address, whereas another remained anonymous. Then they were encouraged to take a single sweet. Those that were individuated (by asking for their personal details)

transgressed in 8% of cases. Those who were less deindividuated (by their clothing and not being asked for details) transgressed in 80% of cases.

The causes of deindividuation were gradually extended from anonymity in groups to other contextual factors, such as reductions of responsibility, arousal, sensory overload, a lack of contextual structure or predictability, and altered consciousness due to drugs or alcohol.

But recent research argues for a reconceptualisation of deindividuation: It appears deindividuation is not a loss of individual identity, but may be better construed as a transition to a social identity - Social Identity Theory of Deindividuation.

### *Social identity theory of deindividuation*

Social identity theory uses the concept of social identification. It claims that the self is a complex construct consisting of at least two subsystems. The first is personal identity. This is all the qualities of someone that makes them who they are and different from everyone else. Secondly there's the social identity which is the groups the individuals belong to and so when in a group, the individual has the particular social identity depending on the group they are in. The theory states that in a crowd, and other 'deindividuating' settings, the person does not simply lose a sense of individuality, but makes a transition from a personal identity to a social identity. (Reicher, 1987)

That is a key difference between the two approaches. Where deindividuation theory says that individuals lose their sense of self, social identity theory says that the individual just shifts their sense of self but don’t lose it.

### *Anonymity and pro-social behaviour*

The situation, however, is not necessarily all that bad. Sometimes a different context can liberate anonymous subjects from their counter-productive inhibitions or limitations.

In some cases, it can be shown that anonymity has an unusual effect: to increase pro-social behaviour instead of increasing antisocial behaviour. Spivey & Prentice-Dunn (1990) put people into brightly lit chambers or in

totally dark chambers and monitored the behaviour of the strangers they had put together. In the dark room, there was much more uninhibited and positive expressions of physical contact such as hugs and of emotional openness such as discussions of personal matters. However, directionality of these effects may be affected by the demand-characteristics of the situation. That is, the way the experimental objectives were described could cause significant differences in the subjects' behaviour. (Kabay, 1998)

Another example of positive effects of anonymity can be found in anonymous discussion groups dealing with substance abuse, abusive relationships and other personal and interpersonal problems, for example Alcoholics Anonymous. A. A. is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help to recover from alcoholism, to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety. Anonymity lies at the heart of the fellowship and assures members that their recovery will be private - often just the first name or even the nickname is revealed. The active alcoholic would avoid any source of help, which might reveal his or her identity.

The constructive, supportive communications often seen in such discussion groups illustrate the possible benefits of anonymity in a positive context.

## ANONYMITY AND THE INTERNET

Anonymity is not the phenomena brought to us by the internet. Anonymity and pseudonymity are traceable long back to the human history. It's lately so closely connected with the internet mainly because depersonalisation of this new medium just made it simpler to be anonymous. Actually, on the internet it is more difficult to prove your real identity than hide it.

But still, the question is, if there is the possibility to achieve something like absolute anonymity on the internet? The answer is yes and no at the same time. Technically, the communication requires at least some sort of identification, otherwise no communication is possible at all. Both (or all when more than 2 participants) parties must know at least where to send the message and from where expect the answer. And because even the simplest action on the internet (such as click on the link or posting the message) is on the protocol level two-sided communication, TCP/IP protocol must have at least the information about IP address (physical internet address) of the other user. And since IP address uniquely identifies every internet computer, it is generally possible to trace each user back to the terminal which he/she used[2]. Sure, this knowledge does not directly reveal the real-word identity of the user, but in the case of necessity (for instance law enforcement investigation) knowledge of IP address could be crucial for identifying real-word person. Even when a user is connected to the internet using a temporary IP number assigned to him for a single session, such numbers are logged by the ISP (Internet Service Provider) and it is possible to find out who used a certain IP number at a certain time, provided that the ISP assists with the identification.

Figure 1 illustrates, how much information is stored, when sending just regular e-mail. Mention, that also IP addresses are logged in the e-mail header, which contains a trace of all the route of a message.

[2] There are some exemptions, e.g. use of third-party computer as a redirector (Anonymizer.com, or hacked server), but those machines usually keep the logs anyway…

```
From jv66103@uta.fi Thu Dec 18 22:30:05 2003
Received: from data.centrum.cz ([62.84.131.172]:1510 "EHLO data.centrum.cz")
          by mail2.centrum.cz with ESMTP id <S147586AbTLRV3d>;
          Thu, 18 Dec 2003 22:29:33 +0100
Received: from alsikeapila.uta.fi ([153.1.1.44]:26148 "EHLO alsikeapila.uta.fi")
        by data.centrum.cz with ESMTP id <S131149AbTLRV2p>;
        Thu, 18 Dec 2003 22:28:45 +0100
X-SpamDetected: 0
Received: from neliapila.uta.fi (neliapila.uta.fi [153.1.1.43])
        by alsikeapila.uta.fi (8.12.10/8.12.10) with ESMTP id hBILScMV005884
        for <antonin.pavlicek@centrum.cz>; Thu, 18 Dec 2003 23:28:38 +0200 (EET)
Received: from apila.uta.fi (localhost [127.0.0.1])
        by neliapila.uta.fi (8.12.10/8.12.10) with ESMTP id hBILSbmf011572
        for <antonin.pavlicek@centrum.cz>; Thu, 18 Dec 2003 23:28:37 +0200
Received: from peippi.uta.fi (peippi.uta.fi [153.1.6.44])
        by apila.uta.fi (8.12.10/8.12.10) with ESMTP id hBILSbTL023565
        for <antonin.pavlicek@centrum.cz>; Thu, 18 Dec 2003 23:28:37 +0200 (EET)
Received: from peippi.uta.fi (localhost.localdomain [127.0.0.1])
        by peippi.uta.fi (8.12.10/8.12.10) with ESMTP id hBILSbQa013348
        for <antonin.pavlicek@centrum.cz>; Thu, 18 Dec 2003 23:28:37 +0200
Received: (from wwwroot@localhost)
        by peippi.uta.fi (8.12.10/8.12.10/Submit) id hBILSbw2013347
        for antonin.pavlicek@centrum.cz; Thu, 18 Dec 2003 23:28:37 +0200
Received:     from     user-tre1b-170.dial.inet.fi     (user-tre1b-170.dial.inet.fi
[195.165.0.170])
        by imp2.uta.fi (IMP) with HTTP
        for <jv66103@localhost>; Thu, 18 Dec 2003 23:28:37 +0200
Message-ID: <1071782917.3fe21c056ba0e@imp2.uta.fi>
Date:   Thu, 18 Dec 2003 23:28:37 +0200
From:   Jari.Valiverronen@uta.fi
To:     antonin.pavlicek@centrum.cz
Subject: Re: Happy New Year
References: <20031217202224Z314291-1126+143903@mail2.centrum.cz>
In-Reply-To: <20031217202224Z314291-1126+143903@mail2.centrum.cz>
MIME-Version: 1.0
Content-Type: text/plain; charset=ISO-8859-1
Content-Transfer-Encoding: 8bit
User-Agent: Internet Messaging Program (IMP) 3.2.3-cvs
Return-Path: <jv66103@uta.fi>
X-Orcpt: rfc822;antonin.pavlicek@mail2.centrum.cz
```

***Figure 1 – example of email "header" including IP addresses***

From this point of view, anonymity on the internet is an illusion. Most of the traffic and user activities are in the case of necessity traceable. Technically there are just two ways of achieving absolute anonymity - either using third-party IP address (and all communication redirect via this machine, while make sure there is no log left behind) or make sure that there is absolutely no connection between the computer which was used and the real-world user who sat behind the keyboard (that excludes not only the computers at home and office but also public libraries and some internet cafés and where access is restricted to the regular users and monitored by cameras).

On the other hand, ordinary internet user does not have necessary resources to undertake such extended search, so on the level of the common use, the anonymity really exists. Actually, at the moment it is for the ordinary internet user more difficult to prove his real-word identity than escape into the anonymity.

However, some recent cases proved that sometimes is not impossible retrieve an information about the identity of the internet user. As St. Petersburg Times (Florida, USA) reports: "a judge has handed Hillsborough County Sheriff David Gee a victory in his quest to quell what he says are inflammatory

postings to an Internet message board used by law enforcement. Gee now has the authority to serve subpoenas to the Web site, LeoAffairs.com, take depositions and try to identify anonymous posters who might work for the Sheriff's Office."

This is one of several recent cases (others are e.g. Applica/Yahoo case or the Apple bloggers case) in the United States where internet service providers (ISPs) and websites have been compelled by the courts to release the names or IP addresses of users. In the UK, the Motley Fool was ordered to hand over the IP address of a user who was then successfully sued for libel.

The similar case took place in the Czech Republic too, when the IP address was used to determine identity of the person, who distributed some false allegations concerning former chief of US-DEU, Hana Marvanová.

## ADVANTAGES OF ANONYMITY

Anonymity – defined as being without a name (and thus identity) or with an unknown name and Pseudonymity – which is the usage of a false name – are imbued in English with negative connotation. Nonetheless, there are plenty of examples and cases, when pseudo/ano -nymity plays a positive role.

- ***Anonymity as a constitutional right***

CATO Institute (extremely liberal Washington DC think-tank) defends anonymity on the internet with (very American) reasoning (Wallace 1999): They consider the right for anonymity as the constitutional right. As they put it, the US Supreme Court has consistently held that the First Amendment protects anonymous and pseudonymous speech. It makes no sense according to them to treat internet speech differently from printed leaflets or books, and since under American constitution anonymous pamphleteering is not a pernicious, fraudulent practice, but an honourable tradition of advocacy and dissent, anonymity on the internet is desirable and positive.

In the United States, the government would likely run up against these constitutional guarantees of speech if it tried to ban anonymity outright.

No wonder CATO Institute fights for anonymity and pseudonymity so fiercely, when the name of the institute itself is derived from very famous 18$^{th}$ century essays about freedom of speech and political liberty written under the pseudonym name Cato.

Moreover, anonymity could be seen as a shield from the tyranny of the majority, as well as tyranny of the state-dictatorship. And there are more than just a few examples that such threat is still there:

In China (the second largest internet domain with more than 87 million users) Communist authorities have struggled to limit free discussion and other online content considered subversive while encouraging the Net's commercial applications. The Communist Party views the internet as a threat to its power and the country's stability and acts accordingly. It is illegal to use the internet to make, produce, look up, copy or spread information that harms the prestige of state institutions, subverts state power, destroys the unity of China, or

seeks to overthrow the socialist system. Researchers at Harvard University Zittrain, Jonathan, Edelman Benjamin (2003) have just released a study of the internet in China and have concluded China is the most censored country in the world.

The United Arab Emirate's government-controlled ISP has set up a proxy server to censor the internet. The country's 9 669 Etisalat users are required by law to configure their Web browsers to use the official proxy server that filters out so called offensive materials. (Zittrain, Jonathan, Edelman Benjamin, 2002)

At the World Economic Forum in Switzerland, representatives from such countries as Iran called the pressure for unfettered communications an ideology and explicitly rejected liberalism.

But hopefully, governments will finally fail in their efforts to govern cyberspace because electronic communications networks are inherently divorced from their geographical jurisdiction.

- ***Anonymity as a right of privacy***

Anonymity and pseudonymity are sometimes understood as an expression of the right of privacy. Once you are anonymous (unknown) your privacy hardly could be attacked. This aspect is very important on the internet, where personal data could be gained, stored, processed and abused very easily. E.g. all websites track some data regarding visitors to their sites. For an example of what can be tracked, visit http://www.somebody.net/ someother.html. Using cookies (information stored on a users machine for later use), a website can gather more extensive data about a user.

Anonymity helps prevent such intrusive monitoring of individual behaviour in cyberspace.

- ***Anonymity brings unbiased evaluation***

For example a well-known person may use a pseudonym, where the person does not want people's preconception of the real author affect their perception of the work (e.g. US president Harry S. Truman signed his influential essay

"The Sources of soviet Power" merely as X). Also in some other cases people may want to hide certain information about themselves in order to achieve a more unbiased evaluation. For example, in history it has been common that women used male pseudonyms. Another example could be anonymous evaluation of tests/exams, when names were replaced by randomly assigned numbers.

In short, it could be said that anonymity promotes honesty. Once there is no fear of revenge, people tend to be more honest and explicit. That's why public opinion pools as well as surveys are usually anonymous.

- ***Social benefits of anonymity***

Anonymity serves to society also in another way – reduced likelihood of retaliation can encourage whistleblowers to draw attention to serious problem. Whistle blowing is an example, when anonymity is perceived in both positive and negative way. A company may not like an employee to divulge information about improper practices within the company, but society as a whole may find it important that such improper practices are publicly exposed.

Politicians communicate anonymously with the press when they wish to express ideas or communicate information without attribution; press reports are full of quotes attributed to sources such as "a senior official confirmed…, according to well-informed source…".

Pseudonymity has also protected people stigmatised by prior political speech or association; many blacklisted writers continued to work throughout the McCarthy era by using names other than their own (Wallace 1999).

There are circumstances, where anonymity and pseudonymity are useful tools in the deference of liberty and justice.

Anonymous communications are helpful also in another ways. They open public or private discussions of potentially embarrassing personal problems (as demonstrated example of A. A. mentioned on p. 20). It was proved that people are becoming more open and they are able to talk about the topics which were / are considered taboo in real word. That could help e.g. homosexuals with their come-out or partner search. The study of Mikael

Berglund on how anonymity was used in publicly available newsgroups on the Swedish Usenet News server proves that (Table I). The most anonymously used newsgroups were:

| Percentage | Newsgroup |
|---|---|
| 21,7 % | Alt.sex.fetish.hair |
| 19,5 % | alt.personals.bi |
| 17,4 % | alt.sex.stories |
| 16,4 % | alt.personals.poly |
| 15,9 % | alt.sex.stories.gay |
| 13,5 % | alt.suicide.holiday |
| 13,4 % | alt.personals.bondage |
| 12,6 % | alt.sex.wanted |
| 11,8 % | alt.recovery.addiction.sexual |
| 11,7 % | alt.personals.spanking.punishment |
| 11,3 % | alt.personals.spanking |
| 10,9 % | alt.binaries.pictures.boys |
| 10,7 % | alt.personals.ads |
| 10,2 % | alt.test |
| 10,0 % | alt.personals.intercultural |
| 9,7 % | alt.personal.motss |
| 9,1 % | alt.sex.intergen |

***Table 1: Topics on which anonymous re-mailer was used***

This confirms the theory about overcoming taboo. Also my own study of distribution of the users on chat servers confirms those findings (see chapter 4 and Appendix F).

Cooper (2002) have proposed that easy access, affordability and anonymity of the internet intensifies and accelerates online sexual activity. Variations in technological variables such as control of internet access and internet skill level should explain a substantial portion of the variance in people's online sexual activity.

M. E. Kabay summarizes the issue well in his work Anonymity and pseudonymity in cyberspace:

“In chat rooms and multi-user dungeons, anonymity permits a flowering of imaginative departures from the strictures of participants' real-world identity, social status, personality, gender and gender preferences, political affiliation, national origins, and religion. Multimedia environments such as WorldsAway (http://www.worldsaway.com/home.shtml) provide an imaginative

pseudonymity by allowing each player to select a stable name and a pictorial representation of themselves (an avatar) with amusing and fanciful features (various imaginary animal heads, skin colours, body shapes and so on). Players adopt personae that can be quite different from their real-world identities, yet there is a consistent identity within the virtual world. Because of this consistency, social mechanisms have arisen in these worlds; e.g., avatars can be invited to join parties if they are perceived as friendly or excluded and shunned if they have violated the norms of the imaginary world.

Anonymous, invisible electronic personalities can escape some of the damaging effects of intolerance and prejudice (Detweiler, 1993). There is a very famous cartoon showing two dogs at a terminal, one of whom is saying, "On the Internet no one knows you're a dog." For example, some professors may spend more time and effort in discussions with undergraduate students if they don't realise whom they are corresponding (Detweiler, 1993). At an intellectual level, stripping the authors of published materials of all details of their age, sex, race, national origin and other attributes can reduce the effects of prejudice and focus discussion on substance. Absent such details, correspondents must perforce focus on the texts rather than on personalities." (Kabay, 1999)


***Picture 1: Famous cartoon points to the merit of internet anonymity***

Anonymity (including pseudonymity) is very controversial in the online world. On the one hand (as mentioned above), anonymity is touted as the savoir of personal freedom, necessary to ensure liberty in an era of increasingly sophisticated surveillance. It “allows people to develop reputations based on the quality of their ideas, rather than their job, wealth, age, or status”.

But on the other hand (as will be described bellow), it is condemned as an invitation to anarchy, providing cover for criminals from tax-evaders to terrorists. The “very purpose of anonymity” said US Supreme Court Justice Scalia (quoted in Froomkin, 1995), is to “facilitate wrong by eliminating accountability”.

## *DISADVANTAGES OF ANONYMITY*

I already mentioned some drawback of anonymity in the chapter concerning social theories on anonymity, but there are more of them. Jacob Palme (2002) points out, that anonymity can be used to protect a criminal performing many different crimes, for example slander, distribution of child pornography, illegal threats, racial agitation, fraud, intentional damage such as distribution of computer viruses, etc. The exact set of illegal acts varies from country to country, but most countries have many laws forbidding certain "informational" acts, everything from high treason to instigation of rebellion, etc., to swindling. Anonymity can be used to seek contacts for performing illegal acts, like a paedophile searching for children to abuse or a swindler searching for people to rip off.

Especially the cases of paedophilia disturb the general public and give internet quite ill-fame. Some countries even accepted some special laws concerning this phenomenon. For instance in England was in March 2005 introduced crime called “online grooming”. Under the commonwealth legislation, online grooming is defined as exploiting the anonymity of telecommunications services such as the internet to win the trust of a child as a first step towards the future sexual abuse of that child. There is no need to say that under these new laws against predatory sexual behaviour on the internet already couple of people were charged.

Even when the act is not illegal, anonymity can be used for offensive or disruptive communication. For example, some people use anonymity in order to say nasty things about other people. The border between illegal and legal but offensive use is not very sharp, and varies depending on the law in each country.

Some argue that anonymous speech is more dangerous on the internet, because of the lack of gatekeepers – such as publishers, editors or television/film producers – who may know the identity of the anonymous speaker or filter out anonymous speech. However, that argument is also highly anti-democratic and opposes the ideal of free market of ideas. It presupposes that anonymous speech is acceptable only if pre-screened by informed elite. But such an elitist attitude should not be part of modern free speech philosophy (Wallace 1999).

The biggest trouble (and the benefit at the same time) with anonymity is, that perfect – untraceable – anonymity prevents society from bringing real-world sanctions to bear on malefactors. So there is no legal responsibility for the actor who therefore achieves absolute freedom in his actions. The only judge could be his conscience.

Kollock and Smith (1996) have a different view on a topic of the accountability of a pseudonymous persona. They roughly divide the sanctions to offensive online behaviour into two main categories: those that involve making a connection to a real-world person and those that do not.

Legal charges or prosecution, complaints to a system administrator or other real-world authority are in the former category. Killfiles (list of prohibited authors) and public castigation are in the latter. Email flames are somewhere in-between – one must know an electronic address that the offender accesses in order for them to be seen at all, but that address may be quite securely pseudonymous in relation to the real-world identity.

In an electronic environment in which pseudonyms are prevalent, only the sanctions that do not require a connection to the real world are practical. While these mechanisms can only discourage, and not eliminate, outlawed behaviour, they can have a significant effect (Kollock and Smith, 1996).

Anonymity and pseudonymity are analogous to limited liability in a legal sense. If one is aware of it and behaves accordingly with the caution, it could serve person well. Thus anonymity and pseudonymity cannot reasonably be forbidden without the loss of important benefits to individuals, corporations and society at large. Abuses are just the price society has to pay to preserve anonymity's benefits.

## IDENTITY

Identity is the exact opposite status of anonymity. Identity is the basic building block of social interaction. Such interactions, even those with strangers, are shaped by our sense of with whom we are interacting. We generally tend to assume, that the communication parties (computer users) are who they claim to be. Therefore identity – both the establishment of their own reputation and the recognition of others – plays a vital role.

The identity of a person, place or thing is determined by its characteristics, features or circumstances[3] by which a thing or person is definitely recognisable or known, it is the set of behavioural and personal characteristics by which an individual is recognizable as a member of a group (American Heritage, 2000).

In face-to-face and telephone interactions there is a wealth of cues of varying reliability to indicate our identity and intentions. Our bodies, voices, clothes and gestures signal messages about status, power and group membership. We rely on our ability to recognize fellow group members in order to know who we can turn to and what we can expect. Our ability to identify others also allows us to hold individuals accountable for their actions. For assessing the reliability of information and the trustworthiness of a confidant, identity is essential.

Online interaction strips away many of the clues and signs that are part of face-to-face interaction. This poverty of signals is both a limitation and a resource, making certain kinds of interaction more difficult but also providing room to play with one's identity. (Kollock & Smith, p. 9)

In the real world we may believe a story if it was published in The Times and dismiss it if it appeared in The Sun. On the internet, there is no editorial board ensuring standards of reliability (information usually comes directly from the writer). Thus, the writer's identity can greatly affect how we interpret his or her

[3] http://www.abc.net.au/civics/glossary/identity.htm

statements. Nevertheless, there are still ways to deal with the problem of identity on the internet (see pp. 8 – 14).

## IDENTITY ON THE INTERNET

Identity cues are sparse in the virtual world, but not non-existent. Traditional platforms for online interaction are largely defined by language and text, so experienced users become attuned to the nuances of web & email addresses, signatures, styles, used vocabulary, etc. and so they are able to discover identity cues even in the online world. Let's have a look on the sources of identity, hidden in electronic world.

### E-MAIL ACCOUNT

Email account itself is a source of clues. Although there is not always a one-to-one mapping between an account name and a real-world person (accounts may be shared, some people have several accounts), the account name is generally perceived to refer to a single person. It may provide some contextual information about the writer, information that, while quite sketch, may be the only such cues – and even if not, it reveals he wants to stay anonymous.

The domain name (domain is the organisation that provides the account) gives contextual clues about the author – and about the reliability of the information. Like mails written on a letterhead, a mail submitted from a well-known site shares in its reputation.

Email addresses from such "official" domains as lboro.ac.uk, cuni.cz, whitehouse.gov or ibm.com are therefore generally taken as real names with all the consequences, since the author is usually employee/student/or some other person, whose identity was verified in the real word. And there is an accountability involved, too. The holder of an institutional account – a student or employee – has reasons, such as a job or degree, for remaining in good standing with the account provider.

Institutional accounts are also less private than commercial ones. A work- or school-based account name is known within the organization and there are many people who can make a direct connection between the e-mail address

and the real-world person. For the writer using an institutional account, the online world is a public forum in which he or she can be seen by numerous colleagues and acquaintances.

On the other hand, freemail providers such as hotmail.com, yahoo.com, post.cz do not guarantee anything and offer wide range of anonymity. With such account, it is up to the user to decide who should know the link between physical self and virtual appellation. The anonymity of these accounts could make them popular for disruptive and harassing activities. Many experienced internet users frown upon emails from anonymous accounts. Nevertheless more than 84 % of Czech internet users have such e-mail account (see question 5 in the Appendix H)

### *E-MAIL SIGNATURE*

Another source of identity could be email signature. Signature is text that is automatically attached to the bottom of email message. (see Figure 2).

Signatures are a combination of business card and bumper sticker that sender uses to display his interests, opinions, and occupation. By providing the address of one's company and position, the signature can help establish one's credentials and create the possibility of accountability (one can check the company to verify the information).

```
*****************************************************************

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        Seminars and Training - Consulting - Publications
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***Figure 2: Example of e-mail signature***

By providing the link to a web-page (usually very detailed document), the author is able to establish his or her identity in a very elaborate way. The fact that an elaborate set of web-pages represent a substantial investment of time and effort may also have the effect of encouraging identity persistence – throwing away an alias used in previous postings may be a trivial act, but dismantling a set of web pages and constructing a new set may involve costs that the imposer is not willing to bear.

#### *OTHER SOURCES OF IDENTITY ONLINE*

As already mentioned, in the online world many of the usual identity cues are missing or are greatly reduced, and the human body, which anchors identity in the physical world, is absent. But still, some factors known from real world could be traced here too. The major factor is probably the **language** (including non-textual/non-verbal aspects). Proper/improper grammar, nuances in used vocabulary, misspelling or misprints can indicate good or poor education. Language can also reveal gender (e.g. the Czech language has different grammatical categories for male/female), age (used expressions), region (different dialects), sometimes even race of the user (slang). Also the typing speed is a very important factor, which reveals possible experience of the user. Those factors are usually given off – which means that they are very difficult to control or fake.

### *Experience*

There are also other ways that participants of internet communication reveal their identity – for instance newbie-ness or different levels of user experience can suggest a lot about the user's real world identity. Since internet and computer science are quite new phenomena (at least in the Czech Republic), the extensive experience in this field indicates a young (but not too young) guy (usually men) with a modern lifestyle, possibly a student or fresh graduate with good income – which is the most likely sociological group with such qualifications[4].

### *Protocols and services*

A lot about the user can be understood by the application/network the user uses. Meanwhile HTTP protocol (common web pages) and email are used widely (see the results of my survey – Appendix H), there are some specific programs that are not so widespread and that need some extra knowledge to install and use them. Such applications could be for instance ICQ, MSN or Jabber direct messaging, File Transfer Protocol, Voice over IP or specialised

[4] How the Czech internet develps? http://archiv.isdn.cz/a99/a903o200.php3

chat networks. The use of these more sophisticated ones again leads us to the assumption who the user could be.

Also the amount of time the user spends online can be a very valuable cue. Is he connected just for a short period of time – mostly afternoon and evening? Then it's probably via dial-up from home. Or is he accessible 24/7 or does he transfer huge amounts of data (music, pictures, video)? Then its broadband, but there are not so many ways to get unlimited access to the internet and not everyone lucky enough to have it also has the time to surf/chat/email… all the time. So the chances are it's a student or not too busy office employee.

### *Czech specifics*

There are also some specifics which could be traced just in the Czech language. The first thing is the usage of diacritics. Since extended characters of the Czech alphabet (Ř, Š, Č, Ň, Á, Í, … ) are encoded in the eighth bit of each byte (second half of ASCII table), historically (mid 1990's) they were not transmitted over the 7-bit internet routers correctly. The thing was pretty much fixed lately (since 2000) but the "old" internet users still tend to abstain from them. Lack of diacritics is then something like a sign of an old-school user, or it could mean that the author writes from abroad, and does not have the Czech keyboard installed (which was my case during the stay in Loughborough).

The other Czech uniqueness is that we have two ways to address the partner in discussion. The formal one (the same principle as using "Usted" in Spanish) and the informal one (reminds using one's first name in English). Meanwhile the use of formal addressing is typical for the older generation, young people tend to use the informal one. And therefore it is no surprise, that on the internet, majority of discussions is taken the informal way. If someone uses the formal way of addressing, it clearly marks him as an older guy or as someone, who pays deference to the opponent.

### *Identity = Self-Proclaimed identity*

However, even when there are some cues, in the disembodied world of the virtual community, identity could be ambiguous. I just repeat that many of the basic cues and assumptions about personality and social role we are accustomed to in the physical world are absent. It is composed of information rather than matter. In the physical world there is an inherent unity to the self, for the body provides a compelling and convenient definition of identity. The norm is one body, one identity. But the inhabitants of the virtual space are free from the body's unifying anchor. One can have as many electronic personae as one has time and energy to create (Donath, 1999). The solution of this trouble is to accept, that internet's identity is generally self-proclaimed and just check if there are not some huge discrepancies with expressions "given off".

#### *DECEPTIONS AND IDENTITY MANIPULATIONS*

Identity cues provided by users are not always reliable. The account name in the header of an email can be faked, identity claims can be false, social cues can be deliberately misleading. (Donath, 1999)

Many varieties of identity deception can be found in cyberspace. Some are quite harmful to the individual or to the community; others are innocuous, benefiting the performer without injuring the group (see the case of Daniela, page 73). Some are clearly deceptions, meant to provide a false impression, others are more subtle identity manipulations, similar to the adjustments in self-presentation we make in many real-world situations. Some cases of identity deceptions are acts of omission, rather than commission.

The cost of identity deception, particularly to individuals seeking information, can be potentially high. Donath (1999) identifies four types of identity deception within text-based virtual communities: trolling, category deception, impersonation, and identity concealment.

#### *TROLLING*

Troll is another name for provocateur. The word come from fishing sport and in virtual environment it means that someone sets the controversial "bait" and then wait for furious responses and enjoys the ensuring fight. Just for fun. The

troll pretends to be a regular participant, pretending to share the group's concerns and interests. Responding to a troll is very tempting, especially since these posts and comments are designed to incite. Yet, this is where the troll can cause the most harm, by diverting the discussion off the topic and into a heated argument or even flame wars.

#### *CATEGORY DECEPTION*

Category deception is a category manipulation, when the user on purpose leads others to believe, that he falls into other sociological categories than he actually does. Gender deception is the classic example. Especially in the MUDs (Multi User Dungeon) and in chat rooms where sex is a predominant topic of conversation (or at least, a very significant subtext to the discussion). However, for example in the Usenet newsgroups, gender deception appears to be much less common, again except in forums, where sex and gender are the main conversational topics.

The trouble is, that category deceptions are usually not so obvious, it is impossible to know how often or to what degree this occurs. What does seem to be quite common is a status enhancement, but such things appear in real life too.

#### *IMPERSONATION*

Donath (1999) argues that compared to the physical world, it is relatively easy to pass as someone else (impersonate) online, since there are relatively few identity cues. But, she also reminds that a surprising number of impersonated postings are made simply by signing the target's name, without copying the writing style or forging the header information. But some of the most harmful impersonations are done without deliberate malice toward the victim, who may simply have inadvertently provided a useful identity for the impersonator to hide behind (for instance by providing username/password, forgetting to log-off from public terminals…).

Van Gelder (1991) in her paper The Strange Case of the Electronic lover describes one of the firsts and now very famous case of impersonation:

It happened in the early 1980's on Compuserve network. In the chat-rooms of the Compuserve there was a very well established nickname Talkin' Lady, with the false identity of Joan Sue Greene from New York, 20 years old, disfigured in a car accident, unable to speak and walk. After several years of deception the nickname was revealed at last as a male, Alex, a prominent New York psychiatrist in his early fifties who was engaged in a bizarre, all consuming experiment to see what it felt like to be female, and to experience the intimacy of female friendship. To some of Alex's victims – including a woman who had an affair with the real-life Alex – the experiment was a "mind rape", pure and simple. To some other victims, Alex was not so much an impostor as a seeker whose search went out of control.

### *IDENTITY CONCEALMENT*

There are many reasons why one may wish to conceal one's identity. For example, as mentioned above, women conceal their gender to avoid not only harassment but also gender assumptions. And the problem with harassment in cyberspace, unlike in reality, is that there are no adequate means to police it (see the section Netiquette, page 61). Concealing one's identity, then, may be an appropriate precaution. Van Gelder (1991) confirms that women, who don't want to be continually pestered by requests from strange males to go into private talk, often use androgynous nicknames.

Privacy could be another reason for concealment of identity. Since in internet public forums the authors have no control over who reads their posts, people who are embarrassed use pseudonyms, as well as people who are revealing extremely personal data or who are discussing matters of dubious legality. Finally, some people may simply not want their participation, no matter how innocuous, to be public knowledge

But the ability to conceal one's identity is not limited to those who would use it to protect themselves. Paedophiles, pornographers and spammers also use the same techniques to conceal their identities. Concealment, per se, is not positive. Both the offensive and defensive uses of concealment on networks, however, are based in the fundamental nature of the cyberspace.

### HONESTY SIGNALLING

Good question is, why then majority of users tend to claim their identity correctly? There is not a simple answer to this question - I found more then one possible explanation. Game theorists and biologists have established some models to imitate the interplay between honesty and deception in a communication system. Amotz Zahavi as early as in 1977 wrote his paper "The cost of honesty" examining what makes a signal reliable. He found out that the signals that are inherently reliable are just those, which are difficult, or impossible, to cheat – usually because they are very costly to fake. According to the same logic, Murphy (2000) distinguishes 2 categories of signals:

- ***Assessment signals***

  Assessment signals are costly and directly follow the handicap principle. This type of signal is generally considered "honest" because it would be difficult or impossible to cheat (if in poorer condition could not exhibit signal of animal in better condition). Assessment signals are challenging to maintain, but they are pretty accurate markers of the underlying trait

  Examples include horns, peacock tails, roaring in red deer, in human sense for instance spending a lot of money to show your richness.

- ***Conventional signals***

  Conventional signals may or may not be honest depending on the response of the receiver. The signal is correlated with a trait only by custom or convention. Conventional signals are not costly to maintain but also (therefore) easy to falsify.

  Examples include black badge on throat of sparrow, in human terms it would be mere declaration or manifestation without the proof.

Why have both types of signals? Why not use just the reliable assessment ones? Dawkins & Guilford (1991) give us the answer: One reason is that conventional signals are often less costly, for both the signaller and the receiver. If the costs associated with possible deception are relatively low, then a conventional signal may be more suitable than a more reliable, but

costly, assessment signal. But we should keep in mind, that majority of the signals on the internet are Conventional ones.

Other scientists approached the problem from economic point of view. They found out that human society is generally better off when people tell the truth, because in the long-term it brings the profit for whole society, meanwhile from cheating benefits just one person in the short-term at the cost of society. That is why society sanctions misbehaviour and dishonesty – imposing a cost to being caught limits the spread of deception. Sanctions generally prevent people from being dishonest, even in the case, when the chances of being caught are minimal.

Psychologists come with another idea. According to them, the honesty is natural for human being. Being dishonest, pretend something or cheat takes more effort and brings discomfort. So, when there is no other reason why to behave otherwise, people prefer comfort of being themselves and that's why they rather provide information about their real identity than construct a fake one.

And from the physical point of view, there is one explanation as well. The fact is, that when a signal becomes very unreliable due to excessive cheating, it ceases to bear information - it stops being a signal. This does not mean that there cannot be deception at all – but reasonable signal allows just a limited amount of deception, which is then taken for noise.

All above-mentioned theories explain, why it is possible more less rely on information provided on the internet, even when there is always possibility that some of them are not genuine.

# VIRTUAL COMMUNITIES

The theories relevant to online communities come from different disciplines: sociology, psychology, communication studies, computer-mediated communication studies, human-computer interaction, computer-supported cooperative work, computer science or even anthropology.

Social behaviour is complex, whether it occurs off- or online. How people interact in a community shapes its long-term evolution. Sociological and psychological theories help to explain social behaviour online, but there is still much that is unpredictable. What than we can study about it? Well, though people's behaviour cannot be controlled, it can be influenced. Therefore we can try to find out, how virtual internet environment influences its users. And in virtual environment it is the software and communication protocols – features and functions as programmers designed them, what affects the community development just as the architecture of a house affects those who live in it (Wallace, 1999).

Jenny Preece (2000, p. 12) put the crucial question: "Are online communities really communities, or are they pseudo-communities, in which people swap pleasantries, exchange information, make uncommitted gestures of support, and develop ephemeral friendships? Can deep friendship develop from instant access to thousands of people, scattered across the globe?" The answer is not so easy, since online communities are very complex phenomena, which is quite difficult to determine or study. Lets start with a definition of what virtual community actually is:

## DEFINITIONS

### *COMMUNITY*

Man have clustered together and crowded in herds and gangs throughout the whole of history. Thus it does not surprise, that the ideas and thoughts about communities reach as far back as to the dawn of philosophy. Ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle in his work Nichomachean Ethics explains that community is not so much about unity as it is about harmony.

Later, in modern times, sociologists have defined and redefined the concept of community many times (Wellman, 1982). Initially, communities were defined by physical features such as size, location, and the boundaries that confined them. In later years, when cheap transportation made it easier for people to join multiple communities to satisfy different needs, the strength and type of relationships among people seemed more promising criteria for defining communities (Wellman, 1997). Relationships that developed to satisfy strong identifiable needs were particularly potent indicators of community.

Sociologists make clear distinctions between groups, networks, and communities. Broadly speaking, a group has clear boundaries that determine membership. In contrast, networks involve relationships that can cross these boundaries. The term community connotes the strength of relationships.

The Random House Dictionary of the English Language defines community as:

1. a social group of any size whose members reside in a specific locality, share government, and often have common cultural and historical heritage …

… 3. group sharing common characteristics or interests and perceived or perceiving itself as distinct in some respect from the larger society within which it exists. (Random House, 1987, p. 414)

## *VIRTUAL (ONLINE) COMMUNITY*

Online community has also become a blanket term to describe any collection of people who communicate online, so it could represent different things to different people.

For example, e-commerce entrepreneurs, who take internet for just a market-driven social space, have a very broad view of community. They regard any chat or bulletin board or communications software as an online community. For them, the important issue is what draws people to and holds people in a website (a concept known as stickiness) so they would buy goods or services. (Jones, 1999)

On the other hand, experienced multi-user dungeons (MUD) players do not accept as community anything less then complex and complicated MUD system. Nevertheless, there are some general definitions in the literature:

### *DEFINITION BY JENNY PREECE*

Jenny Preece (2000, p. 10) defines virtual community according to the following **four criteria**:

- **People**, who interact socially as they strive to satisfy their own needs or perform special roles, such as leading or moderating.
- A shared **purpose**, such as an interest, need, information exchange, or service that provides a reason for the community
- **Policies**, in the form of tacit assumptions, rituals, protocols, rules and laws that guide people's interactions.
- **Computer systems**, to support and mediate social interaction and facilitate a sense of togetherness.

This definition is quite broad, so it includes a range of different communities, including physical communities that have become networked, communities supported by a single bulletin board, listserv or chat software, those that are embedded in web sites, multi-user dungeons or domain and object-oriented MUDs and others.

### *DEFINITION BY HOWARD RHEINGOLD*

Cyberspace guru Howard Rheingold (1994), after his seven-year involvement in the WELL (Whole Earth 'Lectronic Link – an early online community developed in the San Francisco Bay area), defined virtual communities as "…cultural aggregation that emerge when enough people bump into each other often enough in cyberspace. A virtual community is a group of people who may or may not meet each other face to face, and who exchange words and ideas through the meditation of computer bulletin boards and networks (Rheingold, 1994, pp. 57-58)" He also observes that in cyberspace, we chat and argue, engage in intellectual discourse, perform acts of commerce, exchange knowledge, share emotional support, make plans, brainstorm, gossip, feud, fall in love, find friends and lose them, play games and metagames, flirt … we do everything people do when people get together, but

we do it with words on computer screens, leaving our bodies behind … our identities commingle and interact electronically, independent of local time or location.

### *ACM DEFINITION*

And there is also another quite technical and enumerative theory based on the report from the brainstorming workshop held at an ACM Computer Human Interaction Conference on the theory and practice of physical and network communities, which listed the following **five core attributes** of network communities (Whittaker, Issacs, O'Day, 1997, p. 137):

1. Members have a shared goal, interest, need or activity that provides the primary reason for belonging to the community.
2. Members engage in repeated, active participation; often, intense interactions, strong emotional ties, and shared activities occur among participants.
3. Members have access to shared resources, and policies determine the access to those resources.
4. Reciprocity of information, support, and services among members is important.
5. There is a shared context of social conventions, language, and protocols.

There are also another **seven non-core attributes** found:

1. Different roles and the reputations of people in those roles
2. Awareness of membership boundaries and group identity
3. Initiation criteria for joining
4. Community history and long duration of existence
5. Notable events or rituals
6. Shared physical environments
7. Voluntary membership

But this definition raises some questions. For example, the need for repeated, active participation as mentioned in the core attribute number two is the most controversial. Does it mean that communities based on random and non-repetitious access of some of its members are not communities, even when they fulfil all the other criteria?

## *REASONS AND PURPOSES OF VIRTUAL COMMUNITIES*

The common denominators of the above mentioned theories are shared purpose or goal and willingness of the members to participate. That's a cornerstone of community on which rests all the rest. Preece (2000, p. 7) summarises it:

The **collective purpose** of a community, the goals and roles of the individuals in a community, and policies generated to shape social interaction all **influence social interaction in the community**. Sociability is concerned with all these issues. A community's purpose could be, for example, to exchange information about rare plants, to discuss local government, to chat about the latest football game, to support those suffering from some illness, to aid students studying via distance education or to support business practices. Millions of different communities exist on the internet, and all the people participating in them have goals, whether to find information, make new friends, find best buys, learn about the stock market, have fun, or get advice. Within the social framework defined by the community's purpose and policies**,** people strive to satisfy their own needs**.** Whether they contribute to the good of the community or are just there to indulge themselves depends the community's policies and individual personalities. Thus, the purpose, the people, and policies comprising a community determine what it is like (Preece, 2000, p. 8).

## COMMUNITY AND ITS MEMBERS

Basic categorization schemes enable us to a make gross assessment about whether and how to proceed with the interaction. There is general consensus among social psychologists that the primary categories of differentiation in the contemporary western world are **gender, race and age**. (Smith, 1999, p. 84). In face-to-face interaction, an individual's physical characteristics are usually apparent at the first glance. But they are not so obvious on the internet. Does it mean, they are not important in virtual communities? Or do they affect online interaction anyway? And how?

### *PRIMARY CATEGORIES*

#### *GENDER*

Some evidence does link gender and personality. Men, and especially young men, often rank higher on aggressiveness, competitiveness, dominance, and task orientation. Women, tend to be orientated more toward connectedness and relationships, showing greater empathy and sensitivity to the emotions and feelings of others (Wallace, 1999). This evidence has led to some superficial assumptions that women are particularly attracted to online communities that focus on support, connection, and discussion. However, there is no solid evidence to support this assumption, and there are counterexamples (Preece, 2000, p. 126).

People tend to reveal themselves without realizing it. Erving Goffman (1959) distinguishes between the "expressions given" and "expressions given off". The former are deliberately stated messages indicating how the one wishes to be perceived; the latter are the much more subtle – and sometimes unintentional – messages communicated via action and nuance. Both forms of expression are subject to deliberate manipulation, but "expression given off" may be much harder to control. One can write "I am female", but sustaining a voice and reactions that are convincingly a woman's may prove to be quite difficult for a man.

Gender differences in conversational style have been observed to transfer to online textual communication. Women use more “fillers” (relatively meaningless words), hedging (reluctance), intensifies (e.g. so, really, awfully, … ) and questions. Women also tend to hedge their comments, to be more self deprecating, and apologetic, and to include more adjectives in their speech (Tannen, 1990, 1994). Women often try to avoid criticism by phrasing their questions in defensive forms, such as: “This may be a naïve question, but…”(Herring, 1992). Men are usually more aggressive, pragmatic and straight to the point, more likely to use indecent comment or even swearword. Research on textual communication suggests that emotions are typically transmitted – both semantically and syntactically. Hence, linguistic style can betray a person’s gender.

One’s gender is also embedded into the grammar of his/her speech. In Indo-European languages, there are typically feminine, masculine and neuter, Czech further divides the masculine gender into animate and inanimate groups. So, sooner or later, writer has to claim his/her gender. And it seems to be difficult pretend the be member of the other gender for long period of time, since the use of grammatical gender is generally very mechanical and thoughtless routine. Mistake in that immediately points out that something is not correct.

Also in the choice of the topic seems to be difference between genders. I will demonstrate that by the findings of my own research done on the chat servers. The results of the research are in chapter four – page 80, Table 5.

Direct revealing one’s gender online can have startling consequences. It is well known that in some online environments, responses to men are different from those to women (Bruckman, 1993, Turkle 1995). It also have been proved by my research – page 80, Tables 6 and 7.

Gender is definitely the most important category, therefore usually one of the first questions for a newcomer is, what his or her gender is. There are even well known and accustomed abbreviation for starting a conversation with a stranger, which is A/S/L?, meaning What is your Age/sex/location? Or RUMOR, which stands for Are you male or female? (see appendix C for

detailed list of netspeak and chat abbreviations). A person identified as female may receive from men excessive, unwanted, attention and be bombarded by questions and sometimes propositions or harassment. Consequently, women frequently disguise their gender so that they can maintain their freedom in the electronic world.

### *AGE*

Users of different ages have different needs, look for different types of content and prefer different interaction style. So generally, the goal of community determines the age group of its users. In spite of the expectation, age is an important factor in online conversation. Users with different ages have different life experience, opinions, interests, topics and problems. Thus communication across generation gaps (unless related to some highly specific topic) usually seem to bring a lot of trouble.

Age quite often determines also the communication means which are used. ICQ and Chats tend to be popular with teens and students, meanwhile older ones seems to prefer e-mail (confirmed also by my findings – see the Appendix H). Just the WWW service does not have age boundaries.

So, however there is almost no way how to detect or prove user's age, it seems that naturally people of the same age group gather together (exceptions possible). Again, see chapter four for some findings of mine.

### *RACE*

Establishing racial identity lies heavily (more than with gender and age) on physical cues provided by human body. Since there is no body in nonmaterial internet space, virtual world seems to be kind of "colour-blind". Unless explicitly claimed by user, it's almost impossible to figure out his or her racial membership.

What is more likely, in Goffman's terms, to be "given off" is ethnicity rather than race. Ethnicity is based upon cultural markers of membership, such as language, religion and countless symbols such as holidays, music, literature, and so on whereas race is marked by heritable phenotypes (Van Den Berghe, 1993, p. 240).

## ROLES IN VIRTUAL COMMUNITY

Beside regular members, who just contribute to discussions, in virtual communities some other key roles have been identified. There could be moderators and mediators, who guide discussions and serve as arbiters in disputes; professional commentators, who give opinion and guide discussion; provocateurs, who provoke, and lurkers, who silently observe. Let's have a closer look at them (Preece, 2000, p. 83):

### MODERATORS AND MEDIATORS

Moderators and mediators help to govern communities. Moderators' role vary according to the moderation policy of the community, but they generally try to ensure that people behave reasonably and help to direct activity in the community. Mediators, called in to settle disputes, generally take a less active role than moderators; they may even be on call to several groups at once.

The status of moderator or mediator could be official (user account with some special rights e.g. to delete-edit-deny access-…) or unofficial. By unofficial moderator I mean when some regular user takes steps to warn or correct other user. Such things usually happened when very intensive discussion is going on and some participants forget good manners. Then the others remind them to behave themselves.

***The moderator's key roles are (Salmon, 2000)***

- Facilitating, to keep the group focused and "on-topic"
- Managing the list – archiving, deleting and adding subscribers
- Filtering messages and deciding which ones to post. Typically, this involves removing flames, libellous posts, spam, and inappropriate or distracting jokes, and generally keeping the ratio of relevant messages high, often described as the signal/noise ratio.
- Being the expert answering frequently asked questions (FAQs) or directing people to online FAQs, and understanding the topics of discussion.
- Editing text or digests, or formatting messages.
- Opening questions, to generate discussion.

- Marketing the list to others, which generally involves providing information about it.
- Helping people with general needs.
- Ensuring that flaming and ad-hominem attacks are done offline.

### *LURKERS*

Lurker is the term used to describe someone who does not participate; he observes what is going on but remains silent. The online Jargon Dictionary (2001) defines lurker (noun) as: “One of the `silent majority' in a electronic forum; one who posts occasionally or not at all but is known to read the group's postings regularly. This term is not pejorative and indeed is casually used reflexively: "Oh, I'm just lurking." Often used in `the lurkers', the hypothetical audience for the group's flamage-emitting regulars. When a lurker speaks up for the first time, this is called `delurking'.

The term comes from popular science-fiction TV series "Babylon 5", where the term `lurker' was used for a homeless or displaced person”

Some users spend many hours lurking, and know the topics of conversation and key players in the community well. Little research has been done on lurking, but it is known to be a common phenomenon, estimates of the ratio of lurkers to posters are unreliable, but 100:1 is commonly quoted. (Nonnecke, 2000). Very similar ratio was measured by me on e-News servers’ discussions – see chapter 4 for details.

Different communities have different level of lurkerness. Nonnecke & Preece (2000) observed, that average percentage of lurkers in the health support communities was 46%, whereas in the technical support groups, it was more than 80 percent.

Sometimes the term lurker has pejorative connotations. Many think of a lurker as someone who hangs around, often with sinister or, at best, annoying (to us) motives, or as a free rider, someone who wants something for nothing. Since the goal of most online communities is discussion and interaction, there may be some justification for this less than flattering view of lurkers. After all, the success of the community depends on active participation and ongoing

contributions that will entice current members back and encourage new ones to join. Lurkers get the benefits of belonging to the group without giving anything back. It is sometimes seen as a lack of commitment to the community (Preece, 2000, p. 88).

Some reasons why some people are lurking and do not post are listed by Nonnecke & Preece (1999):

**People may lurk, because:**

- They didn't understand the community (e.g. audience, comfort level, topic area)
- Personal factors
- Posting takes time
- No personal or practical need
- No community requirement (e.g. no expectation or requirement)
- Structure of community (e.g. posting is not allowed, FAQ, …)
- Information seeking (e.g. more interested in information than interaction, reading with specific goal in mind)
- Privacy (e.g. sensitivity of employer, fear of archiving, fear of spamming)
- Safety (e.g. can't offend if don't post)
- Involvement (e.g. maintain emotional detachment, makes leaving easier, shy)
- Community responsiveness (e.g. delays)
- Value of posting (e.g. nothing to offer, unable to add value)
- Interaction mechanisms (e.g. volume of posting, user interface, anonymity)
- Efficiency (e.g. not posting takes less time, others will respond, value without cost)

In their later work Nonnecke, B., & Preece, J. (2001) came to conclusion, that lurking is a strategic and idiosyncratic activity and they presented following Gratification Model of Lurking:

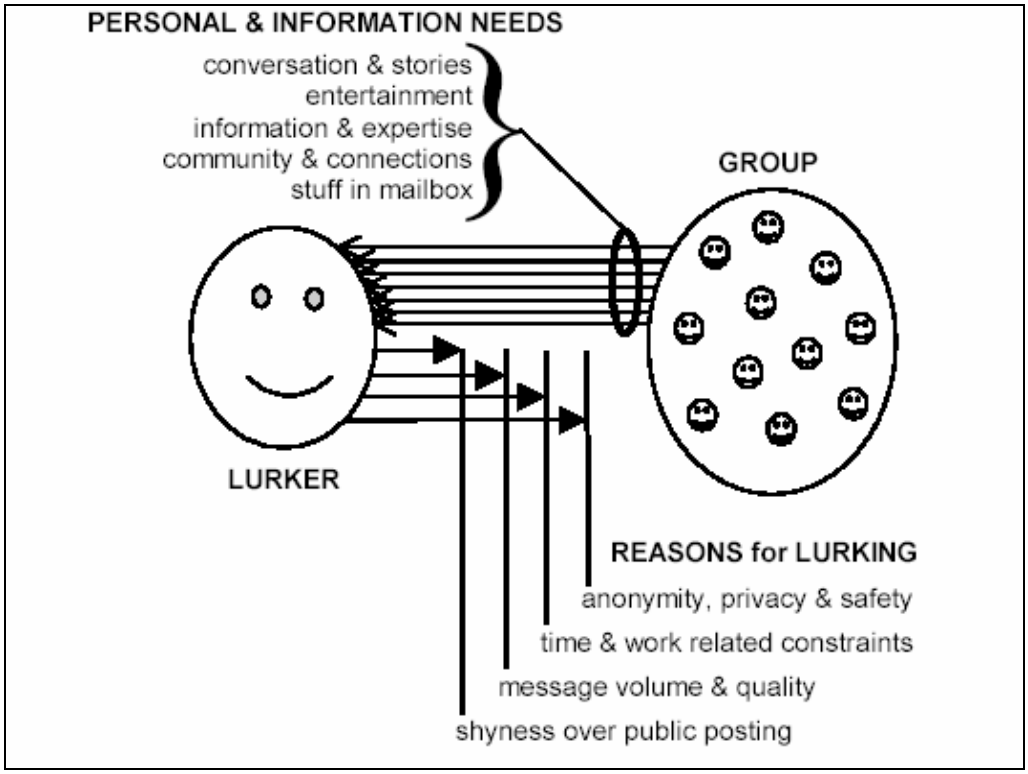


**Figure 3: The *gratification model* showing lurkers needs and the most mentioned reasons for lurking.** (Nonnecke, B., & Preece, J., 2001)

### *CELEBRITIES*

Some communities invite special guests to entertain or educate its members. Those could be for instance experts to lead discussions and answer questions. Such sessions (meetings) are usually scheduled and take place on chats. Some internet servers (usually commercial ones) invite popular celebrities (politicians, actors, sportsmen, ….) to chat session, where users can ask them directly. It is kind of group interview, when all the participants can see the questions and the answer of the celebrity. Record of such chat is stored and later can be accessed as an article. Reason of such sessions is the simple – attract new users to the server or keep current users interested.


***Figure 4: Banner promoting discussions with VIP & celebrities***

## NARROW AND BROAD BANDWIDTH AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

Attempts to solve the problem of the lack of physical presence (let's not forget that this lack, by enabling us to communicate over large distances, is the internet's greatest advantage) occupy technologists and produce generations of ever more sophisticated avatars, video images, virtual environments, and ingenious graphical representations. The "holy grail" of all those improvement would be communication in absence with all the features of co-presence – e.g. full 3-dimensional, optical environment with communication channels for all perceptions.

But despite these efforts, textual communication is still the dominant default medium of communication and so the lack of physical presence brings series of troubles and specifics typical for virtual communities.

### *NARROW BANDWIDTH*

Textual (low-bandwidth) systems are not sufficient to carry all the communication signals needed for communicating social, emotional, and contextual context. In text-only systems, both **task** information and **social** information are carried in the same single verbal/linguistic channel, which, though adequate for most task information, cannot transmit nonverbal information such as body language, voice tone, and so on (Walther, 1994,).

Textual systems seems to be adequate to communicate basic factual information, such as short messages, a list of names, addresses and numbers, but they tend to have troubles dealing with more complex tasks.

In textual communication systems, all the information are transferred just by the words users type. And average amateur typing speed is only around 15 - 20 words per minute (the majority of users, who look at the keys while using two fingered typing; 10 finger typing method without looking reaches maximum around 50 WPM). When taken into account that the average reading speed is 125 – 200 WPS and the average speed of speech is 80 – 100 words per minute (but can top 300 WPS when really necessary), the limitation of online textual input seem to be quite obvious. Moreover, words

are the only information user gets. In comparison to the real-world face-to-face communication, where all the senses are used to provide continuous stream of information not only about the subject, but also about surrounding environment, textual electronic communication is really poor substitution.

One way how to deal with it is wide usage of commonly known abbreviations and emoticons (see appendix C and D). But such kind of “compression” is possible only, when there is shared understanding of the abbreviations used, so the recipient is able decode the meaning.

The other way is suppression of some common knowledge and information while assuming, that the receiver will have the knowledge to understand message. So just the most important parts of the news are communicated. But again, that could easily lead to the misunderstanding or mistakes.

No wonder, that researchers working on computer-mediated communication in business reported that consensus building using textual systems is less effective than in face-to-face meetings (Sproull & Kiesler 1991). Same applies to education. This led to the assumption, that textual systems support communication poorly, particularly socio-emotional communication. Two closely related theories that help to explain these observations are ***social presence theory*** (Short, Willimas, & Christie, 1976) and ***media richness theory*** (Daft & Lengel, 1986). Social presence theory addresses how successfully media convey a sense of the participants being physically present, using face-to-face communication as the standard for the assessment. The media richness theory is similar to social presence, but it takes a media perspective and describes the media’s capacity for immediate feedback - how many and in which ways the senses are involved and how well it conveys cues (see Appendix B).

### *BROAD BANDWIDTH*

The advantage of broadband communication (e.g. video conferencing, or game playing) is that it more closely resembles face-to-face communication, in which voice tone, gestures, facial expression, appearance, body language, and contextual information (environment where speakers are located) are

communicated. Socially oriented communication is greatly enriched by this array of nonverbal information.

### *EFFECTS OF NARROW-BAND ON COMMUNICATION*

Jenny Preece (2000, 151) assumes that the consequences of filtering out social, emotional, and contextual information vary depending on their importance to the communication task. There are three main ways that this affects communication.

**First**, signals needed to understand conversation may be missing; for example, when face to face, speakers check frequently with each other to ensure they understand the conversation as it progresses. This is the aforementioned important concept known as common ground. (whole Common ground theory is in the Appendix A) Nonverbal signals, such as a nod of the head, a quizzical look, or a wave of the hand can say a lot.

**Second**, conversations proceed by speakers taking turns; various signals – such a pauses in speech or a gaze are used to cue the next speaker to take his or her turn. But since such waiting is not very natural in face-to-face communication, it usually confuses newcomers and takes some time to get accustomed to it. It also slows down the speed of textual chat.

**Third**, seeing and hearing the speaker enables the listener to infer information regarding the context of the conversation and the speaker's feelings.

Olson and Olson succinctly argue that differences in "local physical context, time zones, culture and language all persist in spite of the use of distance technologies" and it takes a toll on communication. Furthermore speakers do not get evidence of each other's emotional states. (Olson and Olson, 2000)

Nevertheless, given sufficient time, people in closed textual discussion groups do form strong relationships. It just takes longer to send a comparable number of messages, and correspondingly longer for relationships to develop, than in high-bandwidth environments.(Walther, 1993)

One should suppose, that the lack of nonverbal signs in e-communication led users to the widespread usage of emoticons (sometimes known as "smiles"), as a substitution for facial expression in face-to-face communication. Thus the

grin or smile can twist the meaning of the sentence not only in the real world, but also online (see Appendix D).

As already explained, in face-to-face conversations first impressions are developed primarily from nonverbal signs (race, age and gender are in western society the strongest social markers), but online, the vast majority of them are missing. Such reduction of social cues can encourage unusual behaviour that would not occur if people could see each other. Some people feel comfortable behaving aggressively online because they are hidden behind a veil of anonymity. The way participants form impressions of each other and how much personal information they are prepared to disclose are also influenced. In addition, with fewer social cues to monitor, some people find it easy, even fun, to assume different persona or even switch gender. But experienced users are adept at finding ways to deal with the absence of visual clues (Rice & Barnett, 1986) There are many differences between expert and novice problem-solving strategies; clearly, experts can rely on tacit knowledge that is deeply internalised (for details see Identity section of this work – p. 27).

## COMMUNITY AND ANONYMITY

The fact that people can reach anonymous status online very easily (provided they choose to disguise their identity, they can vanish without trace by pressing a few keys and may never talk to each other again, let alone meeting in the real word) has serious consequences. There are several benefits as well as downsides. But as May (1994) reminds, “anonymous community” is an ***oxymoron***. Ideal for anonymity-conscious users is at best a pseudonymous world with merit-based reputations. Purely anonymous individuals are capable of communicating with each other at present, but there is no accretion of personal histories in their interactions: reputation of any kind is impossible in a purely anonymous environment. Logically, since there is no history, there is no possible future of such anonymous contact either, because full anonymity prevents it (even when all the participants meet again, they could not be aware of the fact, that this is follow-up). The motivation for many of the qualities we associate with community, from cooperative behaviour to creative endeavour, depends on the existence of distinct and persistent personae.

### *EFFECTS OF ANONYMITY ON VIRTUAL COMMUNITIES*

Meeting in cyberspace has the advantage of eliminating prejudging based on someone’s appearance. It has also been proven, that anonymity often encourages people to disclose more about themselves; they even become hyperpersonal (Lea, O’Shea, Fung, Spears, 1992, Walther, 1996). People usually reveal a lot more, that they would in real world. Reciprocity in such self-disclosure is powerful online. More on, anonymity seems to encourage people to more readily reach out to help (Preece: 2000, p.197) People marvel at the unusually open, honest, and sometimes intimate nature of much online communication (Hiltz, 1994).

Human nature is, that people often idealise themselves, represent themselves more favourably, which is very easy in the internet cue-less environment. Such representations are not borne out in real life. You can get away with disingenuousness or dishonesty as long as the communication (or even relationship) remains virtual (which is sometimes satisfactory – there is a

group of community users without any interest in further real contacts – according to my finding up to 78 % - see the Appendix H, question 15). But online romances of any sort may fail when real-life meetings result in dashed fantasies. Online, no one is overweight, but in reality a persons extra 15 kg can make a difference. Seemingly trivial, but potentially devastating, are also improvements in age or marital status. A ten-year-old photograph will be revealed as misleading in a face-to-face meeting too.

Another potential flaw - connected with lack of responsibility - is pilferage. Sometimes it may be tempting for some members to take from the community without repaying. Nevertheless, there is considerable evidence of reciprocity online, both between those linked by weak or strong ties (Preece, 2000, p. 179). Sometimes the term “Gift economy” is used in connection with the internet.

The dark side of anonymity in virtual community is that people can be just as aggressive and unpleasant online as in face-to-face situations. In fact, not having to face people, and knowing that you may never encounter them again online seems to encourage participants to vent negative feelings, often for no apparent reason. Ad-hominem attacks, also known as flames, are usual in some communities.

# OTHER FACTORS OF VIRTUAL COMMUNITY

## *CHARACTER OF COMMUNITY AND ITS FACTORS*

A community's purpose is one of several factors that influence people's interaction in online communities (Wallace, 1999, p.9), as well as the character of community. In a study of one hundred listserver and bulletin board communities, empathy among participants was strongest in patient and emotional support communities, and hostility was low (Preece & Ghozati, 1998). Aggressive comments were voiced most frequently in religious, political, and cultural communities; little empathy was expressed in these communities (this was 100 % proved by my own research – negativity on e-News servers reached 75 %! See chapter 4 and the Appendix F for details). Professional communities of practice also tend to have their characters. Heated discussion and disagreement about ideas is integral to these cultures and is to be expected. In contrast, similar behaviour does not appear in a patient support (Preece, 2000) or commercial community, where it can easily devastate trust between members.

Communities that have clearly stated goals appear to attract people with similar goals and who are often like each other; this creates a stable community in which there is less hostility. Broadly based communities tend to experience more interpersonal confrontations because participants have different expectations and may become frustrated when these expectations are not met. (Whittaker, Treveen, Hill, Cherny, 1998)

Howard Rheingold (2000) points out, that virtual community has to have an affinity – the answer to the question: What would draw these people together? It has to present a user interface that doesn't baffle the newcomer, but gives a range of options to the experienced user. Building a social space online does not guarantee that people will inhabit it. It has to have a social infrastructure, including simple written agreements to a social contract governing online behaviour and sanctions for transgression. It needs skilled human facilitation. And there must be some plan for bringing a continuing stream of newcomers into the community. According to him, without a cadre of experienced

interlocutors to help point out the pitfalls and the preferred paths, online populations are doomed to fall into the same cycles of flame, trash, mindless chatter and eventual dissolution.

### *NETIQUETTE*

Almost all the communities have their own code of conduct, which helps to set the rules and judge the wrong-doers. Netiquette (abbreviation for Network Etiquette) is a contemporary term for proper etiquette on the internet. It sets minimum guidelines for users, helping them to behave well. It could consist of written or unwritten rules, but it generally copies the code of good behaviour in the real word. Different communities could have different codes of practice, but majority of the rules are common. Netiquette is even standardised in RFC1855 (RFC – Request For Comment is a series of widely followed numbered internet informational documents and standards) – for details see the Appendix E. However, netiquette is quite an ancient thing and it seems that it does not have such an importance on the internet recently.

But even when majority of today's internet users is not familiar with netiquette, there are still some ethical norms and guidelines users usually follow. They bring them from real-world. Here are some of them:

"Legality test": Is it legal?

"The Mom test": Would you tell your mother? Would she do it? These questions reach deep into the earliest years of ethical training.

"The Hide test": Do you have the urge to hide with your activity? Would you be ashamed when people discover?

"TV test": Would you tell a nationwide audience? If the gut-level answer is No, there is almost certainly something wrong.

### *JOINING AND LEAVING POLICIES*

Communities that are completely open enable anyone to drop in and out as they please. This may be **convenient**, but it is sometimes abused. Open communities encourage unscrupulous people to cross-post spam and flaming

messages between communities. Spams can also be distributed rapidly. For these reasons, many communities have joining requirements.

Though still open to everyone, having to register, provide a login name and password, and then wait several hours or days for acceptance does deter less serious or unscrupulous people from causally dropping into the community. Registration deters casual visitors and make hit-and-run flaming difficult (proved by my research – see the Appendix F).

Another possibility is to grant newcomers visitor status so they can experience the community for a limited period of time to help them decide whether they want to join. Visitors' activities are generally restricted. Another solution is to allow unregistered people reading rights only, thus preventing them from posting until they are registered (Preece, 2000, pp. 96-97).

On Czech internet (domain .cz and Czech language) there is very liberal approach towards the anonymity. It is not easy to find the reasons, but the fact is, that a great deal of the biggest Czech servers do not require any kind of login procedure to participate on them, though it's slowly changing and free access seems to disappear[5].

#### *COMMUNITY SIZE*

The size of the community can strongly influence its activities. Too few people will generate too little communication, making the community unattractive to newcomers. Too many people will create a sense of being overwhelmed, and not knowing anyone. (Morris & Organ, 1996)

There is a concept, which deals with this issue: Critical Mass theory. Critical mass is the number of members an online community needs to attract others. The community will be perceived worth joining only if there are sufficient people and enough activity to make it interesting and worthwhile (Morris & Ogan, 1996). Too few people, and there will not be sufficient discussion to

[5] Not even year ago, all five major Czech e-News servers provided anonymous login-free discussion forum. Now you can post your comment anonymously just on three of them (www.lidovky.cy, www.ihned.cz, www.izurnal.cz). The same trend appears on chat servers. During 2003 two major ones introduced obligatory login.

retain people's interest and draw them back; too many participants, and the community may become chaotic, and people will start to leave. Lurking too will not prove worthwhile unless there is a critical mass to generate interesting content.

The critical mass number could be different for each type of community or discussion. For instance (as demonstrated in chapter 4) in case of some chat-rooms the critical mass to get attention could be as low as one female lone in the chat-room.

## *ARE VIRTUAL COMMUNITIES A THREAT TO REAL WORLD RELATIONSHIPS?*

Sometimes, there are catastrophic visions presented in mass media concerning the negative influence which excessive internet use should have upon us.

In the mid-1990s, researchers from Carnegie Mellon University investigated the impact of the internet on 169 people in 73 households over a two year period (Kraut et al., 1998) and suggested that "greater use of the Internet was associated with small, but statistically significant declines in social involvement as measured by communication within the family an the size of people's local social networks, and with increases in loneliness, a psychological state associated with social involvement".

A survey of 4113 adults in 2689 households, done by researchers at Stanford, also raises concerns that people who spend a lot of time online do so at the expense of face-to-face relationships, particularly with friends and family (Nie & Erbing, 2000).

A possible explanation is that time spent using the internet may substitute for time that would otherwise be spent engaged in social activities. A similar explanation has been suggested to account for the negative effects of television.

However, developing strong ties with friends met online is rarer. It is possibly because converting weak ties to strong ties may require periods of frequent or

prolonged face-to-face social interaction. (I focus on that in my research – see the Appendix H, question 15 and 16)

# MY RESEARCH

In this chapter, I will present the results of my own research. But before I do so, I will introduce methods I used and also repeat the hypotheses, which I had formulated before I started my work. You will see that the results not only confirm my hypotheses, but also generally match up with the theoretical background from previous chapters. At the same time I will show, that current research - done one year after the initial one – confirmed my findings and results and made my case even stronger.

## *USED METHODS*

To get oriented in the field of study, I have spent the more than 10 months (in the years 2003–4) regularly visiting different chat servers and public discussion groups. Since I have discovered, that it's not in one's powers to cover too broad area of cyberspace, I decided to narrow my interest just to the Czech internet environment, particularly the three biggest chat servers (pokec.atlas.cz, www.lide.cz, www.xko.cz) and 3 news servers with discussion groups on them (www.lidovky.cz, www.novinky.cz, www.ilist.cz).

I took a series of notes and records of what happened there and used the statistics to validate some of my findings. So observation is the first method I used. During my reconfirmation survey, I aimed at the same servers again, so I could possibly compare the results.

Later on, based on the experience I gained from observing, I prepared questionnaires for two different groups of internet users – regular internet users and users of chat servers. The questionnaires were not in written form (pen + paper) but in the form of an HTML document, published on the internet. I used the PHP Hypertext pre-processor to create the web-pages and MySQL server to store the response data.

The questionnaires were in the Czech language, publicly accessible at the address sorry.vse.cz/~pavlant/dotazniky. Their translation to English as well as the results is located in the Appendix H to this work.

I also contacted the owners/administrators of the servers that I was interested in, with a series of question concerning their user portfolio. But unfortunately they refused cooperation pointing out that the facts about users are considered to be secret. So servers were of little help to me during the research. Fortunately, in the beginning of 2005 the servers applied more strict policy towards the users and decided to publish together with the comment of the user also his IP address, which uniquely identifies him/her in the global internet network. So, another type of the survey was possible, thus I include also my research concerning the honesty of the users concerning of using nicknames.

### *HYPOTHESES*

In my proposition of my MA dissertation I proposed the following expectations:

1) **Anonymity affects and shifts the topic of the communication.**
2) **Anonymous communication tends to be shallower and trivial - it tends to amuse the user rather than bring some new, serious information and knowledge.**
3) **Anonymity and lack of responsibility allows radical expressions and statements - used vocabulary would be more vulgar and expressed opinions more extremist.**
4) **On the other hand, anonymity helps to overcome social taboos.**
5) **Anonymity prevents long-lasting communication, thus it does not enable the functional virtual community to be created.**

These hypotheses were theoretically confirmed in previous chapters, and also actual research proved first four of them correct. The last one emerged to be a bit problematic, since I found some contra examples, but again, from the theoretical point of view according to the literature it got confirmed (see page 58).

## E-NEWS SERVERS AND DISCUSSIONS

Rather than analysing Usenet or Newsgroups, which are protocols and services not so widely spread in the Czech internet environment, I decided to focus on the public discussions that take place on the internet servers of some well established Czech newspapers. I studied www.novinky.cz - electronic version of Právo newspaper and www.lidovky.cz (later zpravy.centrum.cz) - electronic counterpart of Lidové noviny newspaper. Both these e-news servers are integrated into the major Czech internet centres www.seznam.cz and www.centrum.cz (similar to www.yahoo.com) and therefore they have quite high visit rates. The third e-newspaper I looked at was www.ilist.cz, electronic version of Studentský list – monthly university magazine of University of Economics, Prague.

Unlike electronic versions of The Guardian, The Times or any other British newspaper, Czech e-newspapers usually allow readers to comment on the articles. The comments appear at the end of the page and are displayed together with the article to the other readers. While Lidovenoviny.cz and iList.cz allow fully anonymous posting of comments, Novinky.cz requires a log-in procedure, so only registered users can add their comments. However, since in the registration are no real-world identity checkers, anonymity of the server users is not reduced, but it reduces average number of comments per article - 49 in comparison to 71 (See the section Joining and leaving policies – page 61).

For statistical evaluation, I took notice of the activity on those servers during one month. In the case of lidovky.cz and novinky.cz I just randomly picked and analysed 80 articles published in March 2004, in the case of iList.cz I analysed all 73 articles published in March. In total, I read and evaluated over 5.500 comments. Complete tables of results are located in the Appendix F.

During my 2005 survey, I picked two sets of 18 and 16 articles, with almost 3 500 comments and analysed them in respect of the loyalty to the nickname. Statistics are shown in the Appendix J.

### COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF DISCUSSIONS ON E-NEWS SERVERS

- Comments about the article do not represent real distribution of opinions between the readers, because less than 5 percent of the readers feel the necessity to add their comment.
- Very often authors get lost in a chain of reactions to each other's comment and drift the discussion off-topic.
- The majority of the comments are negative ones.
- There are more male than female users involved in the discussions.
- People abuse the anonymity of the internet discussion to blame and accuse - sometimes even swear-words appear.
- The majority of comments tends to be shallow, simple and trivial
- The length of discussion is much larger than the original text. Regular internet users usually do not pay as much attention to the discussion as to the article itself (it's time-consuming).

Now I will present the findings that support the above-mentioned statements:

### LOW PARTICIPATION

On all three observed servers, the ratio of users' participation in discussions was minimal. The number of comments was at best just a slight fraction of the number of visitors. In the case of iList.cz, the server had about 20.000 visitors-readers in March[6] but just 804 comments below the articles, which makes the average comment rate 4 %. In the case of lidovky.cz the comment rate is around 3% and in the case of novinky.cz, where login is necessary, the number of contributors drops down to 2%[7]. But the real involvement of the users is even lower than that, because lots of disputants make more than one comment, which even reduces the number of persons involved[8].

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[6] The source of the data is www.toplist.cz - internet meter.

[7] According to what was said to me by the administrators of the servers.

[8] For instance, on ilst.cz, there were 249 signed comments, but only just 150 unique authors, which makes cca. 1,6 comment per author.

In the questionnaire B I focused on that problem too. It turned out (question 8), that less than 2 percent of users actually contribute to the discussions (occasional contribution admitted 7 % and more than 91% denied to be writing any comments at all). The most frequent explanation of passivity was, that it takes time and brings no effect.

So, the lurkerness on those servers reaches 98 percent. However, that seems not to be a trouble, since the main aim of the server is not the discussion itself but the distribution of the information, which is produced by professional journalists. One would not blame the reader of the newspaper for being a lurker.

***NEGATIVITY***

What struck me most when I entered the discussions for the first time was, how negative the comments were. So in the analysed period, I counted how many comments had negative approach and intentions. The results clearly proved me right. 67% of the comments on lidovky.cz and almost three quarters of the comments on novinky.cz were negative. By negative I mean opposing, attacking, assaulting or harassing either the ideas written in the article or somewhere in the discussion or persons involved. I found just a few supportive comments in favour of what was said. Obvious explanation could be, that when someone agrees, usually doesn't feel so strong urge to write about it. Another reason could be the influence of anonymity, as explained in previous chapters.

Surprisingly, the ratio of negativity was not that dependant on the article's topic (see Figure 5) and reached in average almost 70% - with average variance less than 12%. In other words, people were complaining and opposing almost anything what was published, no matter what it was. For detailed information see the Appendix F, theoretical background is in the chapter 3.

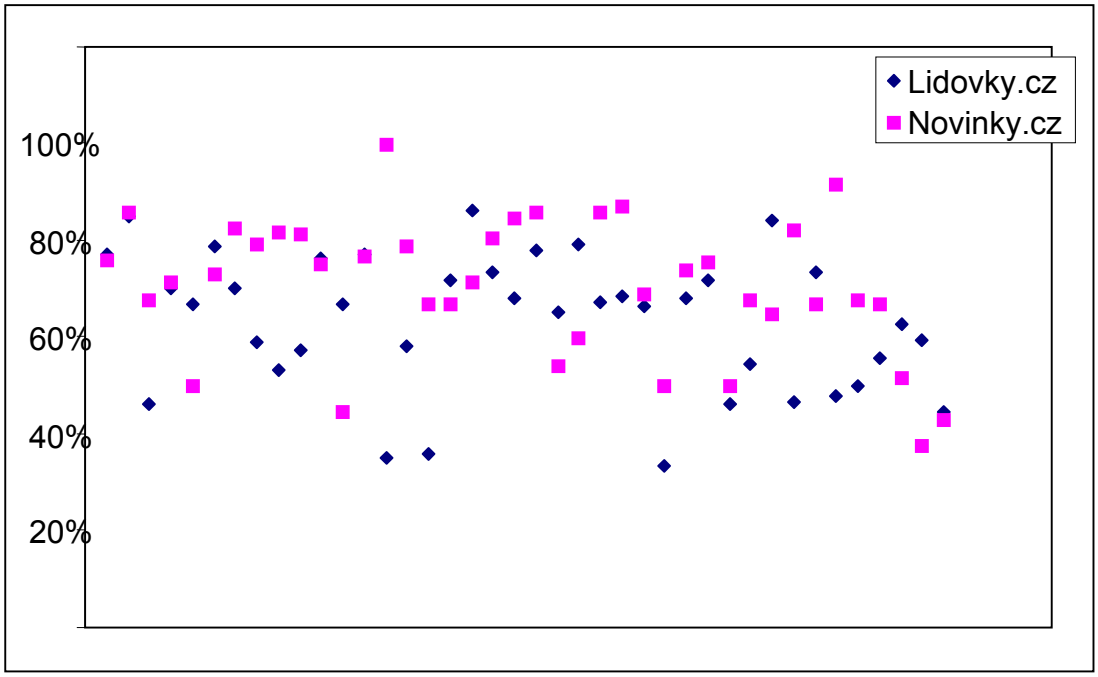


***Figure 5: Ratio of negative comments in discussions***

### *GENDER*

Another surprise comes from the finding that the majority of comments in discussions were posted by men. Just 13% of authors on Lidovky.cz, 16% on Novinky.cz, and 10% on iList.cz proclaimed themselves to be women. It is hard to explain such disparity, especially when generally on the Czech internet both genders seems to be more or less equally represented now[9].

One possible explication could be that women just do not read electronic newspapers as much as men do (although I am not able to prove that, because there are no statistics on gender distribution among lidovky.cz or novinky.cz users[10]), or it could be because women just do not like to engage in the verbal fight as much as men do.

On the other hand, it definitely doesn't mean, that women do not discuss. Specialised women' servers (zena.centrum.cz, www.stratosfera.cz/

---

[9] Though there is still slight majority of male users – 57,3% according to www.netmonitor.cz

[10] However the results from my Questionnaire A suggest that there should be the relation between the gender.

**Question 6 - Do you visit e-News servers?**

Answers **men**: Yes, regularly 28 %, Yes, sometimes, 44 %, No 28 %
Answers **women**: Yes, regularly 17 %, Yes, sometimes, 23 %, No 60 %

cosmopolitan) have comments predominantly from female users. Though I did not study these in detail, my impression is that discussions there are considerably different from the discussions on newspaper servers – less aggressive and with longer comments (for the theoretical background on this see section Gender).

#### *ANONYMITY OF INTERNET DISCUSSION AND AGGRESSIVENESS*

As I already mentioned in the part concerning negativity, people use anonymity of the internet discussions to blame and accuse. According to my survey (Questionnaire A), just 35 % of users always sign their comments. 29 % add their signature time to time and 37 % of authors stay anonymous always.

A perfect example of that is iList.cz, whose users are in the majority university members (students and teachers). When one decides to sign the comment there, he/she takes full responsibility for it, since it is very easy to find the user in the real world on the campus (see section Identity). That's the difference between iList.cz and the other two servers, where the provided e-mail or other sort of identity doesn't have any direct consequences. However, server iList.cz also allows publish anonymous comments.

I analysed in detail 804 comments (433 signed, 371 anonymous) and found a very strong correlation between anonymity and aggressive behaviour. Out of a total of 804 comments, 340 were according to me offensive, aggressive or hostile to some level, but only 81 of them were signed. 259 of them were anonymous, which is 69% of all anonymous comments, in comparison to just 18% aggressive between signed ones (see Appendix F, where the detail table is provided).

The distribution of anonymous comments is also very significant. Out of a total of 73 articles on iList.cz only 21 had an anonymous comment attached to them. And the majority of anonymous remarks were concentrated to just 4 articles (186, 48, 32, and 29 anonymous comments), where the discussion was the fiercest (see page 29). The areas where anonymity played the key role were generally just three:

- Articles related to the one specific faculty and department, where some drastic personal changes have been undertaken recently and both opponents and supporters used the public internet forum to defame their rivals.
- Comments in which students blamed and criticized professors, courses, department or faculties.
- Comments in discussions concerning the rapidly growing number of Slovak students at Czech universities (sometimes even called the "Slovakian problem"). In these discussions, anonymity could not disguise the origin of the author (since Czech and Slovak languages are different) so there was a number of anonymous ad-hominem attacks on anonymous Slovak writers, who responded in like kind.

I registered same xenophobic and racist problem on www.lidovky.cz and www.novinky.cz, when an article concerning gypsy minority appeared. Then the negativity and aggressiveness of some comments reached its peak. Some of the comments were even clearly illegal (comparing gypsies to rats, dogs, suggesting they be sent to the gas chambers). The discussion had some parameters of the lynch mob (see Le Bon, 1895), and obviously anonymity was the key circumstance that allowed it.

Such behaviour completely confirms Keiesler's (1984) findings, that behaviour of individuals de-individuated while online, according to de-individuation theory, is characterized by increased hostility and reduced self-regulation.

Názor na cikánské rabování
Autor: Člověk (cernota@cikanidoplynu.com) Datum: 22. 02. 17:45
Všechny bych je pochytal a dal jim pod kůži čip stejně jako psům. Vyraboval bych jim baráky a všechen jejich majetek prodal, čímž by se uhradila škoda vzniklá rabováním(takto by totiž dopadl běžný člověk). Sebral bych jim děti a převychoval je v dětských domovech speciálně na to zaměřených. A cikánům bych globálně zakázal příjem sociálních dávek.. A nebo vsechny tyhle složitosti přeskočit a všechny je poslat do plynu!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Genetiku Cikanu nelze zmenit vychovou.
Autor: kastelan Datum: 22. 02. 18:08
Vsechny socialni pokusy zmenit podstatu cloveka ztroskotaly.
Cikanske deti nelze vychovat jako bile deti.
Komunisti se snazili a marne. Jenom zmnohonasobili pocet Cikanu. To je to same jako se snazit prevychovat krysy na domaci pejsky. Prikrmovanim se jenom rozmnozi, ale nezmeni…

Moralku maj jinou
Autor: Bilej Jezdec Datum: 22. 02. 18:07
Moralku maj jinou, vychovani taky, jak mi nikdy nebudou, never na zazraky, a za krivy slovo to te klidne pobodaj, tak proc s nima kurva neco neudelaj

***Examples of racist comments on www.lidovky.cz***

### *ANONYMITY AND BAD LANGUAGE*

On all three servers I found examples of bad language. Frequency of the bad word was definitely higher than what we experience in normal life and so it fully confirms Festinger's (1952) findings (see page 18). Sometimes the swear-words were intentionally misspelled or an asterisk was used instead of some letters to reduce the effect, but usually the indecent words were used in their correct form and fully spelled. On the iList.cz server I discovered a correlation between anonymity and the usage of bad language, since the only users who used invectives there, were the anonymous ones. However the iList.cz editor's office oversees the texts of comments quite carefully and the worst ones were promptly deleted to keep good reputation.

### *IMPERSONATION AS A GROUP GAME*

There is one very interesting phenomenon going on right now on www.lidovky.cz. In October 2003 one user started to make silly comments to each and every published article. No matter the topic, she added the comment which read: **I am the first one here!!! I am number one - 11111111** signed by the nickname Daniela. At first, the reactions were furious. People shouted at Daniela to stop, they cursed at her, they wanted editors to remove her posts, but the only thing they achieved was that Daniela doubled the effort. Almost every article in November starts with the very same Daniela's comment. By the end of the month, auditorium split. Some started to support Daniela, some even started to compete with her and other nicknames appeared on the first places claiming their victory, but the rest of the readers' community still hated her.

I presumed that this wouldn't last long, but I was wrong. 8 months later Daniela is still there, but now apparently also different users started to use the signature. So far, there are more than 1.200 comments signed as Daniela in

the archive of lidovky.cz. On my query the administrator of lidovky.cz confirmed, that Daniela connected to the server from more than 120 different IP addresses, which clearly excludes the possibility it's still just one person. Daniela became something like a ghost or mascot of the server.

This point to two things:

Firstly – identity on the news servers is a very fragile thing. It is easy to become someone else and there are no real sanctions for doing so (for theoretical background see page 37).

Secondly – it proves that at least for some people, anonymous communication on the web is a source of fun. They don't take it too seriously, they just want to amuse themselves. Such finding supports the hypothesis that anonymous communication tends to amuse the user rather than bring some new, serious information and knowledge.

But the case of Daniela also weakens my expectation, that the anonymous environment prevents the possibility of the creation of the community. It indicates, that even in the completely anonymous environment some sort of cooperation and common spirit and shared knowledge is possible. However discussion on e-News server is not exactly the prototype of virtual community and therefore I do not refuse the hypothesis, because it was in other aspects confirmed.

I am glad to confirm, that even in September 2005 (some 2 years from the start!!) the myth of Daniela still survives on the server. As shown in following examples of conversation:

**Example 1**

**1!**
Autor: **Daniela** IP: **82.96.100.100** Datum: 17. 09. 14:40
hihihi!
---
Re: 1!+1=2
Autor: Samuel IP: 84.112.100.78 Datum: 17. 09. 16:50
Hahahaha
---
Pozde!
Autor: **Daniela** IP: **85.195.119.22** Datum: 17. 09. 19:22
Ale kdepak!
---

Re: 1!
Autor: otaznik (otaznik1@volny.cz) IP: 62.245.125.84 Datum: 19. 09. 03:33
Hurrá Daniela je ti zas :-) !
---
Re: 1!
Autor: otaznik (otaznik1@volny.cz) IP: 62.245.125.84 Datum: 19. 09. 03:33
... je TU zas..., ach jo.

**Example 2**

1.!!!!!!!!!!!
Autor: **daniela** IP**: 82.202.14.223** Datum: 19. 09. 22:30
---
prvni!!!
Autor: kristusek IP: 194.213.41.2 Datum: 19. 07. 09:12
PrvnŸ?:o)
---
Ahoj
Autor: Franta IP: 80.188.92.137 Datum: 19. 07. 09:19
Druhy ... :o)
---
:-)
Autor: fuj IP: 213.168.177.20 Datum: 19. 07. 09:21
t°etŸ:-))
---
Re: :-)
Autor: Mimozemstan IP: 193.165.228.254 Datum: 19. 07. 15:54
Jsem prave:
5465465465465456456456416817687189716176176176545454654564645643213218778799873539761937749857745988776989779580789 9-7909=70-98=70-9794687397762-hy.

Source: http://zpravy.centrum.cz/domov/clanek.phtml?id=398614

***Examples of Daniela phenomenon surviving in September 2005***

three different users impersonated Daniela, but all of them playing strictly according to the "rules of the game". Other users (nickname Question mark, Franta) clearly appreciate that.

### *SHALLOWNESS AND TRIVIALITY*

When we have a closer look at the content of the discussion comments, we realise, that they seldom carry useful information. Their length varies from just one word to several paragraphs, but on average, they are just 3-5 sentences long. That leaves enough room to express an opinion rather then persuade or bring some new facts[11]. Apart from that, since the identity of the author is always questionable, so is also the validity of presented information. The

[11] When someone want to bring to the readers' attention some larger text or picture, usually just provides the link to the relevant WWW page.

majority of authors thus restrict themselves to the short simple statement, which would get at least some attention.

But even when comments are relatively short, large quantity of them mean that the total length of discussion usually overlaps the size of the original text. This is why the majority of regular internet users don't bother to read whole discussion. As my questionnaire confirms in question 7, ordinary users read just the first few comments (21%) or they don't read discussion at all (73%). Just the authors engaged in discussion tend to read it all.

## CHATS

There are a number of ways how the internet user can engage in online conversation with other internet users. There are direct instant messaging systems such as ICQ, MSN or AOL messenger, or Jabber, which enable one computer user to talk to the other directly from the application on his PC.

But such protocols and programs are unfortunately almost impossible to observe as a third-party, therefore I focused on the chat systems embedded in regular HTML protocol, where no special program is necessary. These systems are run by regular Web servers and users talk to each other in normal internet browser window. The activity on such chat server is therefore well observable. During two weeks in April I recorded how many users were online and which room and section they were in (see Appendix G for details).

I studied the three largest Czech chat servers: pokec.atlas.cz, www.lide.cz, www.xko.cz and particularly focused on pokec.atlas.cz, because it allows fully anonymous status as a guest, with no login procedure necessary.

On chat servers, people gather together in so called chat-rooms with specific topics. The basic structure of all those chats is almost the same - the rooms are usually divided into the following sections: Cities and Places, Hobbies and sports, Love and sex, Dating and romance, Chat and gossip, …

## *HOW ANONYMITY OF INTERNET ENVIRONMENT INFLUENCE THE TOPIC OF DISCUSSION*

The first thing I analysed was the occupancy rate of those sections. The most interesting finding is, that the results seem to be relatively stable, no matter which server I looked at!

| Section: | pokec.atlas.cz | www.lide.cz | www.xko.cz | **Total** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Cities and Places** | 14 % | 11 % | 12 % | **11,4 %** |
| **Hobbies and sports** | 2 % | 4 % | 7 % | **4,1 %** |
| **Love and sex** | 30 % | 34 % | 30 % | **32,5 %** |
| **Dating and romance** | 40 % | 26 % | 27 % | **27,6 %** |
| **Chat and gossip** | 15 % | 20 % | 19 % | **19,4 %** |
| *Avg.# of users* | *335* | *1880* | *655* | |

***Table 1: Average attendance in different section on different chat servers***

Table 1 demonstrates, that **over 60% of chat users come to chat servers to talk about Love, Sex or Dating and romance**!! It clearly proves that anonymity of the internet helps to overcome social taboo. I cannot imagine a situation in real world, where the majority of people openly discuss such matters. This finding supports my fist hypothesis, that anonymity of the internet environment affects the topic of the communication.

When we have a closer look on distribution of values, we find out that the allocation of the users in the sections is very stable over the time, no matter, when I measured it and how many users were online[12].

[12] I made sure, that over the two week period I accessed chat servers at different times in different days (e.g. morning, afternoon, night, workdays, weekends)

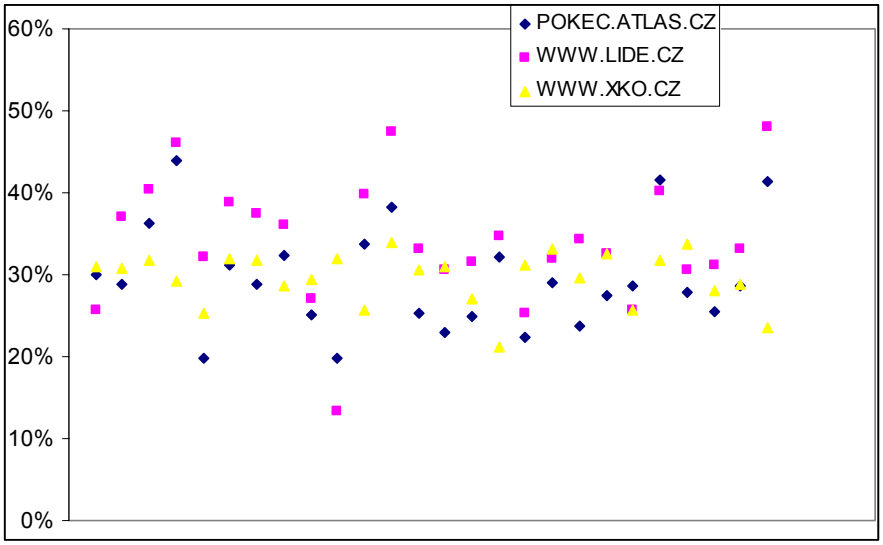


***Figure 6: Percentage of users in section Love and Sex***

| Love And Sex | pokec.atlas.cz | www.lide.cz | www.xko.cz |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 29,92% | 25,63% | 30,90% |
| | 28,86% | 37,04% | 30,72% |
| | 36,36% | 40,30% | 31,69% |
| | 43,97% | 46,09% | 29,14% |
| | 19,84% | 32,06% | 25,36% |
| | 31,23% | 38,74% | 31,98% |
| | 28,81% | 37,40% | 31,75% |
| | 32,31% | 36,10% | 28,55% |
| | 25,17% | 27,08% | 29,48% |
| | 19,76% | 13,35% | 32,06% |
| | 33,82% | 39,85% | 25,70% |
| | 38,32% | 47,41% | 33,96% |
| | 25,37% | 33,08% | 30,59% |
| | 23,02% | 30,68% | 30,92% |
| | 24,90% | 31,64% | 27,14% |
| | 32,16% | 34,80% | 21,22% |
| | 22,26% | 25,34% | 31,21% |
| | 29,11% | 31,93% | 33,20% |
| | 23,79% | 34,32% | 29,60% |
| | 27,49% | 32,62% | 32,59% |
| | 28,57% | 25,69% | 25,68% |
| | 41,61% | 40,14% | 31,86% |
| | 27,88% | 30,55% | 33,63% |
| | 25,46% | 31,27% | 28,11% |
| | 28,54% | 33,18% | 28,83% |
| | 41,38% | 48,12% | 23,55% |
| *Variance* | *5,00%* | *5,55%* | *2,52%* |
| *Median* | *28,69%* | *33,13%* | *30,66%* |
| **Average** | **29,61%** | **34,02%** | **29,59%** |

***Table 2: Percentage of users in section Love and Sex***

| Dating And Romance | pokec.atlas.cz | www.lide.cz | www.xko.cz |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 38,11% | 23,47% | 28,77% |
| | 42,53% | 23,89% | 28,41% |
| | 35,19% | 23,33% | 27,87% |
| | 30,50% | 22,63% | 24,77% |
| | 44,75% | 30,08% | 25,36% |
| | 60,70% | 30,91% | 24,53% |
| | 31,32% | 25,16% | 25,04% |
| | 30,38% | 25,16% | 25,25% |
| | 39,93% | 23,13% | 25,50% |
| | 50,60% | 24,21% | 30,04% |
| | 40,59% | 23,35% | 23,94% |
| | 27,10% | 23,55% | 31,24% |
| | 41,13% | 27,28% | 28,12% |
| | 39,53% | 30,63% | 25,21% |
| | 45,68% | 27,87% | 23,12% |
| | 47,14% | 24,79% | 24,18% |
| | 50,16% | 23,58% | 28,57% |
| | 40,70% | 24,57% | 26,14% |
| | 38,87% | 27,44% | 35,87% |
| | 39,64% | 25,21% | 25,28% |
| | 40,95% | 22,39% | 25,93% |
| | 30,97% | 26,01% | 28,57% |
| | 43,55% | 28,10% | 28,25% |
| | 42,97% | 28,55% | 25,14% |
| | 32,14% | 26,09% | 30,99% |
| | 23,28% | 24,92% | 28,26% |
| Variance | 5,98% | 2,05% | 2,30% |
| Median | 40,26% | 25,04% | 26,03% |
| **Average** | **39,55%** | **25,63%** | **27,09%** |

***Table 3: Percentage of users in section Dating and Romance***

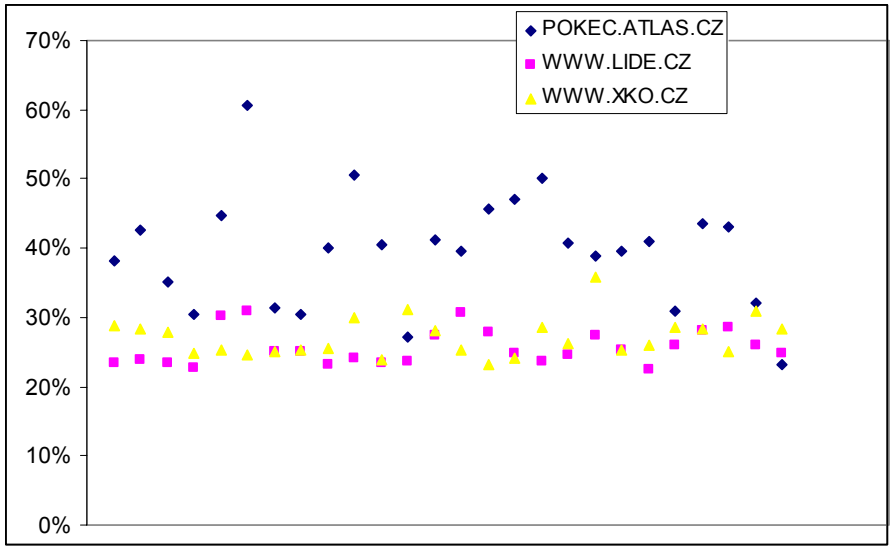


***Figure 7: Percentage of users in section Dating and Romance***

## *CONFIRMING THE RESULTS – 2005 SURVEY*

In September 2005 I decided to undertake the same research again. I am glad to say, that even after more than a year, the statistics show the same trend and confirm the findings and conclusions reached in May 2004.

| Section: | pokec.atlas.cz | www.lide.cz | www.xko.cz | **Total** | **2004** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Cities and Places** | **13%** (14% in 2004) | **15%** (11 % in 2004) | **17%** (12 % in 2004) | **15%** | **11,4 %** |
| **Hobbies and sports** | **1%** (2% in 2004) | **11%** (4 % in 2004) | **N/A** (7 % in 2004) | **6%** | **4,1 %** |
| **Love and sex** | **34%** (30% in 2004) | **25%** (34 % in 2004) | **49%** (30 % in 2004) | **36%** | **32,5 %** |
| **Dating and romance** | **39%** (40% in 2004) | **18%** (26 % in 2004) | **4%** (27 % in 2004) | **21%** | **27,6 %** |
| **Chat and gossip** | **12 %** (15% in 2004) | **22%** (20 % in 2004) | **8 %** (19 % in 2004) | **14%** | **19,4 %** |
| *Avg. # of users* | **332** (*335* in 2004) | **3 260** (*1 880* in 2004) | **868** (*655* in 2004) | | |

***Table 1b: Average attendance in different section on different chat servers in 2005***

Results prove, that vast majority of the users **come to the chat servers talk about Love, Sex or Dating and romance** – similar results as in 2004. The shift in the numbers of the server www.xko.cz can be explained by the fact,

that the server become famous as a traditional meeting point for the homosexual community (nearly 40 % of all system users are logged into the one single Gay chat room “Kluci na kluky”). Some of the former users thus moved away. We can take that for the evidence that internet anonymity helps to overcome social taboo and is very useful for unpopular minorities.

Other fact supporting the connection between anonymity and the likelihood of overcoming social taboo is that the section Love and sex on pokec.atlas.cz has almost double the amount of users, who prefer fully anonymous status[13].

| Cities and places | Hobbies and sports | Love and sex | Dating and romance | Chat and gossip |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 32,13 % | 29,93 % | **56,28 %** | 26,64 % | 28,06 % |

***Table 4: Percentage of completely anonymous users (Guests) in different sections.***

The hypothesis, that anonymous internet environment helps to overcome existing social taboos confirms also the fact, that anonymous chats are very popular places among gay and lesbian community. Number of users in openly gay or lesbian rooms exceeds the quota of them in the real world population, again no matter which server you look at.

### *GENDER*

Another interesting discovery was, that significantly less women entered the section “Love and sex”. Or, in other words, this section was much more attractive for males (see the section Gender in chapter Virtual Communities).

| Cities and places | Hobbies and sports | Love and sex | Dating and romance | Chat and gossip |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 44,78 % | 44,86 % | 36,43 % | 45,75 % | 46,47 % |

***Table 5: Percentage of female nicknames in different sections:***

[13] Server pokec.atlas.cz gives the possibility to enter anonymously as a Guest. Then the only piece of information user provides is his/her gender. Later on the user is recognized by the generic nickname Host(guest)_XXXXX, where XXXXX is automatically assigned number. The generic nickname lasts only during the session, expires after log-out (see page 11).

This may be related to the increased level of attention (one could say harassment) female nicknames are exposed to (see page 39). While average time to be addressed (contacted by another user) in the case of male nicknames is more than 20 minutes, in case of female nicknames it's about two minutes only. However in other sections, the attention drawn to the female nicknames wasn't so high. Here are the results of the series of tests I undertook[14]:

| **Section Love and Sex** | | **Section Dating & Romance** | | **Section Cities and Places** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Female Nickname** | **Male Nickname** | **Female Nickname** | **Male Nickname** | **Female Nickname** | **Male Nickname** |
| 17 | 2 | 8 | 1 | 6 | 3 |
| 19 | 2 | 9 | 2 | 6 | 3 |
| 10 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 4 | 2 |
| 7 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 1 |
| 12 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 1 |
| 4 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| 21 | 4 | 14 | 2 | 8 | 5 |
| 13 | 1 | 6 | 1 | 5 | 0 |
| 16 | 0 | 9 | 3 | 6 | 1 |
| 9 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 22 | 2 | 11 | 4 | 7 | 4 |
| 13 | 0 | 8 | 2 | 5 | 1 |
| 6 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 1 |
| 27 | 3 | 16 | 3 | 7 | 4 |
| **2,14 min.** | **22,10 min.** | **4,11 min.** | **18,26 min.** | **6 min.** | **14 min.** |

***Table 6: Number of attempts to start conversation during 30 minutes test period***

Bigger interest in female element confirms also great number of chat-rooms, where male users wait for women to enter. Table 7 demonstrates that lone woman is almost non-existent event.

| **Cities and places** | | **Hobbies and sports** | | **Love and sex** | | **Dating and romance** | | **Chat and gossip** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |

[14] For this test I logged simultaneously under male and female nickname. Then I created chat-room and counted how many users entered and tried to start conversation in period of 30 min.

| alone | alone | alone | alone | alone | alone | alone | alone | alone | alone |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4,69 | 1,31 | 0,88 | 0,5 | **18,42** | 0,96 | 3,73 | 0,42 | 4,69 | 1,31 |

***Table 7: Average number of lone users waiting in the chat-room.***

### *LOYALTY TO THE NICKNAME*

In the beginning of 2005 the servers www.lidovky.cz decided to publish together with the user's comment also his IP address, which uniquely identifies him/her in the global internet network. This enabled me to perform another type of the survey aimed at the honesty of the nickname usage.

During my survey in September 2005, I picked and analysed two sets of articles, with more than 3 300 comments:

**Set number 1**

Articles: 18 (see list in appendix J)

Total number of comments: 2 020

Total number of unique IP addresses: 1 020

Total number of unique nick name: 1 007

**Set number 2**

Articles: 16 (see list in appendix J)

Total number of comments: 1 315

Total number of unique IP addresses: 551

Total number of unique nick name: 571

As shown in the histograms bellow, there is extremely strong correlation between the nickname frequency and frequency of using unique IP address. That can be explained by the assumption that users – in general – **tend to use on same computer same nickname**. I must admit that there is a number of exemptions to this rule, but, in general, the statistics seem to indicate that users prefer to keep one nickname.

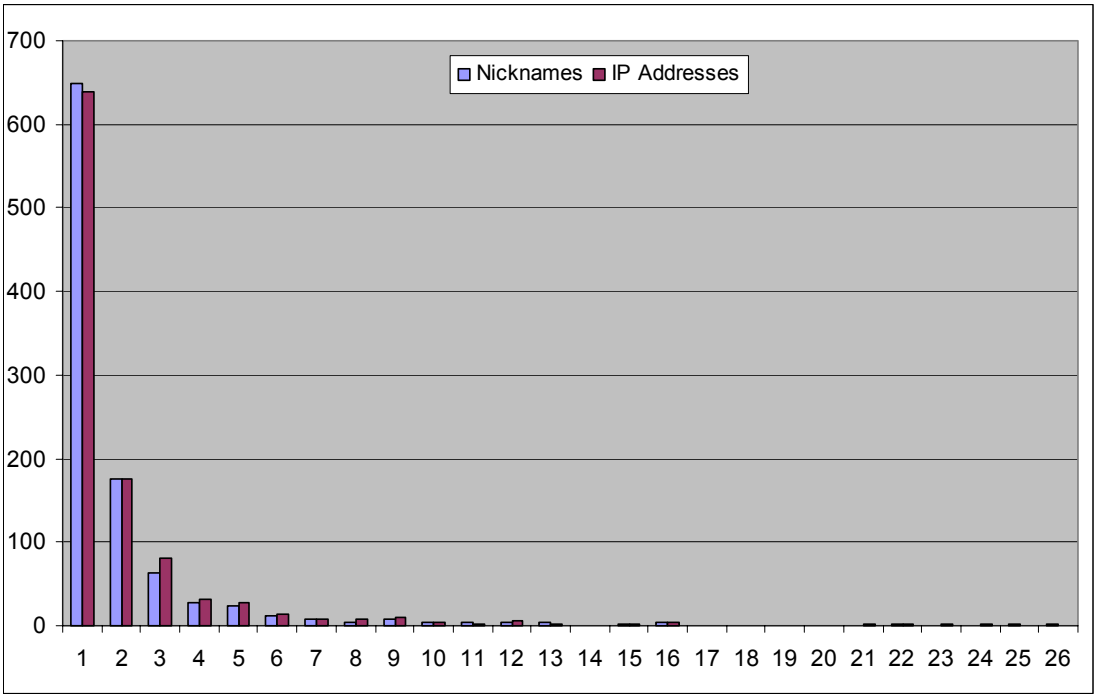


***Figure 8: Histogram of the frequency using Nicknames and unique IP addresses – set 1***

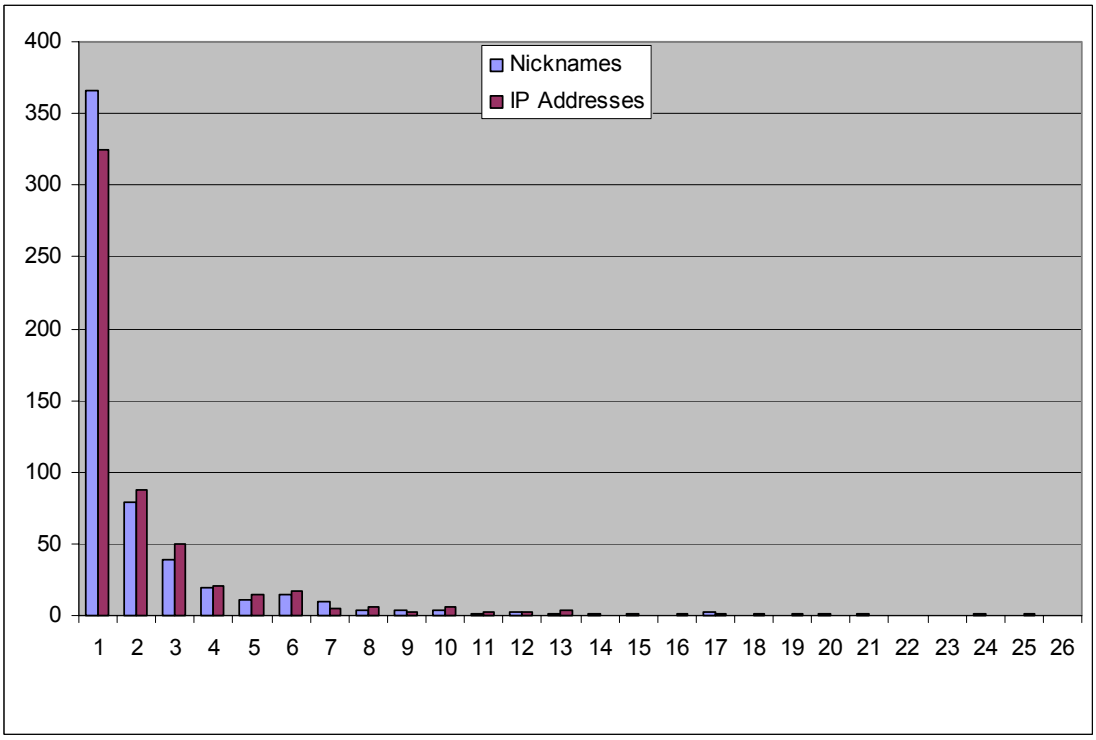


***Figure 9: Histogram of the frequency using Nicknames and unique IP addresses – set 2***

| Used Nickname | Logged from |
|---|---|
| albert | 129.175.101.251 |
| albert | 129.175.101.251 |
| albert | 129.175.101.251 |
| albert | 129.175.101.251 |
| albert | 129.175.101.251 |
| albert | 129.175.101.251 |
| albert | 129.175.101.251 |
| albert | 129.175.101.251 |
| albert | 129.175.101.251 |
| albert | 129.175.101.251 |
| Nitka | 130.161.182.83 |
| slezan | 130.225.216.23 |
| Petr | 130.234.201.9 |
| Petr | 130.234.201.9 |
| Petr | 130.234.201.9 |
| Petr | 130.234.201.9 |
| Petr | 130.234.201.9 |
| cadae | 131.188.24.2 |
| cadae | 131.188.24.2 |
| Shob | 131.220.43.73 |
| Shob | ***131.220.43.73*** |
| Shob | ***131.220.43.76*** |
| Shob | *131.220.43.76* |
| Shob | *131.220.43.76* |
| Shob | *131.220.43.76* |
| Shob | *131.220.43.76* |
| Shob | *131.220.46.76* |
| Young | 132.199.53.175 |
| jie | 134.105.167.136 |
| halabala | 134.226.64.189 |
| halabala | 134.226.64.189 |
| www | 137.108.145.12 |
| www | 137.108.145.12 |
| Hmmm | 140.122.97.64 |
| Tristan | 141.149.142.253 |
| ikil | 146.102.174.11 |
| maeq | 146.102.84.8 |
| Lada | 147.213.138.19 |
| econz | 147.229.148.34 |
| andrej | 147.229.9.14 |
| ***ja*** | ***147.230.128.150*** |
| ***Žeryk*** | ***147.230.128.150*** |
| nnn | 147.230.128.206 |
| nnn | 147.230.128.206 |
| ***Rez*** | ***147.231.44.148*** |
| ***torres*** | ***147.231.44.148*** |
| ***torres*** | 147.231.44.148 |
| ***torres*** | 147.231.44.148 |
| mladý | 147.231.68.2 |
| mladý | 147.231.68.2 |
| šimon | 147.231.68.53 |
| kdysi | 147.231.88.1 |
| Kobla | 147.251.10.42 |
| defrfrf | 147.251.12.31 |
| Pavel | 147.251.36.193 |
| Jan | 147.251.36.193 |
| Pavel | 147.251.36.193 |
| JM | 147.251.40.136 |
| Flasi | 147.32.118.89 |
| Flasi | 147.32.118.89 |
| Flasi | 147.32.118.89 |
| jura | 147.32.122.26 |
| tytyty | 147.32.127.215 |
| renejk | 147.32.127.215 |
| ***rara*** | 147.32.127.215 |
| ***jaja*** | 147.32.127.215 |
| jaja | 147.32.127.215 |

***Table 8: Example of the list of used Nicknames and the IPs they logged from***[15]

[15] Mention that some users use different computers (IP) while others sometimes change Nickname, but generally IP and Nickname tend to match

### *QUESTIONNAIRE – SUMMARY OF RESULTS*

According to the results (for detailed information see Appendix H) of my questionnaire answered by 167 chat users it seems that chat systems are predominantly used by younger users with quite short internet experience (43 % of them less than year) and whose use of the internet is limited to just WWW and email (90%), which perfectly fits into what was said in chapters 2 and 3. Most of them come to the chat server on a regular basis (at least once a week and more often 53%) while using some kind of broadband connection (office, university, home). Almost 70% of them spend more than 2 hours per session. The main reasons why they go to the chat server are:

- Just for fun 32,48%
- Nothing else to do 31,37%
- See and talk to my friends there 25,12%
- Talk with strangers 19,60%

and for 15,47 % of them it's the cheapest medium of communication with real-world friends.

Respondents usually stick to one particular server (73%) where they have their favourite chat room (85%).

Concerning anonymity and identity – 35% of users prefer fully anonymous status, while the rest have either one (29%) or more (37%) user names/nicknames (thus pseudonymity). The most common reasons given for the anonymous login were: its simplicity and ease (no login procedures, no password to remember, just one click on the button), privacy (others will not know that I am online, when I don't use my nickname) and security.

The majority of debaters (63%) do not mind the fact, that they don't know the identity of the other user, if he/she prefers to stay anonymous.

Actually, only 16% of users are quite open and easily reveal real-world their real-world identity (name, address, phone number, …), 57% just something

but not all of it, while 21% would never give any of their personal information online.

It seems that the longer the user accesses the internet and the more experienced he becomes, the less he considers the internet an anonymous medium. However the opinion on whether anonymity on the internet is an advantage or a disadvantage (advantage 23%, disadvantage 17%, both at the same time 60%) does not change with gained experience.

Just 18% of users managed to establish long-lasting friendships over the chat (80% of them were women!), whereas over 52% claim it is impossible (again confirming what I wrote in the previous chapter).

22% of users actually got together in the real-world with someone they met online, but over 70% of such encounters ended up as disaster, because in reality they did not match together as well as online. It ratifies the theory, that discussion participants develop mental models of each other, as well as of the information content of their discussion, but on textual based chats have to work extra hard to compensate the low-bandwidth environment with reduced signal capacity. They have to use a lot of imagination, and thus not surprisingly, later during face-to-face meeting in the real world, disillusion and frustration occur widely. I would conclude that the chat environment often leads to “false compatibility”.

Thus not surprisingly I found a correlation, which suggests, that more experience the user becomes, the less likely he will be to use the chat server.

# CONCLUSION

Social scientists have studied anonymity for quite a long time. In 19. century Le Bon concluded that the anonymous members of a crowd show reduced inhibition of anti-social, reckless and impulsive behaviour and are subject to increased irritability and suggestibility. The theory of deindividuation later acknowledged that anonymity lowers the point at which individuals are likely to indulge in anti-social behaviour. Anonymity can be for example used to protect many criminal activities (slander, fraud, racial agitation, illegal threats,…) facilitating wrongdoing by elimination of accountability. Anonymity is thus condemned as an invitation to anarchy, providing cover for all kinds of criminals - from tax-evaders to terrorists.

That should mislead us to the conclusion that anonymity is inherently associated only with an antisocial behaviour, which I believe is not true. There are cases, when we can witness anonymity increasing pro-social behaviour. Anonymous context liberates people from their counter-productive inhibitions or limitations. Positive effects of anonymity can be found in anonymous discussions dealing with substance abuse, abusive relationships and other personal and interpersonal problems. It was proved that anonymous people are becoming more open and are able to talk about topics considered to be social taboo (e.g. homosexuality, health problems, …).

Anonymity also promotes honesty and gives the chance for unbiased evaluation. It allows people to develop reputations based on the quality of their ideas, rather then their job, wealth, age and status. There are circumstances where anonymity is a useful tool in the deference of liberty and justice. Anonymity (understood as an expression of the right of privacy) is sometimes seen as a basic human right, the shield from the tyranny of the majority or state dictatorship. The reduced likelihood of retaliation also encourages whistleblowers to draw attention to a serious problem.

Anonymity per se is not positive or negative. The biggest problem (and the benefit at the same time) of anonymity is, that it prevents society from bringing sanctions. So there is no responsibility for the actor who therefore achieves absolute freedom in his actions. The only judge could be his conscience.

Anonymity is analogous to limited liability in a legal sense. When one is aware of it and behaves accordingly with the caution, it could serve well. Hence anonymity cannot be banned without the loss of important benefits to individuals and society at large. Abuses are just the price society has to pay to preserve anonymity's benefits.

### *ANONYMITY, PSEUDONYMITY, IDENTITY & THE INTERNET*

Anonymity means that the identity is not known. A common variant of anonymity is pseudonymity, where at least some type of identity is shown (but not the real one). Pseudonymity enables us to attribute different actions to the same author and sometimes even contact pseudonym (without knowing the real person behind it) and get replies back. A special category is deception, where a person intentionally tries to give the impression of being someone else.

Total anonymity on the internet is an illusion. Most of the traffic and user activities are in the case of necessity (e.g. law enforcement) traceable. However, the ordinary internet user does not have the necessary resources to undertake such an extended search, so on the level of the common use, the anonymity really exists. Actually, it is the most common status, since for the ordinary internet user it is more difficult to prove his real-word identity than just remaining anonymous.

Identity is determined by characteristics, features or circumstances by which a person is definitely recognisable or known. Sociologically it is the set of behavioural and personal characteristics by which an individual is recognizable as a member of a group.

Identity is the exact opposite status of anonymity. Identity is the basic building block of social interaction. We generally tend to assume, that the communication parties are who they claim to be. In real-world interactions there is a wealth of cues to indicate our identity and intentions. Our bodies, voices, clothes and gestures signal messages about status, power and group membership. We rely on our ability to recognize fellow group members in order to know who we can turn to and what we can expect. Our ability to identify others also allows us to hold individuals accountable for their actions.

Online interaction strips away many of the clues and signs that are part of face-to-face interaction. Identity cues are sparse in the disembodied virtual world, but not non-existent. Traditional platforms for online interaction are defined by language and text, so experienced users become attuned to the nuances of web & email addresses, signatures, styles, language etc. and so they are able to discover identity cues even in the nonmaterial online world. The major factor is probably the language (including non-textual/non-verbal aspects). Proper or poor grammar, nuances in used vocabulary, misspelling or misprints can indicate good or poor education. The language can also reveal age, region, sometimes even ethnicity of the user and much more...

However identity cues provided by users are not always reliable, so we witness many varieties of identity deception and manipulations. Among others: trolling, category deceptions, impersonation or even identity fraud. Nevertheless biologists, psychologist, economists, game theorists and sociologists have established some models to imitate the interplay between honesty and deception in a communication system and explain, why (against above mentioned odds) the majority of users tend to claim their identity correctly.

### *VIRTUAL COMMUNITIES*

The virtual community has become a blanket term to describe any collection of people, who communicate online. But the crucial question is: are online communities really communities? Or are they just pseudo-communities, in which people swap pleasantries, exchange information, make uncommitted gestures of support and develop ephemeral friendships? Sociologists make clear distinctions between groups, networks, and communities. Broadly speaking, a group has clear boundaries that determine membership. In contrast, networks involve relationships that can cross these boundaries. The term community denotes the strength of relationships; therefore it could also include virtual communities.

The common denominators of all definitions of virtual community are: shared purpose or goal and willingness of the members to participate. That's a cornerstone of community on which rests all the rest. I found that there is the

dispute, whether anonymous users can create a community or not. Some say that at least a pseudonymity with merit-based reputations is needed, because purely anonymous individuals are capable of communicating with each other just at present, but there is no accretion of personal histories in their interactions. However the motivation for many of the qualities we associate with community, from cooperative behaviour to creative endeavour, depends on the existence of distinct and persistent personae. On the other hand I found examples of fully anonymous discussions that had some characters of community.

### *EFFECTS OF ANONYMITY ON VIRTUAL COMMUNITIES*

It has been proven, that anonymity often encourages people to disclose more about themselves; they even become hyperpersonal (with strong reciprocity) and reveal a lot more, that they would in real world. More on, anonymity seems to encourage people to more readily reach out to help.

The dark side of anonymity in the virtual community is that people often idealise themselves and represent themselves more favourably. They can get away with disingenuousness or dishonesty as long as the communication remains virtual. Another drawback of anonymity is that people can be just as aggressive and unpleasant online as in face-to-face situations. In fact, not having to face people, and knowing that you may never encounter them again online seems to encourage participants to vent negative feelings, often for no apparent reason.

### *HYPOTHESES*

In general, my work confirmed all proposed hypotheses. As I supposed, anonymity does affect and shift the topic of the communication. I found enough cases described in literature, and also my research of chat servers proved so.

There are also no doubts that anonymous communication tends to be shallower and trivial. According to my research, the most common reasons why people went to chat server were: just for fun, nothing else to do, to talk with my friends, or talk with strangers. It justifies the statement that

communication in the anonymous internet environment tends to amuse the user rather than bring some new, serious information and knowledge.

Also the fact, that anonymity and lack of responsibility allows radical expressions and statements, including bad language, was documented above all uncertainties.

Presumption that anonymity helps to overcome social taboos was proved to be right as well.

# ABSTRACT

The growth of the internet has brought up the issue of anonymity in virtual electronic communications. This work tries to map the situation, cover the theoretical background of anonymity (Deindividuation, Social theory of deindividuation), identity (difference in conception of identity in real world and online) and virtual communities. It attempts to answer the question how does anonymity of the internet environment influence the communication process. The main outcome of the paper is the validation of the following statements:

Anonymity affects and shifts the topic of the communication.

Anonymous communication tends to be shallower and more trivial. It tends to amuse the user rather than bring some new, serious information and knowledge.

Anonymity attracts radical expressions and proclamations.

Anonymity helps to overcome social taboos.

Anonymity prevents long-lasting communication.

These hypotheses were confirmed also by actual research on major internet chat and news servers in the Czech Republic.

# SUMMARY IN CZECH

## *POJEM ANONYMITA*

Anonymita je předmětem zájmu sociálních věd již od dob jejich vzniku. Jako první se důsledky anonymity zabýval již v 19. století Gustave Le Bon v práci Psychologie davu (1895). Dospívá k názoru, že lidé díky anonymitě způsobené davem ztrácejí pocit zodpovědnosti a dělají věci, jež by jako jedinci sami nikdy neudělali. Le Bon spojuje anonymitu davu s asociálním, bezohledným a vznětlivým chováním, kdy jedinec snadno podléhá sugesci davu.

Na práci Le Bona navázal o půl století později Pepitone Festinger (1952) s teorií de-individuace. Tato teorie vychází z Jungova výrazu ‚individuace' ve smyslu onoho procesu, který vytváří psychologické „individuum", tj. odlišenou, nedělitelnou jednotu, *celost.*

Teorie de-individuace předpokládá, že člověk může o svou vytvořenou identitu přijít, např. působením davu (ale později byly připuštěny také jiné faktory jako odstranění zodpovědnosti, rozdráždění, změněné vnímání vlivem návykových látek, …). Tím se snižují zábrany a boří normativní pravidla chování. Pomocí de-individuace se vysvětlují takové fenomény jako genocida, davové násilnosti a chuligánství, lynč ale také stereotypizace, či neosobnost počítačově zprostředkované komunikace (CMC – computer mediated communication). Také tato teorie, přisuzuje anonymitě výrazně negativní konotaci. Anonymita, umožňující únik od zodpovědnosti, odstraňuje sociální sebekontrolu jedince a může způsobit impulsivní, iracionální, agresivní nebo dokonce násilné chování.

V poslední době ale dochází k rekonceptualizaci (Reicher, 1987) této teorie v tom smyslu, že je uvažována tzv. sociální identita, kterých ovšem může každý člověk mít více. Význam změny pojetí spočívá v tom, že zatímco teorie de-individuace předpokládá ztrátu pojetí sama sebe, v případě sociálně podmíněných identit dochází jenom k přepínání různých pojetí sama sebe.

K neblahé pověsti anonymity přispívá i všeobecně známý fakt, že pod její rouškou se často skrývají skutečné nelegální aktivity (od pomluvy, podvodu,

přes anonymní výhružky až po teroristické útoky). Důsledná anonymita totiž ve svém důsledku efektivně zabraňuje trestu, neboť přetrhává spojení mezi aktérem a jeho činem. Anonymita tak někdy bývá odsuzována jako pootevření dveří k anarchii a bezpráví.

Výše zmíněné teorie a argumenty by snadno mohly vést k závěru, že anonymita je nutně a bezpodmínečně spojena s asociálním chováním. To by ovšem bylo hrubou chybou. Ve spoustě případů totiž anonymita hraje naopak pozitivní a nezastupitelnou roli.

## *POZITIVA ANONYMITY*

Anonymita totiž lidi zbavuje také kontraproduktivních zábran a omezení. Anonymita např. hraje hlavní (a přitom výrazně pozitivní) roli při léčení drogově závislých (Drop in, protialkoholní léčení) , při řešení krizových životních situací (linka důvěry), při rekonvalescenci z prožitých traumat (Bílý kruh bezpečí), nebo při choulostivých zdravotních problémech (anonymní HIV test).

Bylo prokázáno, že lidé skrytí v anonymitě jsou daleko otevřenější a schopni bez zábran hovořit i o jinak tabuizovaných tématech (např. homosexualita).

Anonymita také zvyšuje upřímnost a dává šanci k nestrannému hodnocení. Napomáhá tvorbě reputace na základě kvality názorů a myšlenek bez ohledu na postavení, majetek, věk, společenský status či jiné okolnosti.

Anonymita může občas dokonce posloužit ve prospěch zákona a spravedlnosti (utajené svědectví, neuniformovaní policisté…).

Někdy také bývá anonymita (coby jeden z výrazů práva na soukromí) pokládána za jedno ze základních lidských práv a svobod. Toto platí obzvláště v USA, kde důrazně lpí na prvním dodatku ústavy a anonymitu, coby prostředek k zajištění svobody slova, mají za ochranný štít proti tyranii většiny či diktatuře státu.

Snížená pravděpodobnost odvety či represe vede k tomu, že informátoři anonymně upozorní (např. v tisku) na nekalé aktivity s celospolečensky negativním dopadem.

Anonymita (nebo spíše pseudonymita) má dlouhou a počestnou tradici v literatuře a umění (Samuel Clemens alias Mark Twain, Eric Blair známý jako George Orwell, Vladimír Vašek přezdívaný Petr Bezruč).

Anonymita sama o sobě není ani dobrá ani špatná. Její největší problém (a zároveň i výhoda) spočívá v tom, že znemožňuje sankce. Tím odpadá také zodpovědnost a „pachatel“ tak dosahuje absolutní volnosti ve svém jednání. Jeho jediným soudcem je jeho svědomí.

Anonymita je analogická s „omezeným ručením“ v právním slova smyslu. Budeme-li si toho vědomi a budeme-li s ní podle toho zacházet a příslušně se chovat, může nám dobře sloužit. Dost dobře tedy nemůže být zakázána, aniž by to ve svém důsledku výrazně nepoškodilo společnost. Možnost zneužití je z tohoto hlediska jenom cenou za přínos, který anonymita společnosti přináší.

## *ANONYMITA, PSEUDONYMITA A IDENTITA NA INTERNETU*

Definic anonymity je celá řada. Nejobecněji však je možné říci, že anonymita je případ, kdy není známá identita autora (nebo obecněji původce). Pseudonymitu je pak možné považovat jen za variantu anonymity, kde sice jakási zprostředkující identita použita je, ovšem bez vazby na identitu skutečnou. Speciálním případem pseudonymity je předstírání, kdy vědomě pseudonym budí dojem že je skutečnou identitou někoho jiného.

Podstatným rozdílem (výhodou) pseudonymity oproti anonymitě je ovšem to, že jsme schopni různé aktivity přiřadit k jedinému původci. Někdy je dokonce možné jej i kontaktovat (a to i bez znalosti skutečné osoby skrývající se za pseudonymní identitou) a pseudonym může odpovědět. Úplná anonymita přímou komunikaci vylučuje, neb o jedné z potenciálně komunikujících stran není nic známo.

Teď si dovolím buřičské tvrzení, že anonymita internetu neexistuje. Z technického pohledu totiž internet není nic jiného než nespočetné množství drobných komunikačních aktivit na úrovni TCP-IP protokolu. A každá takováto

aktivita (TCP packet) je principiálně vystopovatelná a zaznamenatelná[16] (ukázkovým případem bylo odhalení autora anonymních hanopisů o Haně Marvanové).

Na druhou stranu ale běžný uživatel nedisponuje právy a možnostmi k takovémuto složitému dohledávání, takže z tohoto hlediska se o anonymitě mluvit dá. Dokonce se dá říci, že pro uživatele je snadnější zůstat v anonymitě než prokázat svoji identitu.

### *IDENTITA*

Identita subjektu je určena souhrnem charakteristik, na základě kterých je subjekt jednoznačně rozpoznatelný. Ze sociologického hlediska se jedná o sadu osobních charakteristik, na základě kterých je jednotlivec rozeznatelný coby člen skupiny.

Jinak se na identitu dívá Gary Marx (2001), který v širším kontextu vydefinoval 7 různých pohledů na identitu.

1) **jméno** – přímý odkaz na existující fyzickou nebo sociální jednotku. Odpovídá na otázku „kdo jsi?“
2) **lokalizace** – odkaz na adresu. Hlavní v tomto aspektu je zastižitelnost ať již elektronickou poštou nebo v reálném světě. Může se tedy jednat o telefonní číslo, email, číslo účtu, poštovní adresu. Přitom v tomto pohledu vůbec nemusí být známé jméno, ani pseudonym… Odpovídá na otázku „Kde?“ spíše než „Kdo?“
3) **pseudonym,** u kterého existuje nějaký odkaz na **jméno** – jedná se tedy doslova o pseudo-anonymní identifikaci. Může to být např. rodné číslo či nějaký biometrický znak. Většinou je ve hře ještě i nějaký důvěryhodný a důvěrný prostředník, který slouží k odstínění pseudonymu od jména na které odkazuje. Tento přístup je vhodný,

[16] S výjimkou případů, kdy celou komunikaci složitě přesměrováváme přes nějakého prostředníka, u kterého je zaručena absolutní diskrétnost (neexistence logů). Toto je však spíše jen teoretická možnost.

potřebujeme-li zajistit jistou míru identifikovatelnosti při zachování alespoň částečné anonymity.

4) **pseudonym** bez existujícího odkazu na jiné formy identity. Toto je „skutečná anonymita“. Tato identifikace znamená volbu takového pseudonymu, který nemůže být za normálních okolností vystopován zpět ke jménu nebo jakékoli jiné formě identity, a to ani pomocí prostředníků. Tato a předcházející forma identity jsou na internetu nejběžnější.

5) **znalost vzorce chování** - být beze jména ještě neznamená být neznámý. Vyzrazování (únik) alespoň nějakých informací je podmínkou sociální a fyzické existence. Stačí tyto informace sbírat a analyzovat… Příkladem může být frekvenční a obsahová analýza textu, která dokáže odhalit autora i proti jeho vůli.

6) **zařazení do sociálních kategorií** - odkazuje k existenci takových prvků identity, které jedince nemusí nutně odlišovat od jiných jedinců, ale mohou (např. pohlaví, vzdělání, zaměstnání, zdravotní stav,…). Přesto jejich kombinace může být zdrojem k určení jednoznačné identity.

7) **symboly vhodnosti/nevhodnosti** - může se jednat např. o držení určitého předmětu (klíč, uniforma) nebo jistou znalost (heslo, kód). Tato vlastnost rozhoduje o tom, jak s vámi bude zacházeno a to bez nutnosti jakékoli jiné formy identifikace.

Identita je přesný opak anonymity. Identita je základním stavebním kamenem sociálních interakcí. Obecně lidé předpokládají, že účastníci komunikace jsou tím, za koho se vydávají. V reálném světě existuje spousta indicií (anglicky cues), které různou měrou prokazují / ověřují / tvoří naši identitu.

Tělo, hlas, oblečení, gesta, chování, … signalizují společenské postavení, příslušnost ke skupině, schopnosti a dovednosti. Na tyto indicie se spoléháme, orientujeme se podle nich, víme co můžeme od koho očekávat.

Ve světě elektronických médií však většina těchto indicií chybí. Při použití běžných platforem které jsou v současné době na internetu k dispozici, zůstaneme odkázáni pouze na text[17]. To značně zužuje prostor pro případné indicie, nicméně i v dematerializovaném prostředí si zkušený uživatel vytrénuje smysly pro vnímání nuancí v jazyce, e-mailové adrese či signatuře, použitém formátu dokumentu, stylu práce s textem, uživatelskou zkušeností…

Hlavním vodítkem ovšem bývá jazyk, který toho dokáže spoustu prozradit. Gramatika, slovní zásoba, chyby, hrubky, překlepy – to vše něco signalizuje. Na jazykové úrovni se dá odhalit pohlaví, věk, vzdělání, region původu, atd… Dalším vodítkem může být uživatelská zručnost, používané protokoly a služby (bezproblémové zvládnutí ICQ, VoIP, FTP, telnetu či SSL mnohé napoví) případně čas a délka pobytu na internetu.

Specificky českou záležitostí pak je používání diakritiky („služebně starší“ uživatelé ji ještě vynechávají, nověji přibyvší ji zpravidla používají) a mnohé napoví tykání/vykání.

I když pravdou je, že ne všechny tyto indicie jsou vždy úplně spolehlivé a jednoznačné.

Právě kvůli poměrně úzké skupině kontrolních indicií a všeobecně rozšířené anonymitě, dochází na internetu poměrně často k různým hrátkám s identitou (a někdy i podvodům). V disertační práci podrobně zmiňuji 4 z nich, a sice:

- **provokace** (provokatér se baví chaosem a hádkami, které způsobil)
- „**vylepšení“** vlastní identity (je libo ubrat kila?, přidat pár cm výšky?, omládnout?… na internetu to není problém, stačí (to) říct)
- **předstírání** že jsem někdo jiný

[17] Neuvažuji možnost použití videa, které není pro běžného uživatele dostupné. Stejně tak i statické obrázky (např. fotky) naráží na technické problémy s jejich pořízením a následným zpracováním v reálném čase. To vše vede k tomu, že text je stále ještě dominantním komunikačním prostředkem internetu.

- **krádež identity** – použití jiné, již existující identity někoho jiného. Zde se již dostáváme na samou hranici zákona, při zneužití za účelem zisku[18] dokonce až za ni.

Dá se tedy vůbec něčemu na internetu věřit? Proč vlastně většina uživatelů přiznává svou skutečnou identitu? Na tuto otázku se snaží odpovědět celá řada vědních oborů - od biologie, přes teorii her, ekonomie až po fyziku. Zoolog Amotz Zahavi (1977) konstatoval, že jediné důvěryhodné signály jsou takové, které není možné zfalšovat. Dělí proto signály do dvou kategorií: Signály prokazatelné (jsou podloženy hmatatelnou realitou) a signály smluvené (založené na konvenci). Zatímco u prokazatelných signálů k podvodu dojít nemůže, signály smluvené tuto záruku neskýtají. Proč tedy vůbec používat signály konvenční (smluvené)? Odpověď je jednoduchá – jsou daleko levnější[19]. Jestliže je tedy újma způsobená případným podvodem menší než zavedení dražšího modelu prokazatelného signalizování, používají se signály smluvené.

Teorie založená na psychologii zase vychází z toho, že pro člověka je přirozené mluvit pravdu (být čestný). Lež totiž vyžaduje větší úsilí a přináší nepohodlí a riziko sankce při odhalení. Pokud tedy lidé k tomu nemají nějaký zvláštní důvod, preferují pohodlí a mluví pravdu, než aby složitě konstruovali systém lží.

Jednoduchý fyzikální princip zase říká, že v případě vysokého výskytu šumu (lež je z tohoto hlediska považována za šum) přestává být signál signálem a tím ztrácí své opodstatnění a samovolně zaniká.

Všechny tyto teorie vysvětlují, proč je víceméně možné spolehnout se na informace z internetu, byť připouští určité procento chyb.

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[18] Např. krádež čísla kreditní karty

[19] Míněno z hlediska provozu systému, nikoli finančně

## VIRTUÁLNÍ KOMUNITY

Pojem virtuální komunita se stal jakýmsi zastřešujícím termínem, kam společně spadají snad všechny možné skupiny lidí, kteří spolu komunikují přes internet. K tématu virtuálních komunit se vztahují teorie z různých disciplín: sociologie, psychologie, komunikačních studií, CMC studií a dokonce i antropologie.

Položme si ale otázku: Jsou virtuální komunity vůbec komunitami v pravém slova smyslu? Nebo se jedná jen o jakési pseudo-komunity, kde si lidé vzájemně vyměňují zdvořilosti, klábosí, dělají nic neříkající a k ničemu nezavazující gesta vzájemné podpory a navazují efemérní nic neznamenající přátelství?

Abychom tuto otázku mohli zodpovědět, ujasněme si napřed pojmy. Sociologové jasně rozlišují mezi skupinou, sítí a komunitou. Obecně řečeno, skupina má jasné hranice které vymezují členství. Naopak síť představuje takový soubor vztahů, který žádné takové jasné hranice nemá. A termín komunita se hranicemi nezaobírá vůbec (i když dříve byla tendence i komunity vymezovat geograficky) a spíše jen konotuje sílu vzájemných vztahů. Z tohoto hlediska by virtuální komunity opravdu mezi komunity spadat mohly.

Definic co to je virtuální komunita jsem našel celou řadu. I když se ne úplně ve všem shodují, mají společné alespoň tyto dva body:

- Virtuální komunita by měla mít nějaký sdílený cíl.
- Účastníci musí mít sami od sebe potřebu podílet se na fungování komunity.

To jsou základní předpoklady, bez kterých žádná (a nejen virtuální) komunita nebude fungovat.

Teoretici se ale už neshodují na tom, zda mohou skupinu vytvořit anonymní uživatelé. Podle názoru jedné strany to možné není, protože pro vytvoření komunity je potřeba aby se účastníci navzájem znali v širším kontextu, což ovšem vylučuje anonymitu (protože jsou-li účastníci anonymní, mohou se

maximálně bavit v horizontu současnosti, nemohou si však vytvořit žádnou pověst - ať již dobrou či špatnou – protože neexistuje relevantní odkaz na minulost). Na druhou stranu existují definice, které nic takového nevyžadují a z jejich hlediska je pak možné hovořit např. o komunitě návštěvníků chatovacího serveru pokec.atlas.cz. (sdílený cíl – ano, zábava; podílení se na fungování – ano, proto tam jsem)

Pokud se od toho problému posuneme dále a třeba i připustíme, že všichni uživatelé komunity používají pro účely identifikace v komunitě nějaké přezdívky či uživatelská hesla, stejně se jedná maximálně o pseudonymitu, neboť jejich skutečná totožnost z reálného světa zůstává skryta.

Tato skutečnost přináší do života virtuálních komunit zajímavý efekt – prokázalo se totiž, že anonymita internetu v lidech podněcuje potřebu otevřít se, svěřit se se svými problémy (a to většinou recipročně). Tento jev má dokonce anglický termín – hyperpersonal – tedy něco jako až příliš osobní. Anonymita také zbavuje lidi ostychu při žádostech o pomoc.

Na druhou stranu ani internetové komunity nejsou ušetřeny negativních vlivů anonymity(jak jsem uvedl na začátku). I v prostředí zavedených komunit se lidé stávají obětí provokací, předstírání nebo neupřímnosti. Stejně tak se občas projevuje i zvýšená agresivita některých jedinců, kteří tam ventilují své negativní pocity a problémy.

## VÝZKUM

Součástí mé disertační práce se stal také samostatný výzkum, který jsem prováděl na českých internetových zpravodajských serverech www.lidovky.cz, www.novinky.cz a www.ilist.cz. Tyto servery se vyznačují tím, že umožňují čtenářům aktivně se zapojit do dění na serveru přidáním vlastních komentářů k jednotlivým článkům. Zde je přehled nejzajímavějších postřehů, ke kterým jsem došel[20]:

- Do diskusí se zapojuje jen relativně velmi malé procento návštěvníků (v závislosti na pozorovaném serveru 2%, 3% a 4%)
- Souhrnná délka komentářů zpravidla několikrát přesahuje rozsah původního článku.
- Jen malé procento čtenářů čte celou diskusi (zpravidla jen ti, kteří tam přispívají)
- Diskutující se v reakcích jeden na druhého často odkloní od původního tématu článku a jen se vzájemně napadají a osočují.
- Většina (až 75 procent) komentářů a příspěvků je NEGATIVNÍCH – ať již proti původnímu článku, nebo proti některému z komentářů.
- Výrazná část komentářů je plytkých, triviálních, bez nosné myšlenky.
- Poměrně často (s větší frekvencí než v běžné mluvě) se v komentářích objevují obhroublé výrazy a nadávky – dokonce se mi podařilo prokázat spojení s anonymitou.
- Provoz na serverech je tak velký, že administrátoři nestačí diskusi editovat a řídit.

[20] Detailní postup – viz samotná diplomová práce

Dále jsem pro účely diplomové práce (ze které čerpá tato práce rigorózní) cca. od června 2003 poměrně často navštěvoval diskusní servery (tzv. chaty) a pozoroval tam komunikační aktivity. Posléze jsem dokonce nejzajímavější momenty zachytil statisticky, neboť jsem si vedl pečlivé záznamy.

Zvláštní pozornost jsem věnoval diskutovaným tématům. Zjistil jsem, že tematické rozvrstvení uživatelů bylo velmi podobné na všech třech (na sobě nezávislých) serverech. Mám za to, že právě toto by mohlo prokazovat tematický posun v diskusích na internetu směrem k tabuizovanému tématu sexu.

**Rozložení uživatelů dle témat hovoru**

| Tématické zaměření | pokec.atlas.cz | www.lide.cz | www.xko.cz | **Total** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Místa a města** | 14 % | 11 % | 12 % | **11,4 %** |
| **Koníčky a zájmy** | 2 % | 4 % | 7 % | **4,1 %** |
| ***Sex a milování*** | ***30 %*** | ***34 %*** | ***30 %*** | ***32,5 %*** |
| ***Seznámení a flirt*** | ***40 %*** | ***26 %*** | ***27 %*** | ***27,6 %*** |
| **Zábava a pokec** | 15 % | 20 % | 19 % | **19,4 %** |
| *Průměrný počet uživatelů* | *335* | *1880* | *655* | |

**Všimněte si, že přes 60 procent uživatelů debatuje na téma Sex a milování, případně Seznámení a flirt**

Dalším zajímavým zjištěním bylo, že v sekci Sex a milování byl téměř dvojnásobný počet plně anonymních uživatelů (tedy bez přezdívky, přihlášení jenom jako Host_xxxxx) než ve všech ostatních sekcích.

**Procento plně anonymních uživatelů v jednotlivých sekcích**

| **Místa a města** | **Koníčky a zájmy** | ***Sex a milování*** | ***Seznámení a flirt*** | **Zábava a pokec** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 32,13 % | 29,93 % | **56,28 %** | 26,64 % | 28,06 % |

Dalším zjištěním, které stojí za zmínku, byl fakt, že v sekci Sex a milování bylo daleko méně žen.

**Procento uživatelů – žen v jednotlivých sekcích**

| Místa a města | Koníčky a zájmy | *Sex a milování* | *Seznámení a flirt* | Zábava a pokec |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 44,78 % | 44,86 % | **36,43 %** | 45,75 % | 46,47 % |

Jeden z faktorů, které k tomuto stavu vedly, mohl být i daleko vyšší zájem, který o ženské uživatele v sekci Sex a milování panuje. Dovedu si představit, že pro spoustu žen to může hraničit až s obtěžováním. Abych tuto teorii potvrdil, spočítal jsem průměrnou dobu mezi jednotlivými pokusy o navázání kontaktu (osloveními) jak u mužské, tak u ženské přezdívky – a to v různých tematických sekcích. Všimněte si propastného rozdílu mezi 2 min. u ženy a více než 22 min. u muže.

**Průměrná rychlost oslovení uživatele**

| Láska a milování | | Seznámení a flirt | | Místa a města | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Uživatel - žena | Uživatel - muž | Uživatel - žena | Uživatel - muž | Uživatel - žena | Uživatel - muž |
| **2,14 min.** | **22,10 min.** | **4,11 min.** | **18,26 min.** | **6 min.** | **14 min.** |

***DOTAZNÍKY***

Na základě zkušeností získaných během pozorování serverů jsem vypracoval dotazníky (ve formě webových stránek) se kterými jsem se prostřednictvím emailu obrátil nejen na uživatele českého internetu obecně, ale také přímo adresně na návštěvníky chatů. Návratnost byla poměrně vysoká, 347 respektive 167 respondentů, přičemž výsledky principiálně potvrdily očekávání.

Potvrdilo se, že na chat chodí spíše mladší uživatelé s poměrně malými zkušenostmi v oblasti užívání internetu (43 procent méně než rok) a jejichž on-line aktivity se omezují jen na WWW, případně e-mail (90 %). Většina z nich navštěvuje chat pravidelně (frekvence 1x týdně a vyšší: 53 %), přičemž

jsou připojeni pomocí datové linky, takže neplatí za čas strávený na síti. To vysvětluje také průměrný čas jedné návštěvy - v 70 % případů přesáhl 2 hod.

Jako důvod proč se rozhodli strávit čas zrovna na chatu uvedli[21]:

- Jen tak pro zábavu 32,48 %
- Neměl jsem nic jiného na práci 31,37 %
- Popovídat si tam se známými 25,12 %
- Popovídat si s někým novým 19,60 %

a pro 15,47 % chat představuje nejlevnější způsob, jak si popovídat se známými aniž by museli platit za meziměstské hovory.

Zajímavá je statistika ohledně loajality vůči serveru – 73 % respondentů uvedlo, že navštěvují pouze jeden server a přes 85 % přiznalo, že tam mají dokonce svoji oblíbenou místnost.

Ani v oblasti dotazů na téma anonymity a identity jsem se nedočkal žádných překvapení: 35 % uživatelů se hlásí plně anonymně jako host (což mimochodem nezávisle na sobě potvrdilo také vlastní pozorování serveru), zatímco zbytek má buďto jeden (29%) nebo více (37%) uživatelských účtů. Nejčastěji uváděné důvody proč zůstávat v anonymitě byly: je to jednodušší, dává mi to pocit soukromí, dává mi to pocit bezpečí.

Co se týká prozrazování své skutečné identity z reálného světa (jméno, telefon, adresa,…) jen 16 % uživatelů připustilo, že jim nevadí poskytnout tyto údaje po internetu. 57 % je o sobě ochotno prozradit alespoň něco, zatímco pro 21% je představa šíření jejich osobních dat po veřejné datové síti nepřípustná. Můj výzkum potvrdil, že s rostoucími zkušenostmi v oblasti internetu klesá přesvědčení o jeho anonymitě.

### *POTVRZENÍ VÝSLEDKŮ OPAKOVANÝM ŠETŘENÍM NA PODZIM 2005*

Při přepracovávání této práce pro účely disertačního řízení jsem znovu podrobil analýze návštěvnost chat serverů. Mohu konstatovat, že i přesto, že mezi výzkumy byl téměř rok, výsledná data potvrzovala hypotézy, které jsem

[21] Respondenti mohli zvolit více než jednu variantu, proto součet přesahuje 100%

stanovil v květnu 2004 a výsledky se nijak radikálně nelišily od těch, ke kterým jsem došel při psaní diplomové práce. Posuďte sami:

**Rozložení uživatelů dle témat hovoru (září 2005)**

| Tématické zaměření | pokec.atlas.cz | www.lide.cz | www.xko.cz | **Total** | **2004** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Místa a města** | **13%** (14% ) | **15%** (11 % ) | **17%** (12 % ) | **15%** | **11,4 %** |
| **Koníčky a zájmy** | **1%** (2% ) | **11%** (4 % ) | **N/A** (7 % ) | **6%** | **4,1 %** |
| ***Sex a milování*** | **34%** (30% ) | **25%** (34 % ) | **49%** (30 % ) | **36%** | **32,5 %** |
| ***Seznámení a flirt*** | **39%** (40% ) | **19%** (26 % ) | **4%** (27 % ) | **21%** | **27,6 %** |
| **Zábava a pokec** | **12 %** (15% ) | **22%** (20 % ) | **8 %** (19 % ) | **14%** | **19,4 %** |
| *Průměrný počet uživatelů* | **332** (*335* ) | **3 260** (*1 880* ) | **868** (*655* ) | | |

Dá se tak říci, že závěry, ke kterým jsem došel před rokem prokázaly svou dlouhodobou platnost.

Rozhodnutí serveru www.lidovky.cz zveřejnit unikátní adresy počítačů, odkud jsou odesílány příspěvky do diskusí pod jednotlivými články mi navíc umožnilo v rigorózní práci uskutečnit ještě i další výzkum, který v době psaní diplomové práce nebyl možný.

Analyzoval jsem přes 3300 příspěvků ve více než 30 diskusích a došel k závěru, že uživatelé opravdu mají tendenci udržovat pro účely diskuse jednu přezdívku, pod kterou diskutují.

### *POTVRZENÍ HYPOTÉZ*

Na závěr již jen konstatuji, že hypotézy, které jsem předložil, se mi vesměs podařilo prokázat. A to jak po stránce teoretické studiem příslušné odborné literatury, kde většina předpokladů, které jsem si dal za teze, byla již zdokumentována a potvrzena, tak také posléze mým vlastním výzkumem.

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# APPENDIX A - COMMON GROUND THEORY

Common-ground theory can be used as a framework for determining, how two people or a small group validate that they understand each other. It focuses on how communication process and content are coordinated. Much of this coordination depends upon social presence on appropriate ways of compensating for its absence.

If person A speaks to person B about “my dogs,” the two of them must understand that person A is referring to the two dogs sleeping in front of the fire in his or her home and not the dogs that live down the street. Common ground is established by a process called grounding. Grounding varies from situation to situation.

Grounding leads participants to a mutual belief that they share a common understanding. Several rounds of verifying that the person has heard and understood a comment may be needed. While this may sound cumbersome, most conversations require a series of twists and turns that move the conversation forward only when the speaker is convinced that he or she has been heard and understood. Usually, conversations have identifiable entry points, “bodies”, and exits. Noticing how much attention a partner is playing to his ore her comments enables the speaker to judge whether there is shared understanding. Utterances, glazes, nodding, and facial expressions are all indicators of attention. Checking, repeating, or rephrasing incomplete or misinterpreted comments encourage common ground.

Generally people try to establish common ground unconsciously, with as little effort as possible. This is where media have an influence. The amount and type of effort changes with the communication medium. Techniques that work in one medium may not in another; and even if available, they may require more effort to achieve grounding. Furthermore, people who are not used to a particular medium will be unfamiliar with good ways of solving problems (Peece, 2000, pp.156-158)

- **Co-presence** – A and B share the same physical environment, as in face-to-face conversation. People are generally used to temporal and geographical proximity from face-to-face communication and they seem to expect, if not assume, same from the virtual communities, which causes troubles in understanding.

- **Visibility** – A and B are visible to each other, as in face-to-face communication and video conferencing.

- **Audibility** – A and B communicate by speaking, which can be very effective for conveying factual information. Beside, voice tone provides clues about emotional state.

- **Contemporality** – B receives at roughly the same time as A presents, so the message is received immediately.

- **Simultaneity** – A and B can send and receive at once and simultaneously.

- **Sequentiality** – A's and B's turns cannot get out of sequence as in asynchronous communication. In asynchronous communication, periods of several seconds, minutes, hours, or day may pass between a message being send and a response being generated. The delay between receiving and sending message could sometimes turn out to be positive. It can provide valuable time for reconsideration and reflection.

- **Reviewability** – B can review A's message. For example, text messages can be reviewed, whereas spoken messages are lost once the speaker pronounce them.

- **Revisablity** – A can revise messages for B. If messages persist, they can be revised – providing they can be accessed.

If one of these opportunities is not present, the communication is constrained by its absence, and ways of overcoming of dealing with it have to be found. Overcoming constrains generally takes time and effort. Clark & Brennan, 1993, p 229-231) listed different characteristics for different media which offer different opportunities:

## Media and Opportunities

| Medium | Opportunities |
|---|---|
| **Face-to-face** | Co-presence<br>Visibility<br>Audibility<br>Cotemporality<br>Simultaneity<br>Sequentiality |
| **Telephone** | Audibility<br>Cotemporality<br>Simultaneity<br>Sequentiality |
| **Video teleconference** | Visibility<br>Audibility<br>Cotemporality<br>Simultaneity<br>Sequentiality |
| **Textual conference** | Cotemporality<br>Sequentiality<br>Reviewability |
| **Answering machines** | Audibility<br>Reviewability |
| **Electronic mail** | Reviewablity<br>Revisability |
| **Letters** | Reviewablity<br>Revisability |
| **BBS** | Reviewablity<br>Revisability<br>Sequentiality |
| **Chats** | Cotamporality<br>Simultaneity |
| **MUDs** | Cotemporality<br>Simultaneity |
| **Computer virtual environments** | Cotemporality<br>Simultaneity |

*Adopted from Clark & Brennan (1993, p. 230)*

# APPENDIX B - TIME AND SPACE MATRIX

Several classification schemes attempt to clarify the nature of communication tasks. One of the most useful is the time and space matrix, which defines tasks and the systems that support them, along two dimension: time and space. Internet helps to facilitate the distributed as well as asynchronous communication.

***Time and space matrix***

| | **Same time** | **Different time** |
|---|---|---|
| **Same place** | **Synchronous**, **collocated** interaction (e.g. face-to-face meeting) | **Asynchronous collocated** interaction (e.g. message left by one person for another to collect later) |
| **Different places** | **Synchronous distributed** interaction (e.g. chats, instant messaging, MUDs, videoconferencing) | **Asynchronous distributed** interaction (e.g. email, listserv, UseNet news group, BBS) |

***Source Ellis et al, 1991, p. 41***

**Web page** Basic pages are asynchronous, but synchronous software is frequently embedded.

**Email** Asynchronous. Email comes to the user. It is a "push" technology.

**Listserv** Asynchronous. Arrives like email or as a collection of messages known as a digest.

**UseNet (News)** Asynchronous. Like email, except that users must go to the UseNet group. It is a "pull" technology.

**Bulletin Boards, Discussion boards** Asynchronous. Users leave messages for others to read.

**Chats** Synchronous, text. Often very fast-moving short messages.

**Instant messaging** Synchronous, text.

**MUDs** Synchronous, mainly texts, but sometimes also graphical environment and avatars.

# APPENDIX C - NETSPEAK – CHAT ABBREVIATIONS

Chat abbreviations are commonly used in e-mail, online chatting, online discussion forum postings, instant messaging, and in text messaging, especially between cell phone users. Some of them are used also in Czech language (for example BTW, FYI, IMHO,…)

404 I haven't a clue
ADN Any day now
AFAIK As far as I know
AFK Away from keyboard
ARE Acronym-rich environment
ASAP As soon as possible
A/S/L? Age/sex/location?
B4N Bye for now
BAK Back at the keyboard
BAS Big a** smile
BBIAB Be back in a bit
BBL Be back later
BBN Bye bye now
BBS Be back soon
BEG Big evil grin
BF Boy friend
BFD Big f***ing deal
BFN Bye for now
BG Big grin
BIBO Beer in, beer out
BIOYIOP Blow it out your I/O port
BL Belly laughing
BMGWL Busting my gut with laughter
BOTEC Back-of-the-envelope calculation
BRB Be right back
BTA But then again...
BTDT Been there, done that
BTW By the way
BWL Bursting with laughter
BWTHDIK But what the heck do I know...?
CICO Coffee in, coffee out
C&G Chuckle and grin
CNP Continued in next post
CRB Come right back
CRBT Crying real big tears
CU See you
CUL See you later
CUL8ER See you later
CYA See ya
CYA Cover your ass
CYO See you online
DBA Doing business as
DFLA Disenhanced four-letter acronym (that is, a TLA)
DL Dead link
DLTBBB Don't let the bed bugs bite
DIKU Do I know you?
DITYID Did I tell you I'm distressed?
DOM Dirty old man
DOS Dozing off soon
DQMOT Don't quote me on this
DTRT Do the right thing
DWB Don't write back
EG Evil grin
EMFBI Excuse me for butting in
EMSG E-mail message
EOM End of message
EOT End of thread (meaning: end of discussion)
ETLA Extended three-letter acronym (that is, an FLA)
F2F Face to face
FAQ Frequently-ask question(s)
FC Fingers crossed
FISH First in, still here
FLA Four-letter acronym
FMTYEWTK Far more than you ever wanted to know
FOMCL Falling off my chair laughing
FTBOMH From the bottom of my heart
FUBAR F***ed up beyond all repair or recognition
FUD Fear, Uncertainty, and Doubt
FWIW For what it's worth
FYI For your information
G Grin
GA Go ahead
GAL Get a life
GD&R Grinning, ducking, and running
GF Girlfriend
GFN Gone for now
GGP Gotta go pee
GIWIST Gee, I wish I'd said that
GL Good luck
GMAB Give me a break
GMTA Great minds think alike
GOL Giggling out loud
GTRM Going to read mail
GTSY Glad to see you
H&K Hug and kiss
HAGN Have a good night
HAND Have a nice day
HHIS Hanging head in shame
HIG How's it going
HT Hi there
HTH Hope this helps
HUB Head up butt
IAC In any case
IAE In any event
IANAL I am not a lawyer (but)
IC I see
IGP I gotta pee
IHA I hate acronyms
IHU I hear you
IIRC If I recall/remember/recollect correctly
ILU or ILY I love you
IM Immediate message
IMCO In my considered opinion
IMHO In my humble opinion
IMing Chatting with someone online usually while doing other things such as playing trivia or other interactive game
IMNSHO In my not so humble opinion
IMO In my opinion
IMS I am sorry
IOW In other words
IPN I'm posting naked
IRL In real life (that is, when not chatting)
ITIGBS I think I'm going to be sick
IWALU I will always love you
IYSWIM If you see what I mean
J4G Just for grins
JBOD Just a bunch of disks (like redundant array of independent disks, etc.)
JIC Just in case
JK Just kidding
JMO Just my opinion
JTLYK Just to let you know
KISS Keep it simple stupid
KIT Keep in touch
KOTC Kiss on the cheek
KOTL Kiss on the lips
KWIM? Know what I mean?
L8R Later
L8R G8R Later gator
LD Later, dude
LDR Long-distance relationship
LHO Laughing head off
LLTA Lots and lots of thunderous applause
LMAO Laughing my a** off
LMSO Laughing my socks off
LOL Laughing out loud
LRF Little Rubber Feet (the little pads on the bottom of displays and other equipment)
LSHMBH Laughing so hard my belly hurts
LTM Laugh to myself
LTNS Long time no see
LTR Long-term relationship
LULAB Love you like a brother
LULAS Love you like a sister
LUWAMH Love you with all my heart
LY Love ya
LY4E Love ya forever
MorF Male or female

MOSS Member of the same sex
MOTOS Member of the opposite sex
MTF More to follow
MUSM Miss you so much
NADT Not a darn thing
NFG No f*****g good
NFW No feasible way or no f*****g way
NIFOC Naked in front of computer
NP or N/P No problem
NRN No response necessary
OIC Oh, I see
OLL Online love
OMG Oh my God
OTF Off the floor
OTOH On the other hand
OTTOMH Off the top of my head
PANS Pretty awesome new stuff (as opposed to "POTS")
PAW Parents are watching
PCMCIA People can't master computer industry acronyms
PDA Public display of affection
PEBCAK Problem exists between chair and keyboard
PIBKAC Problem is between keyboard and chair
PITA Pain in the ass
PM Private message
PMFJIB Pardon me for jumping in but...
POAHF Put on a happy face
::POOF:: Goodbye (leaving the room)
POTS Plain old telephone service
PU That stinks!
QT Cutie
RL Real life (that is, when not chatting)
ROR Raffing out roud (Engrish for "laughing out loud")
ROTFL Rolling on the floor laughing
ROTFLMAO Rolling on the floor laughing my a** off
ROTFLMAOWPIMP Rolling on the floor laughing my a** off while peeing in my pants
ROTFLMBO Rolling on the floor laughing my butt off
RPG Role-playing games
RSN Real soon now
RT Real time
RTFM Read the f***ing manual
RYO Roll your own (write your own program; derived from cigarettes rolled yourself with tobacco and paper)
S^ S'up - what's up
S4L Spam for life (what you may get when you become someone's customer or client)
SHCOON Shoot hot coffee out of nose
SEG S***-eating grin
SETE Smiling ear to ear
SF Surfer-friendly (low-graphics Web site)
SHID Slaps head in disgust
SNAFU Situation normal, all f***ed up
SO Significant other
SOL Smilling out loud or sh*t out of luck
SOMY Sick of me yet?
SOT Short on time
SOTMG Short on time must go
STFW Search the f*****g Web
STW Search the Web
SU Shut up
SUAKM Shut up and kiss me
SUP What's up
SWAG Stupid wild-a** guess
SWAK Sealed with a kiss
SWL Screaming with laughter
SYS See you soon
TA Thanks again
TAFN That's all for now
TANSTAAFL There ain't no such thing as a free lunch
TCOY Take care of yourself
TFH Thread from hell (a discussion that just won't die and is often irrelevant to the purpose of the forum or group)
TGIF Thank God it's Friday
THX Thanks
TIA Thanks in advance (used if you post a question and are expecting a helpful reply)
TILII Tell it like it is
TLA Three-letter acronym
TLK2UL8R Talk to you later
TMI Too much information
TNT Till next time
TOPCA Til our paths cross again (early Celtic chat term)
TOY Thinking of you
TPTB The powers that be
TTFN Ta-Ta for now
TTT Thought that, too (when someone types in what you were about to type)
TTYL Talk to you later
TU Thank you
TY Thank you
UAPITA You're a pain in the ass
UW You're welcome
VBG Very big grin
VBSEG Very big s***-eating grin
WAG Wild a** guess
WAYD What are you doing
WB Welcome back
WBS Write back soon
WDALYIC Who died and left you in charge?
WEG Wicked evil grin
WFM Works for me
WIBNI Wouldn't it be nice if
WT? What/who the ?
WTFO What the F***! Over!
WTG Way to go!
WTGP? Want to go private?
WU? What's up?
WUF? Where are you from?
WYSIWYG What you see is what you get
YBS You'll be sorry
YGBSM You gotta be s***tin' me!
YMMV Your mileage may vary.
YW You're welcome

Source: http://searchwebservices.techtarget.com/sDefinition/0,,sid26_gci211776,00.html

# APPENDIX D - EMOTICONS (SMILEYS)

Smiley, Smile, or Emoticon is a figure created with the symbols on the keyboard. Read with the head tilted to the left. Used to convey the spirit in which a line of text is typed. Usage of them is not related to any particular language. Here is the list of some of them:

:-) Basic smiley
:) Basic smiley-short version
:-( Sad smiley
:( Sad smiley – short version
:) Midget smiley
,-) Winking happy smiley
(-: Left hand smiley
(:-) Smiley big face
(:-( Very unhappy smiley
,-} Wry and winking smiley
8-O Omigod
'-) Winking smiley
:-# My lips are sealed
:-* Kiss
:-/ Sceptical smiley
:-> Sarcastic smiley
:-@ Screaming smiley
:-d Said with a smile
:-V Shouting smiley
:-X A big wet kiss
:-\ Undecided smiley
:-] Smiley blockhead
;-( Crying smiley
;^) Smirking smiley
):-( Nordic smiley
3:] Lucy my pet dog smiley
:-& Tongue tied
8:-) Little girl smiley
:-)8< Big girl smiley
:-0 Talkative smiley
+:-) Priest smiley
O:-) Angel smiley
:-< Walrus smiley
:-? Smiley smokes a pipe
:-E Bucktoothed vampire
:-Q Smoking smiley
:-}X Bow tie-wearing smiley
:-[ Vampire smiley
:-{ Moustache
:-{} Smiley wears lipstick
:-t Pouting smiley
X-( You are brain dead

# APPENDIX E - NETIQUETTE - RFC 1855

1.0 Introduction
In the past, the population of people using the Internet had "grown up" with the Internet, were technically minded, and understood the nature of the transport and the protocols. Today, the community of Internet users includes people who are new to the environment. These "Newbies" are unfamiliar with the culture and don't need to know about transport and protocols. In order to bring these new users into the Internet culture quickly, this Guide offers a minimum set of behaviors which organizations and individuals may take and adapt for their own use. Individuals should be aware that no matter who supplies their Internet access, be it an Internet Service Provider through a private account, or a student account at a University, or an account through a corporation, that those organizations have regulations about ownership of mail and files, about what is proper to post or send, and how to present yourself. Be sure to check with the local authority for specific guidelines.
We've organized this material into three sections: One-to-one communication, which includes mail and talk; One-to-many communications, which includes mailing lists and NetNews; and Information Services, which includes ftp, WWW, Wais, Gopher, MUDs and MOOs. Finally, we have a Selected Bibliography, which may be used for reference.

2.0 One-to-One Communication (electronic mail, talk)
We define one-to-one communications as those in which a person is communicating with another person as if face-to-face: a dialog. In general, rules of common courtesy for interaction with people should be in force for any situation and on the Internet it's doubly important where, for example, body language and tone of voice must be inferred. For more information on Netiquette for communicating via electronic mail and talk, check references [1,23,25,27] in the Selected Bibliography.
2.1 User Guidelines
2.1.1 For mail:
Unless you have your own Internet access through an Internet provider, be sure to check with your employer about ownership of electronic mail. Laws about the ownership of electronic mail vary from place to place.
Unless you are using an encryption device (hardware or software), you should assume that mail on the Internet is not secure. Never put in a mail message anything you would not put on a postcard.
Respect the copyright on material that you reproduce. Almost every country has copyright laws.
If you are forwarding or re-posting a message you've received, do not change the wording. If the message was a personal message to you and you are re-posting to a group, you should ask permission first. You may shorten the message and quote only relevant parts, but be sure you give proper attribution.
Never send chain letters via electronic mail. Chain letters are forbidden on the Internet. Your network privileges will be revoked. Notify your local system administrator if your ever receive one.
A good rule of thumb: Be conservative in what you send and liberal in what you receive. You should not send heated messages (we call these "flames") even if you are provoked. On the other hand, you shouldn't be surprised if you get flamed and it's prudent not to respond to flames.
In general, it's a good idea to at least check all your mail subjects before responding to a message. Sometimes a person who asks you for help (or clarification) will send another message which effectively says "Never Mind". Also make sure that any message you respond to was directed to you. You might be cc:ed rather than the primary recipient.
Make things easy for the recipient. Many mailers strip header information which includes your return address. In order to ensure that people know who you are, be sure to include a line or two at the end of your message with contact information. You can create this file ahead of time and add it to the end of your messages. (Some mailers do this automatically.) In Internet parlance, this is known as a ".sig" or "signature" file. Your .sig file takes the place of your business card. (And you can have more than one to apply in different circumstances.)
Be careful when addressing mail. There are addresses which may go to a group but the address looks like it is just one person. Know to whom you are sending.
Watch cc's when replying. Don't continue to include people if the messages have become a 2-way conversation.
In general, most people who use the Internet don't have time to answer general questions about the Internet and its workings. Don't send unsolicited mail asking for information to people whose names you might have seen in RFCs or on mailing lists.
Remember that people with whom you communicate are located across the globe. If you send a message to which you want an immediate response, the person receiving it might be at home asleep when it arrives. Give them a chance to wake up, come to work, and login before assuming the mail didn't arrive or that they don't care.
Verify all addresses before initiating long or personal discourse. It's also a good practice to include the word "Long" in the subject header so the recipient knows the message will take time to read and respond to. Over 100 lines is considered "long".
Know whom to contact for help. Usually you will have resources close at hand. Check locally for people who can help you with software and system problems. Also, know whom to go to if you receive anything questionable or illegal. Most sites also have "Postmaster" aliased to a knowledgeable user, so you can send mail to this address to get help with mail.
Remember that the recipient is a human being whose culture, language, and humor have different points of reference from your own. Remember that date formats, measurements, and idioms may not travel well. Be especially careful with sarcasm.
Use mixed case. UPPER CASE LOOKS AS IF YOU'RE SHOUTING.
Use symbols for emphasis. That *is* what I meant. Use underscores for underlining. _War and Peace_ is my favorite book. Use smileys to indicate tone of voice, but use them sparingly. :-) is an example of a smiley (Look sideways). Don't assume that the inclusion of a smiley will make the recipient happy with what you say or wipe out an otherwise insulting comment.
Wait overnight to send emotional responses to messages. If you have really strong feelings about a subject, indicate it via FLAME ON/OFF enclosures. For example:
FLAME ON:

This type of argument is not worth the bandwidth it takes to send it. It's illogical and poorly reasoned. The rest of the world agrees with me.
FLAME OFF
Do not include control characters or non-ASCII attachments in messages unless they are MIME attachments or unless your mailer encodes these. If you send encoded messages make sure the recipient can decode them.
Be brief without being overly terse. When replying to a message, include enough original material to be understood but no more. It is extremely bad form to simply reply to a message by including all the previous message: edit out all the irrelevant material.
Limit line length to fewer than 65 characters and end a line with a carriage return.
Mail should have a subject heading which reflects the content of the message.
If you include a signature keep it short. Rule of thumb is no longer than 4 lines. Remember that many people pay for connectivity by the minute, and the longer your message is, the more they pay.
Just as mail (today) may not be private, mail (and news) are (today) subject to forgery and spoofing of various degrees of detectability. Apply common sense "reality checks" before assuming a message is valid.
If you think the importance of a message justifies it, immediately reply briefly to an e-mail message to let the sender know you got it, even if you will send a longer reply later.
"Reasonable" expectations for conduct via e-mail depend on your relationship to a person and the context of the communication. Norms learned in a particular e-mail environment may not apply in general to your e-mail communication with people across the Internet. Be careful with slang or local acronyms.
The cost of delivering an e-mail message is, on the average, paid about equally by the sender and the recipient (or their organizations). This is unlike other media such as physical mail, telephone, TV, or radio. Sending someone mail may also cost them in other specific ways like network bandwidth, disk space or CPU usage. This is a fundamental economic reason why unsolicited e-mail advertising is unwelcome (and is forbidden in many contexts).
Know how large a message you are sending. Including large files such as Postscript files or programs may make your message so large that it cannot be delivered or at least consumes excessive resources. A good rule of thumb would be not to send a file larger than 50 Kilobytes. Consider file transfer as an alternative, or cutting the file into smaller chunks and sending each as a separate message.
Don't send large amounts of unsolicited information to people.
If your mail system allows you to forward mail, beware the dreaded forwarding loop. Be sure you haven't set up forwarding on several hosts so that a message sent to you gets into an endless loop from one computer to the next to the next.
2.1.2 For talk:
Talk is a set of protocols which allow two people to have an interactive dialogue via computer.
Use mixed case and proper punctuation, as though you were typing a letter or sending mail.
Don't run off the end of a line and simply let the terminal wrap; use a Carriage Return (CR) at the end of the line. Also, don't assume your screen size is the same as everyone else's. A good rule of thumb is to write out no more than 70 characters, and no more than 12 lines (since you're using a split screen).
Leave some margin; don't write to the edge of the screen.
Use two CRs to indicate that you are done and the other person may start typing. (blank line).
Always say goodbye, or some other farewell, and wait to see a farewell from the other person before killing the session. This is especially important when you are communicating with someone a long way away. Remember that your communication relies on both bandwidth (the size of the pipe) and latency (the speed of light).
Remember that talk is an interruption to the other person. Only use as appropriate. And never talk to strangers.
The reasons for not getting a reply are many. Don't assume that everything is working correctly. Not all versions of talk are compatible.
If left on its own, talk re-rings the recipient. Let it ring one or two times, then kill it.
If a person doesn't respond you might try another tty. Use finger to determine which are open. If the person still doesn't respond, do not continue to send.
Talk shows your typing ability. If you type slowly and make mistakes when typing it is often not worth the time of trying to correct, as the other person can usually see what you meant.
Be careful if you have more than one talk session going!
2.2 Administrator Issues
Be sure you have established written guidelines for dealing with situations especially illegal, improper, or forged traffic.
Handle requests in a timely fashion - by the next business day.
Respond promptly to people who have concerns about receiving improper or illegal messages. Requests concerning chain letters should be handled immediately.
Explain any system rules, such as disk quotas, to your users. Make sure they understand implications of requesting files by mail such as: Filling up disks; running up phone bills, delaying mail, etc.
Make sure you have "Postmaster" aliased. Make sure you have "Root" aliased. Make sure someone reads that mail.
Investigate complaints about your users with an open mind. Remember that addresses may be forged and spoofed.
3.0 One-to-Many Communication (Mailing Lists, NetNews)
Any time you engage in One-to-Many communications, all the rules for mail should also apply. After all, communicating with many people via one mail message or post is quite analogous to communicating with one person with the exception of possibly offending a great many more people than in one-to-one communication. Therefore, it's quite important to know as much as you can about the audience of your message.
3.1 User Guidelines
3.1.1 General Guidelines for mailing lists and NetNews
Read both mailing lists and newsgroups for one to two months before you post anything. This helps you to get an understanding of the culture of the group.
Do not blame the system administrator for the behavior of the system users.
Consider that a large audience will see your posts. That may include your present or your next boss. Take care in what you write. Remember too, that mailing lists and Newsgroups are frequently archived, and that your words may be stored for a very long time in a place to which many people have access.

Assume that individuals speak for themselves, and what they say does not represent their organization (unless stated explicitly).
Remember that both mail and news take system resources. Pay attention to any specific rules covering their uses your organization may have.
Messages and articles should be brief and to the point. Don't wander off-topic, don't ramble and don't send mail or post messages solely to point out other people's errors in typing or spelling. These, more than any other behavior, mark you as an immature beginner.
Subject lines should follow the conventions of the group.
Forgeries and spoofing are not approved behavior.
Advertising is welcomed on some lists and Newsgroups, and abhorred on others! This is another example of knowing your audience before you post. Unsolicited advertising which is completely off-topic will most certainly guarantee that you get a lot of hate mail.
If you are sending a reply to a message or a posting be sure you summarize the original at the top of the message, or include just enough text of the original to give a context. This will make sure readers understand when they start to read your response. Since NetNews, especially, is proliferated by distributing the postings from one host to another, it is possible to see a response to a message before seeing the original. Giving context helps everyone. But do not include the entire original!
Again, be sure to have a signature which you attach to your message. This will guarantee that any peculiarities of mailers or newsreaders which strip header information will not delete the only reference in the message of how people may reach you.
Be careful when you reply to messages or postings. Frequently replies are sent back to the address which originated the post - which in many cases is the address of a list or group! You may accidentally send a personal response to a great many people, embarrassing all involved. It's best to type in the address instead of relying on "reply."
Delivery receipts, non-delivery notices, and vacation programs are neither totally standardized nor totally reliable across the range of systems connected to Internet mail. They are invasive when sent to mailing lists, and some people consider delivery receipts an invasion of privacy. In short, do not use them.
If you find a personal message has gone to a list or group, send an apology to the person and to the group.
If you should find yourself in a disagreement with one person, make your responses to each other via mail rather than continue to send messages to the list or the group. If you are debating a point on which the group might have some interest, you may summarize for them later.
Don't get involved in flame wars. Neither post nor respond to incendiary material.
Avoid sending messages or posting articles which are no more than gratuitous replies to replies.
Be careful with monospacing fonts and diagrams. These will display differently on different systems, and with different mailers on the same system.
There are Newsgroups and Mailing Lists which discuss topics of wide varieties of interests. These represent a diversity of lifestyles, religions, and cultures. Posting articles or sending messages to a group whose point of view is offensive to you simply to tell them they are offensive is not acceptable. Sexually and racially harassing messages may also have legal implications. There is software available to filter items you might find objectionable.

### 3.1.2 Mailing List Guidelines

There are several ways to find information about what mailing lists exist on the Internet and how to join them. Make sure you understand your organization's policy about joining these lists and posting to them. In general it is always better to check local resources first before trying to find information via the Internet. Nevertheless, there are a set of files posted periodically to news.answers which list the Internet mailing lists and how to subscribe to them. This is an invaluable resource for finding lists on any topic. See also references [9,13,15] in the Selected Bibliography.
Send subscribe and unsubscribe messages to the appropriate address. Although some mailing list software is smart enough to catch these, not all can ferret these out. It is your responsibility to learn how the lists work, and to send the correct mail to the correct place. Although many many mailing lists adhere to the convention of having a "-request" alias for sending subscribe and unsubscribe messages, not all do. Be sure you know the conventions used by the lists to which you subscribe.
Save the subscription messages for any lists you join. These usually tell you how to unsubscribe as well.
In general, it's not possible to retrieve messages once you have sent them. Even your system administrator will not be able to get a message back once you have sent it. This means you must make sure you really want the message to go as you have written it.
The auto-reply feature of many mailers is useful for in-house communication, but quite annoying when sent to entire mailing lists. Examine "Reply-To" addresses when replying to messages from lists. Most auto-replys will go to all members of the list.
Don't send large files to mailing lists when Uniform Resource Locators (URLs) or pointers to ftp-able versions will do. If you want to send it as multiple files, be sure to follow the culture of the group. If you don't know what that is, ask.
Consider unsubscribing or setting a "nomail" option (when it's available) when you cannot check your mail for an extended period.
When sending a message to more than one mailing list, especially if the lists are closely related, apologize for cross-posting.
If you ask a question, be sure to post a summary. When doing so, truly summarize rather than send a cumulation of the messages you receive.
Some mailing lists are private. Do not send mail to these lists uninvited. Do not report mail from these lists to a wider audience.
If you are caught in an argument, keep the discussion focused on issues rather than the personalities involved.

### 3.1.3 NetNews Guidelines

NetNews is a globally distributed system which allows people to communicate on topics of specific interest. It is divided into hierarchies, with the major divisions being: sci - science related discussions; comp - computer related discussions; news - for discussions which center around NetNews itself; rec - recreational activities; soc - social issues; talk - long-winded never-ending discussions; biz - business related postings; and alt - the alternate hierarchy. Alt is so named because creating an alt group does not go through the same process as creating a group in the other parts of the hierarchy. There are also regional hierarchies, hierarchies which are widely distributed such as Bionet, and your place of business may have its own groups as well. Recently, a "humanities" hierarchy was added, and as

time goes on its likely more will be added. For longer discussions on News see references [2,8,22,23] in the Selected Bibliography.
In NetNews parlance, "Posting" refers to posting a new article to a group, or responding to a post someone else has posted. "Cross-Posting" refers to posting a message to more than one group. If you introduce Cross-Posting to a group, or if you direct "Followup-To:" in the header of your posting, warn readers! Readers will usually assume that the message was posted to a specific group and that followups will go to that group. Headers change this behavior.
Read all of a discussion in progress (we call this a thread) before posting replies. Avoid posting "Me Too" messages, where content is limited to agreement with previous posts. Content of a follow-up post should exceed quoted content.
Send mail when an answer to a question is for one person only. Remember that News has global distribution and the whole world probably is NOT interested in a personal response. However, don't hesitate to post when something will be of general interest to the Newsgroup participants.
Check the "Distribution" section of the header, but don't depend on it. Due to the complex method by which News is delivered, Distribution headers are unreliable. But, if you are posting something which will be of interest to a limited number or readers, use a distribution line that attempts to limit the distribution of your article to those people. For example, set the Distribution to be "nj" if you are posting an article that will be of interest only to New Jersey readers.
If you feel an article will be of interest to more than one Newsgroup, be sure to CROSSPOST the article rather than individually post it to those groups. In general, probably only five-to-six groups will have similar enough interests to warrant this.
Consider using Reference sources (Computer Manuals, Newspapers, help files) before posting a question. Asking a Newsgroup where answers are readily available elsewhere generates grumpy "RTFM" (read the fine manual - although a more vulgar meaning of the word beginning with "f" is usually implied) messages.
Although there are Newsgroups which welcome advertising, in general it is considered nothing less than criminal to advertise off-topic products. Sending an advertisement to each and every group will pretty much guarantee your loss of connectivity.
If you discover an error in your post, cancel it as soon as possible.
DO NOT attempt to cancel any articles but your own. Contact your administrator if you don't know how to cancel your post, or if some other post, such as a chain letter, needs canceling.
If you've posted something and don't see it immediately, don't assume it's failed and re-post it.
Some groups permit (and some welcome) posts which in other circumstances would be considered to be in questionable taste. Still, there is no guarantee that all people reading the group will appreciate the material as much as you do. Use the Rotate utility (which rotates all the characters in your post by 13 positions in the alphabet) to avoid giving offense. The Rot13 utility for Unix is an example.
In groups which discuss movies or books it is considered essential to mark posts which disclose significant content as "Spoilers". Put this word in your Subject: line. You may add blank lines to the beginning of your post to keep content out of sight, or you may Rotate it.
Forging of news articles is generally censured. You can protect yourself from forgeries by using software which generates a manipulation detection "fingerprint", such as PGP (in the US).
Postings via anonymous servers are accepted in some Newsgroups and disliked in others. Material which is inappropriate when posted under one's own name is still inappropriate when posted anonymously.
Expect a slight delay in seeing your post when posting to a moderated group. The moderator may change your subject line to have your post conform to a particular thread.
Don't get involved in flame wars. Neither post nor respond to incendiary material.
3.2 Administrator Guidelines
3.2.1 General Issues
Clarify any policies your site has regarding its subscription to NetNews groups and about subscribing to mailing lists.
Clarify any policies your site has about posting to NetNews groups or to mailing lists, including use of disclaimers in .sigs.
Clarify and publicize archive policy. (How long are articles kept?)
Investigate accusations about your users promptly and with an open mind.
Be sure to monitor the health of your system.
Consider how long to archive system logs, and publicize your policy on logging.
3.2.2 Mailing Lists
Keep mailing lists up to date to avoid the "bouncing mail" problem.
Help list owners when problems arise.
Inform list owners of any maintenance windows or planned downtime.
Be sure to have "-request" aliases for list subscription and administration.
Make sure all mail gateways operate smoothly.
3.2.3. NetNews
Publicize the nature of the feed you receive. If you do not get a full feed, people may want to know why not.
Be aware that the multiplicity of News Reader clients may cause the News Server being blamed for problems in the clients.
Honor requests from users immediately if they request cancellation of their own posts or invalid posts, such as chain letters.
Have "Usenet", "Netnews" and "News" aliased and make sure someone reads the mail.
3.3 Moderator Guidelines
3.3.1 General Guidelines
Make sure your Frequestly Asked Questions (FAQ) is posted at regular intervals. Include your guidelines for articles/messages. If you are not the FAQ maintainer, make sure they do so.
Make sure you maintain a good welcome message, which contains subscribe and unsubscribe information.
Newsgroups should have their charter/guidelines posted regularly.
Keep mailing lists and Newsgroups up to date. Post messages in a timely fashion. Designate a substitute when you go on vacation or out of town.
4.0 Information Services (Gopher, Wais, WWW, ftp, telnet)
In recent Internet history, the 'Net has exploded with new and varied Information services. Gopher, Wais, World Wide Web (WWW), Multi-User Dimensions (MUDs) Multi-User Dimensions which are Object Oriented (MOOs) are a few of

these new areas. Although the ability to find information is exploding, "Caveat Emptor" remains constant. For more information on these services, check references [14,28] in the Selected Bibliography.

4.1 User Guidelines

4.1.1. General guidelines

Remember that all these services belong to someone else. The people who pay the bills get to make the rules governing usage. Information may be free - or it may not be! Be sure you check.

If you have problems with any form of information service, start problem solving by checking locally: Check file configurations, software setup, network connections, etc. Do this before assuming the problem is at the provider's end and/or is the provider's fault.

Although there are naming conventions for file-types used, don't depend on these file naming conventions to be enforced. For example, a ".doc" file is not always a Word file.

Information services also use conventions, such as www.xyz.com. While it is useful to know these conventions, again, don't necessarily rely on them.

Know how file names work on your own system.

Be aware of conventions used for providing information during sessions. FTP sites usually have files named README in a top level directory which have information about the files available. But, don't assume that these files are necessarily up-to-date and/or accurate.

Do NOT assume that ANY information you find is up-to-date and/or accurate. Remember that new technologies allow just about anyone to be a publisher, but not all people have discovered the responsibilities which accompany publishing.

Remember that unless you are sure that security and authentication technology is in use, that any information you submit to a system is being transmitted over the Internet "in the clear", with no protection from "sniffers" or forgers.

Since the Internet spans the globe, remember that Information Services might reflect culture and life-style markedly different from your own community. Materials you find offensive may originate in a geography which finds them acceptable. Keep an open mind.

When wanting information from a popular server, be sure to use a mirror server that's close if a list is provided.

Do not use someone else's FTP site to deposit materials you wish other people to pick up. This is called "dumping" and is not generally acceptable behavior.

When you have trouble with a site and ask for help, be sure to provide as much information as possible in order to help debug the problem.

When bringing up your own information service, such as a homepage, be sure to check with your local system administrator to find what the local guidelines are in affect.

Consider spreading out the system load on popular sites by avoiding "rush hour" and logging in during off-peak times.

4.1.2 Real Time Interactive Services Guidelines (MUDs MOOs IRC)

As in other environments, it is wise to "listen" first to get to know the culture of the group.

It's not necessary to greet everyone on a channel or room personally. Usually one "Hello" or the equivalent is enough. Using the automation features of your client to greet people is not acceptable behavior.

Warn the participants if you intend to ship large quantities of information. If all consent to receiving it, you may send, but sending unwanted information without a warning is considered bad form just as it is in mail.

Don't assume that people who you don't know will want to talk to you. If you feel compelled to send private messages to people you don't know, then be willing to accept gracefully the fact that they might be busy or simply not want to chat with you.

Respect the guidelines of the group. Look for introductory materials for the group. These may be on a related ftp site.

Don't badger other users for personal information such as sex, age, or location. After you have built an acquaintance with another user, these questions may be more appropriate, but many people hesitate to give this information to people with whom they are not familiar.

If a user is using a nickname alias or pseudonym, respect that user's desire for anonymity. Even if you and that person are close friends, it is more courteous to use his nickname. Do not use that person's real name online without permission.

4.2 Administrator Guidelines

4.2.1 General Guidelines

Make clear what's available for copying and what is not.

Describe what's available on your site, and your organization. Be sure any general policies are clear.

Keep information, especially READMEs, up-to-date. Provide READMEs in plain ascii text.

Present a list of mirrors of your site if you know them. Make sure you include a statement of copyright applicable to your mirrors. List their update schedule if possible.

Make sure that popular (and massive) information has the bandwidth to support it.

Use conventions for file extensions - .txt for ascii text; .html or .htm for HTML; .ps for Postscript; .pdf for Portable Document Format; .sgml or .sgm for SGML; .exe for non-Unix executables, etc.

For files being transferred, try to make filenames unique in the first eight characters.

When providing information, make sure your site has something unique to offer. Avoid bringing up an information service which simply points to other services on the Internet.

Don't point to other sites without asking first.

Remember that setting up an information service is more than just design and implementation. It's also maintenance.

Make sure your posted materials are appropriate for the supporting organization.

Test applications with a variety of tools. Don't assume everything works if you've tested with only one client. Also, assume the low end of technology for clients and don't create applications which can only be used by Graphical User Interfaces.

Have a consistent view of your information. Make sure the look and feel stays the same throughout your applications.

Be sensitive to the longevity of your information. Be sure to date time-sensitive materials, and be vigilant about keeping this information well maintained. Export restrictions vary from country to country. Be sure you understand the implications of export restrictions when you post.

Tell users what you plan to do with any information you collect, such as WWW feedback. You need to warn people if you plan to publish any of their statements, even passively by just making it available to other users.

Make sure your policy on user information services, such as homepages, is well known.

# APPENDIX F – SUMMARY STATISTICS OF DISCUSSIONS ON E-NEWS SERVERS

**Content analysis of discussions on Lidovky.cz**

| | # of comments | By women | Negative comment | Offensive comment | Negative ratio |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 207 | 19 | 160 | 45 | 77,29% |
| | 53 | 5 | 45 | 34 | 84,91% |
| | 13 | 18 | 6 | 3 | 46,15% |
| | 120 | 17 | 84 | 24 | 70,00% |
| | 3 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 66,67% |
| | 142 | 22 | 112 | 44 | 78,87% |
| | 236 | 17 | 165 | 71 | 69,92% |
| | 34 | 4 | 20 | 11 | 58,82% |
| | 75 | 21 | 40 | 22 | 53,33% |
| | 7 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 57,14% |
| | 34 | 2 | 26 | 12 | 76,47% |
| | 12 | 0 | 8 | 6 | 66,67% |
| | 78 | 11 | 60 | 34 | 76,92% |
| | 54 | 3 | 19 | 16 | 35,19% |
| | 12 | 3 | 7 | 4 | 58,33% |
| | 111 | 14 | 40 | 29 | 36,04% |
| | 134 | 7 | 96 | 21 | 71,64% |
| | 186 | 20 | 160 | 57 | 86,02% |
| | 15 | 1 | 11 | 5 | 73,33% |
| | 154 | 27 | 105 | 40 | 68,18% |
| | 123 | 24 | 96 | 35 | 78,05% |
| | 49 | 3 | 32 | 18 | 65,31% |
| | 72 | 9 | 57 | 21 | 79,17% |
| | 64 | 8 | 43 | 24 | 67,19% |
| | 38 | 6 | 26 | 13 | 68,42% |
| | 74 | 4 | 49 | 29 | 66,22% |
| | 12 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 33,33% |
| | 75 | 6 | 51 | 21 | 68,00% |
| | 78 | 8 | 56 | 34 | 71,79% |
| | 65 | 4 | 30 | 14 | 46,15% |
| | 22 | 6 | 12 | 9 | 54,55% |
| | 106 | 16 | 89 | 31 | 83,96% |
| | 152 | 24 | 71 | 49 | 46,71% |
| | 45 | 10 | 33 | 19 | 73,33% |
| | 25 | 5 | 12 | 9 | 48,00% |
| | 12 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 50,00% |
| | 43 | 8 | 24 | 19 | 55,81% |
| | 24 | 4 | 15 | 9 | 62,50% |
| | 76 | 13 | 45 | 19 | 59,21% |
| | 9 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 44,44% |
| **Total** | **2844** | **379** | **1925** | **865** | **67,69%** |
| **Percentage** | | ***13,33%*** | ***67,69%*** | ***30,41%*** | |
| **Average** | **71,1** | | | **Variance** | **12,47%** |

## Content analysis of discussions on Novinky.cz

| | # of comments | By women | Negative comment | Offensive comment | Negative ratio |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 25 | 3 | 19 | 6 | 76,00% |
| | 120 | 9 | 103 | 31 | 85,83% |
| | 212 | 29 | 143 | 48 | 67,45% |
| | 56 | 6 | 40 | 14 | 71,43% |
| | 6 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 50,00% |
| | 41 | 7 | 30 | 11 | 73,17% |
| | 75 | 9 | 62 | 15 | 82,67% |
| | 227 | 31 | 180 | 42 | 79,30% |
| | 11 | 2 | 9 | 2 | 81,82% |
| | 86 | 14 | 70 | 19 | 81,40% |
| | 12 | 4 | 9 | 4 | 75,00% |
| | 9 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 44,44% |
| | 94 | 17 | 72 | 16 | 76,60% |
| | 4 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 100,00% |
| | 52 | 8 | 41 | 9 | 78,85% |
| | 48 | 17 | 32 | 4 | 66,67% |
| | 21 | 5 | 14 | 7 | 66,67% |
| | 7 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 71,43% |
| | 36 | 8 | 29 | 8 | 80,56% |
| | 85 | 12 | 72 | 19 | 84,71% |
| | 21 | 5 | 18 | 5 | 85,71% |
| | 13 | 1 | 7 | 3 | 53,85% |
| | 15 | 3 | 9 | 4 | 60,00% |
| | 14 | 2 | 12 | 3 | 85,71% |
| | 31 | 2 | 27 | 9 | 87,10% |
| | 45 | 5 | 31 | 11 | 68,89% |
| | 6 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 50,00% |
| | 179 | 34 | 132 | 47 | 73,74% |
| | 81 | 14 | 61 | 19 | 75,31% |
| | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 50,00% |
| | 34 | 4 | 23 | 9 | 67,65% |
| | 17 | 5 | 11 | 4 | 64,71% |
| | 94 | 24 | 77 | 21 | 81,91% |
| | 24 | 3 | 16 | 5 | 66,67% |
| | 12 | 0 | 11 | 3 | 91,67% |
| | 34 | 11 | 23 | 11 | 67,65% |
| | 12 | 3 | 8 | 3 | 66,67% |
| | 64 | 14 | 33 | 10 | 51,56% |
| | 8 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 37,50% |
| | 21 | 3 | 9 | 4 | 42,86% |
| **Total** | **1954** | **320** | **1456** | **434** | **74,51%** |
| **Percentage** | | ***16,38%*** | ***74,51%*** | ***22,21%*** | |
| **Average** | **48,85** | | | **Variance** | **11,36%** |

## Content analysis of discussions on iList.cz

| # of comments | By man | By woman | Anonymous | Offensive | Offensive & anonymous |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 28 | 24 | 0 | 4 | 10 | 3 |
| 14 | 12 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 2 |
| 35 | 5 | 1 | 29 | 26 | 21 |
| 21 | 8 | 1 | 12 | 10 | 6 |
| 12 | 10 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| 4 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 |
| 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 63 | 29 | 2 | 32 | 29 | 24 |
| 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| 6 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| 6 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 8 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 18 | 10 | 0 | 8 | 9 | 6 |
| 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 295 | 91 | 18 | 186 | 173 | 138 |
| 7 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 17 | 15 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| 16 | 13 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 2 |
| 63 | 48 | 3 | 12 | 14 | 10 |
| 76 | 52 | 7 | 17 | 17 | 14 |
| 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 71 | 19 | 4 | 48 | 35 | 28 |
| 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 5 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 4 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| **804** | **386** | **47** | **371** | **340** | **259** |
| | ***89,15%*** | ***10,85%*** | ***46,14%*** | ***42,29%*** | |

| | |
|---|---|
| Signed (man+woman) | **433** |
| Offensive and anonymous at the same time: | **259** |
| Offensive and signed: | **81** |
| Offensive out of anonymous | **69,81%** |
| Offensive out of signed | **18,71%** |

| | |
|---|---|
| Total articles | 73 |
| Articles with discussion | 34 |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Average # of comments per article** | **11,01** |
| **Average # of comments per commmented article** | **23,65** |

# APPENDIX G – SUMMARY STATISTICS OF CHAT SERVERS

**Attendance to sections on pokec.atlas.cz**

| Total # of users | Cities and places | Hobbies and sports | Love and sex | Dating and romance | Chat and gossip |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 244 | 36 | 5 | 73 | 93 | 37 |
| 395 | 63 | 5 | 114 | 168 | 54 |
| 341 | 38 | 10 | 124 | 120 | 40 |
| 141 | 14 | 2 | 62 | 43 | 10 |
| 257 | 43 | 2 | 51 | 115 | 46 |
| 285 | 58 | 6 | 89 | 173 | 53 |
| 479 | 90 | 2 | 138 | 150 | 100 |
| 260 | 39 | 8 | 84 | 79 | 49 |
| 298 | 25 | 5 | 75 | 119 | 48 |
| 334 | 36 | 4 | 66 | 169 | 51 |
| 340 | 42 | 3 | 115 | 138 | 33 |
| 107 | 15 | 1 | 41 | 29 | 19 |
| 406 | 74 | 4 | 103 | 167 | 56 |
| 430 | 76 | 4 | 99 | 170 | 66 |
| 486 | 79 | 3 | 121 | 222 | 69 |
| 227 | 15 | 5 | 73 | 107 | 36 |
| 319 | 36 | 5 | 71 | 160 | 50 |
| 371 | 63 | 4 | 108 | 151 | 46 |
| 391 | 69 | 7 | 93 | 152 | 69 |
| 502 | 76 | 2 | 138 | 199 | 93 |
| 315 | 32 | 6 | 90 | 129 | 58 |
| 310 | 42 | 5 | 129 | 96 | 36 |
| 434 | 57 | 8 | 121 | 189 | 54 |
| 377 | 59 | 9 | 96 | 162 | 62 |
| 529 | 77 | 7 | 151 | 170 | 66 |
| 116 | 13 | 7 | 48 | 27 | 13 |
| 334,3846 | | | | | |

**Attendance to sections on pokec.atlas.cz**

| | Cities and places | Hobbies and sports | Love and sex | Dating and romance | Chat and gossip |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 14,75% | 2,05% | 29,92% | 38,11% | 15,16% |
| | 15,95% | 1,27% | 28,86% | 42,53% | 13,67% |
| | 11,14% | 2,93% | 36,36% | 35,19% | 11,73% |
| | 9,93% | 1,42% | 43,97% | 30,50% | 7,09% |
| | 16,73% | 0,78% | 19,84% | 44,75% | 17,90% |
| | 20,35% | 2,11% | 31,23% | 60,70% | 18,60% |
| | 18,79% | 0,42% | 28,81% | 31,32% | 20,88% |
| | 15,00% | 3,08% | 32,31% | 30,38% | 18,85% |
| | 8,39% | 1,68% | 25,17% | 39,93% | 16,11% |
| | 10,78% | 1,20% | 19,76% | 50,60% | 15,27% |
| | 12,35% | 0,88% | 33,82% | 40,59% | 9,71% |
| | 14,02% | 0,93% | 38,32% | 27,10% | 17,76% |
| | 18,23% | 0,99% | 25,37% | 41,13% | 13,79% |
| | 17,67% | 0,93% | 23,02% | 39,53% | 15,35% |
| | 16,26% | 0,62% | 24,90% | 45,68% | 14,20% |
| | 6,61% | 2,20% | 32,16% | 47,14% | 15,86% |
| | 11,29% | 1,57% | 22,26% | 50,16% | 15,67% |
| | 16,98% | 1,08% | 29,11% | 40,70% | 12,40% |
| | 17,65% | 1,79% | 23,79% | 38,87% | 17,65% |
| | 15,14% | 0,40% | 27,49% | 39,64% | 18,53% |
| | 10,16% | 1,90% | 28,57% | 40,95% | 18,41% |
| | 13,55% | 1,61% | 41,61% | 30,97% | 11,61% |
| | 13,13% | 1,84% | 27,88% | 43,55% | 12,44% |
| | 15,65% | 2,39% | 25,46% | 42,97% | 16,45% |
| | 14,56% | 1,32% | 28,54% | 32,14% | 12,48% |
| | 11,21% | 6,03% | 41,38% | 23,28% | 11,21% |
| **Average** | **14,09%** | **1,67%** | **29,61%** | **39,55%** | **14,95%** |
| *Variance* | *17,46%* | *2,76%* | *34,73%* | *43,87%* | *17,69%* |
| *Median* | *14,65%* | *1,49%* | *28,69%* | *40,26%* | *15,31%* |

# 2005

**Attendance to sections on pokec.atlas.cz**

| Total # of users | Cities and places | Hobbies and sport | Love and sex | Dating and romance | Chat and gossip |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 455 | 54 | 3 | 144 | 175 | 53 |
| 414 | 60 | 2 | 127 | 171 | 50 |
| 503 | 55 | 2 | 162 | 216 | 64 |
| 296 | 50 | 2 | 104 | 104 | 32 |
| 339 | 57 | 0 | 93 | 137 | 48 |
| 241 | 27 | 3 | 91 | 90 | 24 |
| 249 | 21 | 1 | 108 | 90 | 29 |
| 390 | 51 | 2 | 133 | 161 | 46 |
| 354 | 49 | 3 | 123 | 139 | 27 |
| 418 | 72 | 4 | 116 | 161 | 68 |

| Cities and places | Hobbies and sport | Love and sex | Dating and romance | Chat and gossip |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11,87% | 0,66% | 31,65% | 38,46% | 11,65% |
| 14,49% | 0,48% | 30,68% | 41,30% | 12,08% |
| 10,93% | 0,40% | 32,21% | 42,94% | 12,72% |
| 16,89% | 0,68% | 35,14% | 35,14% | 10,81% |
| 16,81% | 0,00% | 27,43% | 40,41% | 14,16% |
| 11,20% | 1,24% | 37,76% | 37,34% | 9,96% |
| 8,43% | 0,40% | 43,37% | 36,14% | 11,65% |
| 13,08% | 0,51% | 34,10% | 41,28% | 11,79% |
| 13,84% | 0,85% | 34,75% | 39,27% | 7,63% |
| 17,22% | 0,96% | 27,75% | 38,52% | 16,27% |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Average** | **13,48%** | **0,62%** | **33,48%** | **39,08%** | **11,87%** |
| *Variance* | *7,78%* | *0,11%* | *20,31%* | *5,44%* | *4,82%* |
| *Median* | *13,46%* | *0,59%* | *33,15%* | *38,89%* | *11,72%* |

**Attendance to sections on www.lide.cz**

| Total # of users | Cities and places | Hobbies and sport | Love and sex | Dating and romance | Chat and gossip |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5028 | 867 | 533 | 1198 | 885 | 1067 |
| 4479 | 628 | 432 | 1234 | 867 | 959 |
| 4376 | 701 | 557 | 997 | 782 | 1024 |
| 5527 | 1020 | 721 | 1023 | 994 | 1332 |
| 1348 | 215 | 169 | 342 | 302 | 326 |
| 3727 | 516 | 402 | 1050 | 746 | 758 |
| 2728 | 319 | 198 | 964 | 516 | 485 |
| 4686 | 691 | 552 | 1155 | 873 | 1104 |
| 7229 | 1237 | 826 | 1337 | 1244 | 1947 |

| Cities and places | Hobbies and sport | Love and sex | Dating and romance | Chat and gossip |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 17,24% | 10,60% | 23,83% | 17,60% | 21,22% |
| 14,02% | 9,65% | 27,55% | 19,36% | 21,41% |
| 16,02% | 12,73% | 22,78% | 17,87% | 23,40% |
| 18,45% | 13,05% | 18,51% | 17,98% | 24,10% |
| 15,95% | 12,54% | 25,37% | 22,40% | 24,18% |
| 13,84% | 10,79% | 28,17% | 20,02% | 20,34% |
| 11,69% | 7,26% | 35,34% | 18,91% | 17,78% |
| 14,75% | 11,78% | 24,65% | 18,63% | 23,56% |
| 17,11% | 11,43% | 18,49% | 17,21% | 26,93% |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Average** | **15,45%** | **11,09%** | **24,97%** | **18,89%** | **22,55%** |
| *Variance* | *3,87%* | *2,92%* | *23,82%* | *2,25%* | *6,31%* |
| *Median* | *15,95%* | *11,43%* | *24,65%* | *18,63%* | *23,40%* |

**Attendance to sections on www.lide.cz**

| Total # of users | Cities and places | Hobbies and sports | Love and sex | Dating and romance | Chat and gossip |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2314 | 274 | 115 | 593 | 543 | 629 |
| 1620 | 160 | 86 | 600 | 387 | 280 |
| 1732 | 170 | 66 | 698 | 404 | 271 |
| 716 | 49 | 19 | 330 | 162 | 101 |
| 1416 | 170 | 32 | 454 | 426 | 250 |
| 1585 | 208 | 58 | 614 | 490 | 364 |
| 2500 | 244 | 94 | 935 | 629 | 632 |
| 1701 | 150 | 51 | 614 | 428 | 350 |
| 2201 | 302 | 112 | 596 | 509 | 515 |
| 2705 | 370 | 130 | 361 | 655 | 640 |
| 1739 | 189 | 52 | 693 | 406 | 290 |
| 637 | 56 | 13 | 302 | 150 | 88 |
| 1877 | 231 | 62 | 621 | 512 | 352 |
| 1972 | 201 | 53 | 605 | 604 | 396 |
| 2544 | 256 | 81 | 805 | 709 | 558 |
| 1569 | 157 | 82 | 546 | 389 | 314 |
| 2163 | 275 | 110 | 548 | 510 | 555 |
| 2108 | 234 | 69 | 673 | 518 | 437 |
| 2019 | 226 | 40 | 693 | 554 | 387 |
| 2578 | 269 | 79 | 841 | 650 | 586 |
| 2756 | 357 | 176 | 708 | 617 | 689 |
| 1684 | 151 | 53 | 676 | 438 | 255 |
| 2082 | 206 | 47 | 636 | 585 | 475 |
| 1839 | 212 | 28 | 575 | 525 | 383 |
| 2185 | 230 | 73 | 725 | 570 | 454 |
| 638 | 41 | 26 | 307 | 159 | 73 |
| 1880 | | | | | |

**Attendance to sections on www.lide.cz**

| | Cities and places | Hobbies and sports | Love and sex | Dating and romance | Chat and gossip |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 11,84% | 4,97% | 25,63% | 23,47% | 27,18% |
| | 9,88% | 5,31% | 37,04% | 23,89% | 17,28% |
| | 9,82% | 3,81% | 40,30% | 23,33% | 15,65% |
| | 6,84% | 2,65% | 46,09% | 22,63% | 14,11% |
| | 12,01% | 2,26% | 32,06% | 30,08% | 17,66% |
| | 13,12% | 3,66% | 38,74% | 30,91% | 22,97% |
| | 9,76% | 3,76% | 37,40% | 25,16% | 25,28% |
| | 8,82% | 3,00% | 36,10% | 25,16% | 20,58% |
| | 13,72% | 5,09% | 27,08% | 23,13% | 23,40% |
| | 13,68% | 4,81% | 13,35% | 24,21% | 23,66% |
| | 10,87% | 2,99% | 39,85% | 23,35% | 16,68% |
| | 8,79% | 2,04% | 47,41% | 23,55% | 13,81% |
| | 12,31% | 3,30% | 33,08% | 27,28% | 18,75% |
| | 10,19% | 2,69% | 30,68% | 30,63% | 20,08% |
| | 10,06% | 3,18% | 31,64% | 27,87% | 21,93% |
| | 10,01% | 5,23% | 34,80% | 24,79% | 20,01% |
| | 12,71% | 5,09% | 25,34% | 23,58% | 25,66% |
| | 11,10% | 3,27% | 31,93% | 24,57% | 20,73% |
| | 11,19% | 1,98% | 34,32% | 27,44% | 19,17% |
| | 10,43% | 3,06% | 32,62% | 25,21% | 22,73% |
| | 12,95% | 6,39% | 25,69% | 22,39% | 25,00% |
| | 8,97% | 3,15% | 40,14% | 26,01% | 15,14% |
| | 9,89% | 2,26% | 30,55% | 28,10% | 22,81% |
| | 11,53% | 1,52% | 31,27% | 28,55% | 20,83% |
| | 10,53% | 3,34% | 33,18% | 26,09% | 20,78% |
| | 6,43% | 4,08% | 48,12% | 24,92% | 11,44% |
| | **10,67%** | **3,57%** | **34,02%** | **25,63%** | **20,13%** |
| **Average** | **10,63%** | **3,52%** | **34,34%** | **25,71%** | **19,86%** |
| *Variance* | *11,24%* | *6,20%* | *42,09%* | *25,80%* | *20,16%* |
| *Median* | *10,48%* | *3,29%* | *33,60%* | *25,16%* | *20,35%* |

**Attendance to sections on www.xko.cz**

| Total # of users | Cities and places | Hobbies and sports | Love and sex | Dating and romance | Chat and gossip |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 657 | 85 | 53 | 203 | 189 | 123 |
| 690 | 89 | 39 | 212 | 196 | 139 |
| 890 | 101 | 58 | 282 | 248 | 195 |
| 549 | 55 | 29 | 160 | 136 | 110 |
| 757 | 119 | 39 | 192 | 192 | 194 |
| 738 | 82 | 37 | 236 | 181 | 153 |
| 567 | 83 | 30 | 180 | 142 | 98 |
| 606 | 82 | 73 | 173 | 153 | 95 |
| 251 | 26 | 37 | 74 | 64 | 35 |
| 496 | 60 | 29 | 159 | 149 | 88 |
| 965 | 125 | 98 | 248 | 231 | 193 |
| 589 | 73 | 19 | 200 | 184 | 89 |
| 729 | 94 | 27 | 223 | 205 | 166 |
| 595 | 62 | 18 | 184 | 150 | 123 |
| 770 | 120 | 90 | 209 | 178 | 120 |
| 947 | 130 | 125 | 201 | 229 | 224 |
| 644 | 84 | 38 | 201 | 184 | 134 |
| 765 | 81 | 26 | 254 | 200 | 159 |
| 223 | 21 | 9 | 66 | 80 | 26 |
| 902 | 94 | 28 | 294 | 228 | 205 |
| 810 | 96 | 40 | 208 | 210 | 220 |
| 609 | 68 | 49 | 194 | 174 | 102 |
| 223 | 22 | 31 | 75 | 63 | 31 |
| 875 | 81 | 53 | 246 | 220 | 221 |
| 555 | 63 | 30 | 160 | 172 | 127 |
| 637 | 80 | 59 | 150 | 180 | 88 |
| 655,3462 | | | | | |

**Attendance to sections on www.xko.cz**

| Cities and places | Hobbies and sports | Love and sex | Dating and romance | Chat and gossip |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12,94% | 8,07% | 30,90% | 28,77% | 18,72% |
| 12,90% | 5,65% | 30,72% | 28,41% | 20,14% |
| 11,35% | 6,52% | 31,69% | 27,87% | 21,91% |
| 10,02% | 5,28% | 29,14% | 24,77% | 20,04% |
| 15,72% | 5,15% | 25,36% | 25,36% | 25,63% |
| 11,11% | 5,01% | 31,98% | 24,53% | 20,73% |
| 14,64% | 5,29% | 31,75% | 25,04% | 17,28% |
| 13,53% | 12,05% | 28,55% | 25,25% | 15,68% |
| 10,36% | 14,74% | 29,48% | 25,50% | 13,94% |
| 12,10% | 5,85% | 32,06% | 30,04% | 17,74% |
| 12,95% | 10,16% | 25,70% | 23,94% | 20,00% |
| 12,39% | 3,23% | 33,96% | 31,24% | 15,11% |
| 12,89% | 3,70% | 30,59% | 28,12% | 22,77% |
| 10,42% | 3,03% | 30,92% | 25,21% | 20,67% |
| 15,58% | 11,69% | 27,14% | 23,12% | 15,58% |
| 13,73% | 13,20% | 21,22% | 24,18% | 23,65% |
| 13,04% | 5,90% | 31,21% | 28,57% | 20,81% |
| 10,59% | 3,40% | 33,20% | 26,14% | 20,78% |
| 9,42% | 4,04% | 29,60% | 35,87% | 11,66% |
| 10,42% | 3,10% | 32,59% | 25,28% | 22,73% |
| 11,85% | 4,94% | 25,68% | 25,93% | 27,16% |
| 11,17% | 8,05% | 31,86% | 28,57% | 16,75% |
| 9,87% | 13,90% | 33,63% | 28,25% | 13,90% |
| 9,26% | 6,06% | 28,11% | 25,14% | 25,26% |
| 11,35% | 5,41% | 28,83% | 30,99% | 22,88% |
| 12,56% | 9,26% | 23,55% | 28,26% | 13,81% |
| **12,01%** | **7,03%** | **29,59%** | **27,09%** | **19,44%** |
| **Average** | **6,99%** | **29,54%** | **27,03%** | **19,46%** |
| *Variance* | *8,41%* | *33,11%* | *30,55%* | *23,35%* |
| *Median* | *5,75%* | *30,09%* | *26,03%* | *20,09%* |

**Detailed statistics of section Cities and places on pokec.atlas.cz**

| | avg. sers per room | occupancy rate of the section | % women in section | Anonymous woman / anoymous man | Woman who stays anonymous | % anonymous in the section |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2,12 | 14,75% | 52,78% | 60,00% | 63,16% | 55,56% |
| | 3,00 | 15,95% | 46,03% | 39,13% | 31,03% | 36,51% |
| | 1,90 | 11,14% | 50,00% | 42,86% | 15,79% | 18,42% |
| | 1,17 | 9,93% | 42,86% | 42,86% | 50,00% | 50,00% |
| | 2,69 | 16,73% | 51,16% | 50,00% | 22,73% | 23,26% |
| | 2,90 | 20,35% | 51,72% | 50,00% | 23,33% | 24,14% |
| | 3,60 | 18,79% | 52,22% | 50,00% | 42,55% | 44,44% |
| | 2,60 | 15,00% | 46,15% | 52,38% | 61,11% | 53,85% |
| | 1,47 | 8,39% | 40,00% | 63,64% | 70,00% | 44,00% |
| | 2,00 | 10,78% | 44,44% | 50,00% | 31,25% | 27,78% |
| | 2,10 | 12,35% | 47,62% | 40,00% | 20,00% | 23,81% |
| | 1,25 | 14,02% | 46,67% | 66,67% | 57,14% | 40,00% |
| | 3,08 | 18,23% | 48,65% | 47,83% | 30,56% | 31,08% |
| | 2,92 | 17,67% | 46,05% | 67,86% | 54,29% | 36,84% |
| | 2,39 | 16,26% | 46,84% | 46,67% | 37,84% | 37,97% |
| | 1,67 | 6,61% | 33,33% | 50,00% | 40,00% | 26,67% |
| | 2,40 | 11,29% | 16,67% | 33,33% | 33,33% | 16,67% |
| | 2,42 | 16,98% | 41,27% | 25,00% | 19,23% | 31,75% |
| | 2,65 | 17,65% | 46,38% | 33,33% | 15,63% | 21,74% |
| | 2,45 | 15,14% | 38,16% | 37,93% | 37,93% | 38,16% |
| | 2,29 | 10,16% | 56,25% | 66,67% | 33,33% | 28,13% |
| | 2,47 | 13,55% | 47,62% | 30,00% | 15,00% | 23,81% |
| | 2,59 | 13,13% | 45,61% | 28,57% | 15,38% | 24,56% |
| | 2,57 | 15,65% | 50,85% | 56,25% | 30,00% | 27,12% |
| | 3,21 | 14,56% | 51,95% | 50,00% | 32,50% | 33,77% |
| | 1,08 | 11,21% | 23,08% | 50,00% | 33,33% | 15,38% |
| **Average** | **2,35** | **14,09%** | **44,78%** | **47,34%** | **35,25%** | **32,13%** |
| *Variance* | **0,49** | **2,81%** | **6,04%** | **9,32%** | **12,43%** | **9,05%** |
| *Median* | *2,44* | *0,15* | *0,47* | *0,50* | *0,33* | *0,30* |

**Detailed statistics of section Hobbies and sports on pokec.atlas.cz**

| | avg. sers per room | occupancy rate of the section | % women in section | Anonymous woman / anoymous man | Woman who stays anonymous | % anonymous in the section |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1,00 | 2,05% | 60,00% | 50,00% | 33,33% | 40,00% |
| | 1,00 | 1,27% | 40,00% | 100,00% | 50,00% | 20,00% |
| | 2,00 | 2,93% | 60,00% | 0,00% | 0,00% | 10,00% |
| | 0,40 | 1,42% | 50,00% | 0,00% | 0,00% | 50,00% |
| | 0,40 | 0,78% | 50,00% | 100,00% | 100,00% | 50,00% |
| | 1,20 | 2,11% | 50,00% | 100,00% | 66,67% | 33,33% |
| | 0,40 | 0,42% | 50,00% | 100,00% | 100,00% | 50,00% |
| | 1,14 | 3,08% | 37,50% | 50,00% | 33,33% | 25,00% |
| | 0,83 | 1,68% | 40,00% | 100,00% | 100,00% | 40,00% |
| | 0,80 | 1,20% | 50,00% | 100,00% | 50,00% | 25,00% |
| | 0,60 | 0,88% | 33,33% | 50,00% | 100,00% | 66,67% |
| | 0,17 | 0,93% | 0,00% | #DIV/0! | #DIV/0! | 0,00% |
| | 0,67 | 0,99% | 0,00% | #DIV/0! | #DIV/0! | 0,00% |
| | 0,80 | 0,93% | 50,00% | 100,00% | 50,00% | 25,00% |
| | 0,50 | 0,62% | 66,67% | 100,00% | 50,00% | 33,33% |
| | 0,83 | 2,20% | 20,00% | 100,00% | 100,00% | 20,00% |
| | 0,83 | 1,57% | 40,00% | 50,00% | 50,00% | 40,00% |
| | 0,80 | 1,08% | 25,00% | 0,00% | 0,00% | 25,00% |
| | 1,40 | 1,79% | 57,14% | 0,00% | 0,00% | 14,29% |
| | 0,40 | 0,40% | 100,00% | 50,00% | 50,00% | 100,00% |
| | 1,20 | 1,90% | 50,00% | 100,00% | 33,33% | 16,67% |
| | 0,83 | 1,61% | 20,00% | 100,00% | 100,00% | 20,00% |
| | 1,33 | 1,84% | 50,00% | 66,67% | 50,00% | 37,50% |
| | 1,50 | 2,39% | 66,67% | 50,00% | 16,67% | 22,22% |
| | 0,88 | 1,32% | 57,14% | 100,00% | 25,00% | 14,29% |
| | 1,17 | 6,03% | 42,86% | #DIV/0! | 0,00% | 0,00% |
| **Average** | **0,89** | **1,67%** | **44,86%** | | | **29,93%** |
| *Variance* | **0,31** | **0,74%** | **14,98%** | | | **16,27%** |
| *Median* | *0,83* | *0,01* | *0,50* | | | *0,25* |

**Detailed statistics of section Love and sex on pokec.atlas.cz**

| avg. sers per room | occupancy rate of the section | % women in section | Anonymous woman / anoymous man | Woman who stays anonymous | % anonymous in the section | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1,92 | 29,92% | 31,51% | 20,00% | 39,13% | 61,64% | |
| 2,65 | 28,86% | 36,84% | 32,20% | 45,24% | 51,75% | |
| 2,48 | 36,36% | 31,45% | 17,46% | 28,21% | 50,81% | |
| 2,14 | 43,97% | 43,55% | 27,27% | 33,33% | 53,23% | |
| 2,22 | 19,84% | 43,14% | 39,13% | 40,91% | 45,10% | |
| 1,98 | 31,23% | 34,83% | 32,08% | 54,84% | 59,55% | |
| 2,88 | 28,81% | 42,03% | 41,05% | 67,24% | 68,84% | |
| 2,33 | 32,31% | 35,71% | 38,71% | 80,00% | 73,81% | |
| 2,78 | 25,17% | 41,33% | 38,46% | 48,39% | 52,00% | |
| 2,54 | 19,76% | 42,42% | 39,47% | 53,57% | 57,58% | |
| 3,38 | 33,82% | 36,52% | 26,00% | 30,95% | 43,48% | |
| 2,93 | 38,32% | 36,59% | 28,57% | 40,00% | 51,22% | |
| 3,03 | 25,37% | 40,78% | 44,07% | 61,90% | 57,28% | |
| 2,48 | 23,02% | 35,35% | 34,55% | 54,29% | 55,56% | |
| 2,69 | 24,90% | 33,88% | 30,88% | 51,22% | 56,20% | |
| 2,92 | 32,16% | 36,99% | 37,84% | 51,85% | 50,68% | |
| 2,03 | 22,26% | 25,35% | 24,39% | 55,56% | 57,75% | |
| 2,63 | 29,11% | 36,11% | 25,00% | 41,03% | 59,26% | |
| 2,16 | 23,79% | 35,48% | 32,86% | 69,70% | 75,27% | |
| 2,60 | 27,49% | 40,58% | 39,00% | 69,64% | 72,46% | |
| 3,00 | 28,57% | 36,67% | 32,73% | 54,55% | 61,11% | |
| 2,63 | 41,61% | 34,88% | 27,14% | 42,22% | 54,26% | |
| 2,75 | 27,88% | 31,40% | 32,76% | 50,00% | 47,93% | |
| 2,82 | 25,46% | 35,42% | 33,33% | 58,82% | 62,50% | |
| 2,70 | 28,54% | 37,09% | 39,53% | 60,71% | 56,95% | |
| 2,18 | 41,38% | 31,25% | 69,23% | 60,00% | 27,08% | |
| **2,57** | **29,61%** | **36,43%** | **33,99%** | **51,67%** | **56,28%** | |
| **0,29** | **5,00%** | **3,15%** | **6,70%** | **9,95%** | **7,10%** | *Variance* |
| *2,63* | *0,29* | *0,36* | *0,33* | *0,53* | *0,57* | *Median* |

**Detailed statistics of section Dating and romance on pokec.atlas.cz**

| avg. users per room | occupancy rate of the section | % women in section | Anonymous woman / anoymous man | Woman who stays anonymous | % anonymous in the section |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8,45 | 38,11% | 41,94% | 40,91% | 23,08% | 23,66% |
| 8,84 | 42,53% | 44,64% | 40,54% | 20,00% | 22,02% |
| 5,71 | 35,19% | 37,50% | 41,94% | 28,89% | 25,83% |
| 6,14 | 30,50% | 39,53% | 50,00% | 41,18% | 32,56% |
| 8,21 | 44,75% | 56,52% | 57,78% | 40,00% | 39,13% |
| 10,81 | 60,70% | 49,13% | 57,97% | 47,06% | 39,88% |
| 8,33 | 31,32% | 47,33% | 59,09% | 18,31% | 14,67% |
| 5,27 | 30,38% | 40,51% | 42,86% | 18,75% | 17,72% |
| 14,88 | 39,93% | 52,10% | 54,29% | 30,65% | 29,41% |
| 9,94 | 50,60% | 28,99% | 54,17% | 26,53% | 14,20% |
| 7,26 | 40,59% | 36,23% | 50,00% | 20,00% | 14,49% |
| 2,90 | 27,10% | 37,93% | 42,86% | 27,27% | 24,14% |
| 11,93 | 41,13% | 47,90% | 48,39% | 37,50% | 37,13% |
| 9,44 | 39,53% | 51,18% | 51,56% | 37,93% | 37,65% |
| 8,22 | 45,68% | 48,65% | 56,58% | 39,81% | 34,23% |
| 7,13 | 47,14% | 43,93% | 62,96% | 36,17% | 25,23% |
| 9,41 | 50,16% | 48,75% | 56,00% | 35,90% | 31,25% |
| 10,07 | 40,70% | 46,36% | 35,48% | 15,71% | 20,53% |
| 8,44 | 38,87% | 46,05% | 75,00% | 42,86% | 26,32% |
| 11,06 | 39,64% | 59,30% | 64,91% | 31,36% | 28,64% |
| 8,06 | 40,95% | 44,19% | 42,11% | 28,07% | 29,46% |
| 4,57 | 30,97% | 43,75% | 41,67% | 23,81% | 25,00% |
| 12,60 | 43,55% | 50,26% | 48,21% | 28,42% | 29,63% |
| 9,00 | 42,97% | 46,30% | 46,43% | 34,67% | 34,57% |
| 11,33 | 32,14% | 52,35% | 51,43% | 20,22% | 20,59% |
| 4,50 | 23,28% | 48,15% | 25,00% | 7,69% | 14,81% |
| **8,56** | **39,55%** | **45,75%** | **49,93%** | **29,30%** | **26,64%** |
| **2,05** | **5,98%** | **4,93%** | **7,90%** | **7,96%** | **6,45%** |
| *8,45* | *0,40* | *0,46* | *0,50* | *0,29* | *0,26* |

**Detailed statistics of section Chat and gossip on pokec.atlas.cz**

| | occupancy rate of the section | % women in section | Anonymous woman / anoymous man | Woman who stays anonymous | % anonymous in the section |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3,70 | 15,16% | 54,05% | 50,00% | 40,00% | 43,24% |
| 3,00 | 13,67% | 55,56% | 61,11% | 36,67% | 33,33% |
| 2,67 | 11,73% | 45,00% | 40,00% | 11,11% | 12,50% |
| 1,43 | 7,09% | 50,00% | 66,67% | 40,00% | 30,00% |
| 2,88 | 17,90% | 41,30% | 40,91% | 47,37% | 47,83% |
| 2,94 | 18,60% | 56,60% | 62,50% | 33,33% | 30,19% |
| 5,00 | 20,88% | 54,00% | 64,29% | 33,33% | 28,00% |
| 3,50 | 18,85% | 48,98% | 73,33% | 45,83% | 30,61% |
| 4,00 | 16,11% | 43,75% | 63,64% | 33,33% | 22,92% |
| 3,00 | 15,27% | 43,14% | 36,84% | 31,82% | 37,25% |
| 2,54 | 9,71% | 33,33% | 28,57% | 18,18% | 21,21% |
| 1,73 | 17,76% | 47,37% | 25,00% | 11,11% | 21,05% |
| 3,73 | 13,79% | 35,71% | 60,00% | 30,00% | 17,86% |
| 3,47 | 15,35% | 27,27% | 37,50% | 16,67% | 12,12% |
| 3,45 | 14,20% | 47,83% | 55,00% | 33,33% | 28,99% |
| 3,27 | 15,86% | 50,00% | 50,00% | 16,67% | 16,67% |
| 3,33 | 15,67% | 60,00% | 45,45% | 33,33% | 44,00% |
| 2,71 | 12,40% | 50,00% | 44,44% | 34,78% | 39,13% |
| 3,29 | 17,65% | 52,17% | 50,00% | 30,56% | 31,88% |
| 4,23 | 18,53% | 47,31% | 43,48% | 22,73% | 24,73% |
| 3,87 | 18,41% | 56,90% | 62,50% | 30,30% | 27,59% |
| 3,00 | 11,61% | 38,89% | 50,00% | 21,43% | 16,67% |
| 3,00 | 12,44% | 46,30% | 53,33% | 32,00% | 27,78% |
| 2,95 | 16,45% | 40,32% | 57,89% | 44,00% | 30,65% |
| 3,14 | 12,48% | 43,94% | 50,00% | 34,48% | 30,30% |
| 1,86 | 11,21% | 38,46% | 33,33% | 20,00% | 23,08% |
| **3,14** | **14,95%** | **46,47%** | **50,22%** | **30,09%** | **28,06%** |
| **0,55** | **2,63%** | **6,17%** | **9,83%** | **7,92%** | **7,12%** |
| *3,07* | *0,15* | *0,47* | *0,50* | *0,33* | *0,28* |

# APPENDIX H – QUESTIONNAIRES & RESULTS

**Questionnaire A**

Target group: Internet users in Czech republic

Number of respondents: 347

Dates of survey: 24. 04. 2004 – 14. 5. 2004

Method of acquiring respondents: Group e-mail to all my friends and persons listed in my address book (164 entries), in which I asked them to fill-in the Questionnaire (by clicking on provided link to the Questionnaire A) and forward the e-mail on to their friends (so called Snow ball method).

**1) When have you started use the internet?**

- Less than year ago 23,70 %
- 1-3 year ago 45,36 %
- more than 3 years ago 30,94 %

**2) Which services of the internet you use regularly?**

- Mainly just WWW 13,26 %
- Mainly just e-mail 3,42 %
- Both WWW and email but nothing else 67,11 %
- WWW, email and some other services 16,21 %

**3) Do you consider the internet as an anonymous medium?**

- Yes 72,34 %
- No 27,66 %

And Why....

**4) If Yes, do you consider anonymity on the internet as an advantage or disadvantage of this medium?**

- Advantage 23,04 %
- Disadvantage 16,79 %
- Both at the same time 60,17 %

And why…

**5) Do you have freemail email account?**

- Yes, and I use it as my main email account 50,19 %
- Yes, but only as a secondary email account 33,49 %
- No 16,32 %

And Why…

**6) Do you visit e-News servers (www.lidovky.cz, www.novinky.cz, www.idnes.cz, …)**

- Yes, regularly 23,41 %
- Yes, sometimes 35,88 %
- No 40,70 %

And why…

**7) Do you read also discussions bellow the articles?**

- Yes 6,07 %
- Just briefly 21,26 %
- No 72,67 %

And why…

**8) Do you also add your own comments there?**

- Yes 1,76 %
- Sometimes – rarely 7,13 %
- No 91,11 %

And why

**9) If Yes, do you sign your comments?**

- Always 34,60 %
- It depends… 28,60 %
- No, I prefer anonymity. 36,80 %
- And why…

**10) Are you**

- Male 62,34 %
- Female 37,66 %

**11) What's your age?**

- 10 – 15 years 12,19 %
- 15 – 20 years 28,76 %
- 20 – 30 years 31,11 %
- 30 – 40 years 19,21 %
- 40 – 50 years 12,44 %
- more than 50 years 6,29 %

## Questionnaire B

Number of respondents: **167**

Target group: **Users of chat servers** pokec.atlas.cz, www.lide.cz, www.xko.cz

Dates of survey: 24. 04. 2004 – 14. 5. 2004

Method of acquiring respondents: Contacting them directly in chat rooms on chat servers. I was logged under normal user name and asked the people I met there to do me a favour. When they agreed, I gave them link to the address, where Questionnaire B was located.

**1) When have you started use the internet?**

- Less than year ago 43,16 %
- 1-3 year ago 47,87 %
- more than 3 years ago 8,97 %

**2) Which services of the internet you use regularly?**

- Mainly WWW 34,87 %
- Mainly e-mail 0,41 %
- Both WWW and email but nothing else 56,18 %
- WWW, email and some other services 8,54 %

**3) Do you consider the internet as an anonymous medium?**

- Yes 85,92 %
- No 14.08 %

And Why....

**4) How often do you go to the internet chat?**

- Regularly
  - Every day 6,32 %
  - 3-4x per week 29,14 %
  - At leas once a week 17,75 %
- Irregularly
  - When I have spare time and 12,44 %
  - When I'm feeling blue 7,31 %
  - When need some distraction 9,49 %
  - Other reasons … please specify 20,55 %

**5) Where are you connected to the internet from, while you are on chat? (more than 1 answer possible)**

- Office/Work 34,16 %
- University 22,97 %
- High School 12,52 %
- Home – broadband 27,31 %
- Home – dialup 1,34 %
- Internet Café 2,07 %
- Other 27,38 %

**6) How much time aprox. do you spend here in one session.**

- Just a few minutes 1,34 %
- Up to ½ hour 12,46 %
- Up to 1 hour 17,61 %
- 2-3 hours 36,30 %
- more 32,29 %

**7) Why do you go to the internet chat (possible more reasons)**

- Just for fun 32,48 %
- Talk with strangers 19,60 %
- Nothing else to do 31,37 %
- See and talk to my friends there 25,12 %
- It's the cheapest medium of communication for me and my friends 15,47 %
- Other…. 37,17 %

**8) Do you meet some of your real-world friends also on the chat?**

- Yes 30,78 %
- No 69,22 %

**9) Do you regularly visit more than one chat server?**

- Yes 26,73 %
- No 73,27 %

**10) Do you have any particular favorite chat-room or chat section?**

- Yes – and I usually do not attend any other 18,37 %
- Yes – but time to time visit also others. 66,84 %
- No 14,79 %

**11) Do you have your own username/nickname or do you prefer anonymous login?**

- Nickname – just one 28,60 %
- More than one nickname 36,79 %
- No nickname – use generic anonymous login 34,61 %

Why?

**12) Do you mind, if the partner in discussion is anonymous?**

- I don't like it. 24,52 %
- I don't mind. 63,71 %
- I prefer that 11,77 %

Why?

**13) Have you ever revealed your real-world identity (name, address, phone number, …) on the chat?**

- Yes, I am quiet open and don't mind. 16,35 %
- Just something, not all of it. 57,13 %
- Never 21.25 %
- Other answer... 5,27 %

**14) Have you ever established long-lasting friendship on the chat?**

- Yes 18,43 %
- No, I would rather talk about acquaintances 29,16 %
- No, it never lasts 25,26 %
- No 27,15 %

Please, explain…

**15) Have you ever met some other chat user in the real-world?**

- Yes 21,75 %
- No 78,25 %

Comments on that…

**16) If yes, did it work out? Did you understand each other as well as in cyberspace?**

- Yes 28,31 %
- No 71,69 %

Why?

**17) Are you**

- Male 51,36 %
- Female 48,64 %

**18) What's your age?**

- 10 – 15 years 18,34 %
- 15 – 20 years 36,17 %
- 20 – 30 years 24,93 %
- 30 – 40 years 12,88 %
- 40 – 50 years 4,27 %
- more than 50 years 3.41 %

# APPENDIX J – LIST OF ARTICLES, WHERE DETAILS OF COMMENTS WERE STUDIED

**SET 1**

**Mluvme, jak nám zobák narost**
*http://zpravy.centrum.cz/clanek.phtml?id=386211*

**Jazykovědce trápí "volování"**
*http://zpravy.centrum.cz/zajimavosti/clanek.phtml?id=397913*

**McDonald's a muezzíni**
*http://zpravy.centrum.cz/zajimavosti/clanek.phtml?id=398272*

**Česku hrozí vlna protestů lékařů**
*http://zpravy.centrum.cz/domov/clanek.phtml?id=395376*

**Emmerová škodí oboru, tvrdí lékaři**
*http://zpravy.centrum.cz/clanek.phtml?id=394790*

**Lékaři plánují bojkot knížek**
*http://zpravy.centrum.cz/domov/clanek.phtml?id=376858*

**Katolíci bojují proti slovenské verzi VyVolených**
*http://zpravy.centrum.cz/svet/clanek.phtml?id=399331*

**Hornová zaplatila za neúspěch Big Brother**
*http://zpravy.centrum.cz/domov/clanek.phtml?id=399327*

**Nad Saturnovým měsícem se drží vodní pára**
*http://zpravy.centrum.cz/zajimavosti/clanek.phtml?id=399338*

**Přejel policistu, odsedí si 10 let**
*http://zpravy.centrum.cz/domov/clanek.phtml?id=399309*

**Na silnicích začal další "Kryštof"**
*http://zpravy.centrum.cz/domov/clanek.phtml?id=323949*

**Kapela Kryštof zve posluchače do svého Mikrokosmu**
*http://zpravy.centrum.cz/kultura/clanek.phtml?id=295476*

**Česko půjčí radar Věra Pákistánu**
*http://zpravy.centrum.cz/domov/clanek.phtml?id=399348*

**Radar Věra putuje do USA**
*http://zpravy.centrum.cz/domov/clanek.phtml?id=390447*

**Radar Věra smí do Pákistánu**
*http://zpravy.centrum.cz/domov/clanek.phtml?id=386394*

**Česko prodalo Estonsku radar Věra**
*http://zpravy.centrum.cz/domov/clanek.phtml?id=370425*

**Vrah střihače zabíjel ukradenou pistolí**
*http://zpravy.centrum.cz/domov/clanek.phtml?id=399347*

**Policie zná vraha střihače Novy**
*http://zpravy.centrum.cz/domov/clanek.phtml?id=398276*

**SET 2**

**Mladíci dostali za vraždu výjimečné tresty**
*http://zpravy.centrum.cz/domov/clanek.phtml?id=400231*

**Rita míří na Houston, lidé utíkají z domovů**
*http://zpravy.centrum.cz/svet/clanek.phtml?id=399831*

**Tragická nehoda tramvaje se dostala před soud**
*http://zpravy.centrum.cz/domov/clanek.phtml?id=400238*

**Bublan: Krejčíř už není českým občanem**
*http://zpravy.centrum.cz/domov/clanek.phtml?id=400196*

**Poborskému sdělili vyhazov esemeskou**
*http://zpravy.centrum.cz/sport/clanek.phtml?id=400206*

**Kalousek používá afektovanou sprostotu**
*http://zpravy.centrum.cz/domov/clanek.phtml?id=400226*

**Kvůli letové dráze v Ruzyni se bude vyvlastňovat**
*http://zpravy.centrum.cz/domov/clanek.phtml?id=400194*

**Studie EU: Islámský terorismus neexistuje**
*http://zpravy.centrum.cz/eu/clanek.phtml?id=399827*

**Po harleji má Tlustý i ruského veterána**
*http://zpravy.centrum.cz/zajimavosti/clanek.phtml?id=399828*

**Letadlu při přistání shořel podvozek**
*http://zpravy.centrum.cz/svet/clanek.phtml?id=399833*

**Ministerstvo začalo kontrolovat ceny benzinu**
*http://zpravy.centrum.cz/ekonomika/clanek.phtml?id=399743*

**Premiér slibuje vyšší dávky**
*http://zpravy.centrum.cz/ekonomika/clanek.phtml?id=399420*

**Bush prohrál spor o vězně z Guantánama**
*http://zpravy.centrum.cz/svet/clanek.phtml?id=273375*

**Byznys válcuje lidská práva**
*http://zpravy.centrum.cz/ekonomika/clanek.phtml?id=399829*

**Haider prodává levnější naftu**
*http://zpravy.centrum.cz/ekonomika/clanek.phtml?id=399830*

**Kellner je dolarový miliardář**
*http://zpravy.centrum.cz/ekonomika/clanek.phtml?id=399412*

# POSUDEK RIGORÓZNÍ PRÁCE

**Téma práce:** Anonymity on the internet and its influence on the communication process

**Autor:** Ing. Mgr. Antonín Pavlíček

Rigorózní práce Antonína Pavlíčka je rozšířenou a upravenou verzí práce, kterou autor vypracoval a předložil jako práci diplomovou. Jelikož jsem se na vzniku původní diplomové práce účastnil v roli konzultanta, nebyla pro mě její rozšířená verze úplnou novinkou.

Autor rozpracoval a obohatil úvodní teoretickou část. Na hypotéze ani závěrech se nic zásadního nezměnilo a mohu proto jen zopakovat to, co jsem napsal v konzultantském posudku k jeho diplomové práci (viz níže). Pozitivně lze hodnotit přepracování pasáží, ke kterým se v posudcích objevily výhrady (mám na mysli zejména shrnutí v českém jazyce), a především doplnění výzkumu o nová data. Srovnání výsledků výzkumu z let 2003-4 a 2005 při zachování jednotné metodiky poukazuje na déledobou platnost autorových empiricky ověřených hypotéz.

Antonín Pavlíček dále využil technologické změny v diskusích na serveru Lidovky.cz k tomu, aby dokázal, že diskutující čtenáři jsou loajální ke svým přezdívkám - dávají tedy přednost pseudonymitě před anonymitou.

Je potěšitelné, že autor nerozšiřoval svou původní práci samoúčelně, ale pokusil se ji obohatit o nové poznatky. Vzhledem ke kvalitě původní diplomové práce proto nemohu jinak, než tuto rigorózní práci doporučit k obhajobě a navrhnout klasifikovat stupněm výborně.

Mgr. Tomáš Mrkvička

**Příloha: původní posudek na diplomovou práci**

Diplomová práce se věnuje hojně diskutovanému tématu anonymity v on-line komunikaci a jejím vlivu na komunikační proces. Zatímco jedni vidí anonymitu jako jednu z největších výhod komunikace prostřednictvím internetu, druzí v ní spatřují největší nebezpečí.

Autor ve své práci pojímá téma anonymity komplexně, nesoustředí se jen na anonymitu v on-line prostředí. Začíná výkladem přístupů různých sociálních teorií k problému anonymity a popisuje její výhody a nevýhody. Dále se zabývá popisem celé škály od anonymity k identitě, konstruováním identity v on-line prostředí a otázkou důvěry (proč se lidé spoléhají na informace na internetu, i když jsou nedůvěryhodné.)

Druhá část práce je věnována problému virtuálních komunity s nimiž anonymita úzce souvisí. Autor postupuje stejně jako v předchozí části od definic, přes hlavní charakteristiky po okrajovější jevy. Téma pojímá sice stručně, ale výstižně. Snad jen část, která se zabývá vlivem anonymity na komunikaci v komunitách, by si zasloužila podrobnější rozpracování (možná včetně příkladů), jakkoli autor uvádí, že podle většiny pramenů nic jako anonymní komunita neexistuje.

Obě první kapitoly jsou velmi přehlednými a uspořádanými kompilacemi vytvořenými z velkého množství kvalitních zdrojů odborné literatury. Autor využil snadného přístupu k odborné literatuře po dobu své zahraniční stáže, o čemž svědčí nejen osmistránkový seznam literatury na konci práce, ale především počet odkazů v textu a jejich relevance.

Poslední část práce tvoří autorův vlastní výzkum. Autor jednak sledoval diskuse pod články českých zpravodajských serverech, dále mapoval dění na několika tuzemských chatovacích serverech a provedl rovněž dotazníkové šetření. Výsledky výzkumů nejsou překvapivé. Ve shodě se zahraniční odbornou literaturou potvrdily platnost tezí diplomové práce. Zvláštní ohodnocení si zaslouží autorova pečlivost při výběru metody a statistickém zpracování výsledků.

Jednu poznámku mám k jazykové podobě práce. Anglický text se velmi dobře čte, stylově je zcela ve vědeckém jazyce, ale třináctistránkové české shrnutí

má kupodivu formu mnohem volnější a najdeme v něm dokonce i smajlíky. Případnému českému čtenáři nicméně toto shrnutí nejdůležitějších bodů v českém jazyce jistě přijde vhod. Za pozornost stojí i obsáhlá příloha s podklady výzkumu.

Práce Antonína Pavlíčka je po všech směrech příkladná diplomová práce. Autor bezezbytku využil příležitosti, kterou mu poskytla zahraniční stáž. Přestože by mohl, neomezil se jen na kompilaci, ale dopracoval k práci i vlastní výzkum. Z výše uvedených důvodů navrhuji práci klasifikovat stupněm výborně a samozřejmě ji doporučuji k obhajobě.

# POSUDEK DIPLOMOVÉ PRÁCE

## „Anonymity on the internet

## and its influence on the communication process“

**Tato práce je u nás v mnoha ohledech bezkonkurenční. Množství nejenom uvedené ale i fakticky excerpované literatury převážně v angličtině, velmi solidní angličtina textu, vzájemná propojenost teoretické sondy s empirickým výzkumem, rozsah výzkumného vzorku - již to stačí této práci v relaci k jiným u nás obhajovaným zajistit nejvyšší ocenění. Prosím proto, aby následujícím kritickým poznámkám bylo rozuměno tak, že jsou snahou nabídnout autorovi náměty, jež by mu pomohly prohloubit jeho přístup a dotáhnout knihu do podoby publikovatelné knižně.**

Jak si lze ověřit ve vyhledavači, distinkce Garry T. Marxe identita vs. anonymita je zaběhaná, zejména na poli sociologie internetu a elektronických médií obecně. Přesto se nemohu smířit s autorovým příliš kategorickým tvrzením: „Identita je přesným protikladem anonymity“ (str. 27 a 78). Autor sám na mnoha stranách dokládá, že každý z těchto dvou jevů, identita i anonymita, se uskutečňují mnoha rozmanitými způsoby a mají mnoho rozličných funkcí. Přitom si uvědomujeme, že tyto postupy pocházejí z různých dějinných údobí a životních situací.

Autor, pravda, náznakově rekonstruuje určitý dějinný zvrat v pojímání anonymity - Le Bonem byla chápána jako zdroj společenského zla (str. 14), dnes je často doceňována - a také připomene, že v totalitě (absurdně omezené na Čínu - str. 20 - a McCarthyismus - str. 22, zřejmě artefakt způsobený levicovým knihovníkem západní univerzity, kde autor pobýval) se anonymita zakazuje, čímž autor reflektuje situační podmíněnost jejího vyznění. Není ale možno obecně říci, že anonymita „je stejně stará jako identita a provází lidstvo od počátků dějin“ (str. 6). Víme, že například umělecká díla po převážnou část dějin nebyla signována a často byla nadindividuálním výtvorem - v tomto případě ale je nutno dodat, že to byla doba před renesanční individualizací, před kultem géniů a před vysokou tržní

hodnotou „originálu“ v protikladu ke „kopii“. Tato díla nebyla anonymní v tom smyslu, že by identita byla skrývána některou z technik, které uvádí G. Marx, ale že o ni nešlo. Jděme ještě více zpátky: když byl v archaické společnosti zástupně ztrestán „obětní beránek“, nebylo to tím, že by tehdy byli laxní vyšetřovatele a spokojili se s prvním náhradníkem pravého viníka, ale že neměli vypracovaný koncept individuální viny. Anonymita v moderním smyslu se rodí s nástupem dostatečně velkých měst a států, s ústupem Geimenschaft ve prospěch Gesellschaft, a tedy s formalizací pravidel chování nutných pro fungování tam, kde již nepůsobila sociální kontrola v podobě toho, že se všichni znají a skoro všichni jsou příbuzní. Bez této anonymity by velká města a obecněji velké sociální systémy nefungovaly - ale také by bez ní nevznikla typická velkoměstská kriminalita. Neodělitelnost obou těchto aspektů byla jasná prvním velkým sociologům města, Simmelovi, Wirthovi, Parkovi nebo našemu Bláhovi.

K archaickým zdrojům identity je možné jen zmínit několik velkých motivů: magie spjatá se získáním a s prozrazením jména; rituál přechodu spojený s proměnou identity; ambivalentní motiv cizince; maska; anagnorisis v řeckém dramatu; jména Boží; atributy světců... Je jasné, že v těchto dobách byla každá změna jména spojena s šancí i hrozbou ontologické změny. Naproti tomu moderní identita je komunikační hra, která může mít jako jeden z cílů, prostředků i vedlejších účinků vyvolání nebo naopak odstranění nějaké relativní anonymity. Zároveň se tu ocitáme na poli represe - bez identity nejde vybírat daně, nejde soudit bez pomoci vyšší moci nebo svévole. Identita předpokládá kontrolu porodů i úmrtí stejně jako míst pobytu, tedy úřednictvo, matriky, mapy. O co méně zde funguje magie, o to více tu je sociální kontroly a možností jejího zneužívání.

Druhá zásadnější připomínka se týká rozboru toho, zda vůbec lze na internetu mít plnou anonymitu a čím vším ji účastník může bezděčně prozrazovat. To vše je popisováno tak trochu jako v příručce pro kriminalisty. Připojený slovníček emotikonů a počítačového slangu by však měl autorovi připomenout, že zásadním živlem této komunikace zejména u mladých lidí je hravost, neustálé chrlení slovních hříček, mnohoúrovňová ironie, kombinace různých výrazových prostředků, postupy připomínající komiksový střih,

neustálé parodování zejména reklamy, narážky... To, co v očích dospělého vypadá jako žvást, je často komunikační exhibicí. Internet je médiem doby plurality. Internet tyto „okrajové“ možnosti jazyka, jeho schopnost reflexe dosavadních a zkoušení nových pravidel přímo rozvichřil - jako by syntagma vysoce vítězilo nad neustále před očima usychajícím paradigmatem.

Stejně jako se hraje s jazykem, hraje se ale i s identitou a s anonymitou. Ostatně i v antickém dramatu spolu s tragédií žila komedie a vedle tragických momentů anagnorize tu byly proměny, převleky a záměny komické. Lidé v těchto komunikačních hrách zažívají pluralitu svých rolí a reflektují nutnost neustálého přepínání jako součást své sociální kompetence. U pubescentů je to ještě vystupňováno: v jejich jazykových hrách a v hrách s proměnami identity nejde jen o vytváření ezoterických generačních subkultur, ale také o permanentní průkaz mnohem vyšší kompetence v zacházení s počítači, než jakou mají jejich dospělí „učitelé“. Počítače jsou první technické produkty, ve kterých se zcela převrátily role mezi generacemi.

Třetí autorovo opomenutí spočívá v tom, že internetová anonymita není jen otázkou pozitiv (výhod) a negativ (nevýhod), ale že bývá v řadě případů strategií v určité tematické oblasti/instituci/dějinné situaci povinnou - kupodivu autor neuvádí pojmy jako password (pouze login), firewall apod. I tento okruh jevů má své mimointernetové předchůdce a paralely: šifrování, patentová ochrana, služební tajemství, stupně utajení dokumentů, konspirace/dekonspirace, utajení svědka a vytvoření nové identity... Činnost hackerů a crackerů není jen generační vzpourou, ale také politickým antimonopolním protestem, často samozřejmě zdevalvovaným kalkulací s možnou publicitou a možností vyvolat nabídku lukrativního místa.

Polarizaci komunikačních situací klasicky otevřel Bernstein rozlišením kontextového a akontextového kódu. Pokusme se tuto distinkci hypoteticky rozšířit na naši problematiku. Formalizované situace vyžadující akontextový kód budou mít explicitní pravidla pro anonymitu a pro identitu, v situacích vyznačujících se akontextovým kódem bude vše intuitivní, měkké, řeč bude přelévavě propojena s gesty, rekvizitami nebo počasím a její náznakovost bude právě uložena až skryta v tomto pingpongu mezi řečí a nonverbálním výrazem.

* * *

Formálních poklesků je v této nabité a pečlivé práci málo. Na str. 56 mi vadilo, že typologie testů věrohodnosti internetové komunikace nemá literární odkaz.V literatuře jsem očekával, že autor bude podstatně více čerpat z pokladnice reflexe netu publikované přímo na netu (viz geniální web www.netzwissenschaft.de, který bohužel nedávno umlkl). Je brutální necitlivostí pro variantu tzv. měkké vědecké metody sněhové koule (oslovený dotazovaný sám osloví další dle své volby) užít názvu „takzvaná metoda Avalanche“ (příloha H) - toto je jméno firmy provozující nezákonné metody multilevel marketingu. Kromě toho bychom také v příloze měli mít možnost číst průvodní dopis, kterým autor své respondenty oslovil.

* * *

Jak jsem již řekl v úvodu, **tato práce je u nás v mnoha ohledech bezkonkurenční. Množství nejenom uvedené ale i fakticky excerpované literatury převážně v angličtině, velmi solidní angličtina textu, vzájemná propojenost teoretické sondy s empirickým výzkumem, rozsah výzkumného vzorku - již to stačí této práci v relaci k jiným u nás obhajovaným zajistit nejvyšší ocenění.** Mmimořádné kvality práce přes všechny výtky a doporučení zůstávají nepochybné, takže ji nemohu než doporučit k obhajobě a navrhnout pro ni **nejvyšší ocenění**.

22. června 2004 MgA Mgr Bohuslav Blažek