

Young people in Facebook: emptiness and apathy in the social network

Universitarios madrileños en facebook:
Vacío y apatía en la red social

Lizette Martínez Valerio

Universidad Internacional de la Rioja, España
lizette.martinez@unir.net

Resumen

Desde que a principios del siglo XXI aparecieran las primeras redes sociales online, estas plataformas no han dejado de crecer hasta formar parte de la vida diaria de millones de personas en todo el mundo, principalmente de los jóvenes. Sin embargo, ¿sabemos qué comparten en ellas? La presente investigación estudia la actividad que tienen los jóvenes universitarios madrileños en *Facebook*. Los datos que se presentan son el resultado del análisis de 250 perfiles. Se trata de una metodología encuadrada dentro de la etnografía *online*. Las conclusiones ponen de manifiesto que los jóvenes parecen no tener problema en compartir su edad o lugar de origen, pero se muestran reticentes a dar a conocer cuestiones más personales, como su orientación sexual. Y, aunque la interactividad es uno de los sellos distintivos de los nuevos medios de comunicación, los usuarios de las redes sociales pasan una cantidad considerable de tiempo sólo contemplando a otros.

Palabras clave

Facebook, medios sociales, redes sociales online, jóvenes, nuevas metodologías.

Abstract

Since the first online social networks appeared in the early XXI century, these platforms have not stopped growing, and now are part of millions of people's daily life worldwide, mainly young people. However, do we know what they are sharing in these spaces? This research studies the activity on *Facebook* of students from Madrid universities. The data presented here are the result of the analysis of 250 profiles. It is a methodology framed within the online ethnography. The findings show that young people seem to have no problema with sharing their age or place of origin, but are reluctant to disclose more personal issues such as sexual orientation. But most important es that while interactivity is one of the hallmarks of these new media, users of this social network spend a considerable amount of time just watching others without doing anything else.

Keywords:

Facebook, social media, online social networks, young people, new methodologies.

1. Introduction

Interactivity is one of the main characteristics of the web 2.0, to which online social networks belong. Since its beginning in 2004, Facebook has emerged as the leading website of this type of service, with currently over 1.7 billion active users. Nevertheless, what Facebook considers as “activity” could be misleading. In social networks, active users are users that access their account. This investigation aims to find out if activity really exists, or in other words, if the users actually do more than simply log in. The study group is made up of college students in Madrid and the methodology chosen in the quantitative analysis of 250 profiles chosen specifically for academic purposes. Results show young people do not have a problem with sharing personal information with the rest. However, their activity is mainly limited to observation.

2. Context and Discussion. Activity of Young Adults on Facebook

Facebook was born as a service for college students and, thanks to them, grew to have over a billion users. Nevertheless, it is starting to have a problem specifically with the sector of the population that made it so popular. Young adults today no longer find it appealing to share their opinions, experiences, and pictures of their private life on this social network. In fact, while presenting the company’s results in October 2013, David Ebersman (CFO) admitted for the first time that there had been a decrease in the number of active users among the youngest sector of the population (Oreskovic, 2013). Facebook is not only losing users in this age group, but in addition, those users who stay connected are rarely active.

However, this trend is no novelty. It is a common behavior in other environments. In 2004, psychologists of the University of California analyzed the behavior of young people in online forums related to health and sexuality, and proved that the majority of the young people entered the forum only to observe (Suzuki and Calzo, 2004).

In 2009, an investigation from the University of Georgetown confirmed this behavior on social networks (Pempek, Yermolayeva & Calvert, 2009). Via surveys and the tracking of logbooks on behalf of a determi-

ned sample of users, they discovered that, despite the diverse ways to interact offered by the social network, the majority of them remained passive. Some 69.6% of students at this private university logged in to Facebook to see the profiles of others during the week that they tracked their logbook, 58.7% did it to see pictures, and 54.3% to see the latest news of their network of friends. It seems that the photograph constitutes one of the main interests of young people on the social network, girls being those who posted the most content of this type (Lenhart & Madden, 2007).

Likewise, the study “*Why most Facebook users get more than they give*” revealed that only 20% to 30% of Facebook users make intensive use of the social network (2012). These are “active users” (Brandtzaeg & Heim, 2011) those that post links, upload pictures and tag, comment and click “like”. The rest observe and, every so often, contribute content. One would think that those users who have been on the social network longer are those that have the least activity because they may have grown tired of it, but analysts did not find a direct correlation between the time that people have been using Facebook and their amount of activity.

Use also doesn’t seem to change over time. In 2008, investigators at the University of Michigan showed that, throughout three years (surveys were given in 2006, 2007 and 2008), the main use of Facebook to keep in contact with people they met offline (Lampe, Ellison & Steinfield, 2008). No change was detected regarding the perception of the social network. The majority of users surveyed said that Facebook is a fully integrated part of their lives and that, in general, it proposes no problem to them. They conclude that, although there are modifications, they are not drastic, and are mainly due to changes in the social context of users and, to a lesser degree, to the changes in the functions that the social network introduces periodically.

The academic community was fascinated with the study of Facebook during 2011 and 2012. The social network never stopped growing and its usage was at one of its all time highs. In fact, some researchers (Schou, Torsheim, Brunborg & Pallesen, 2012) started to develop scales to clinically detect addiction to Facebook. Nevertheless, two years later, other works (Ryan, Chester, Reece & Xenos, 2014) recognized that although the use of Facebook can be habitual, there are no conclusive results would lead to it be considered an

addiction. More recent investigations (Maier, Laumer, Weinert & Weitzel, 2015) indicate that indeed there are users that feel a certain stress from excessive use of social networks, and in order to mitigate it, have to discontinue use of these services.

In terms of the real use by Facebook users, in 2013 Reynol Junco published an interesting paper that compares the results of usage time obtained by two different methods. The author indicates that the large majority of investigations related to Facebook usage are done using techniques like the survey, in which users are those who say how much time they spend on the social network. Is the time they say really the time they spend on the website? Via a monitoring software of online activity, results obtained often differ from those declared by users. In other words, the reliability of investigations that use this type of technique could become questionable. Users could not be spending as much time on the social network as previously thought.

There are few investigations dedicated to the study of real activity of Facebook users. Therefore, the objective of this investigation is to analyze the activity young college students enrolled at colleges and universities in Madrid carry out on this website. The importance of this type of investigation lies in the main role these websites are playing in the daily life of this population segment. Knowing whether the young people are really using them could be useful to know in which direction new communication models are going to college students in Madrid given that this is a population that has a stable frame of sample reference and is easily accessible, factors that are of utmost importance so that the sample could be truly representative. The individuals studied coincide with those observed in the majority of the investigations carried out in this field of study, as can be seen in the works cited on the status of the issue in the introduction of this article.

Of the total sample, 65% are women and 35% are men. In terms of the colleges at which they are enrolled, both public and private colleges are represented, with a majority attending public colleges. Contrary to other investigations whose sample has been obtained from students from one or two colleges (Ayala, 2012; Elgueta, Loreto & Riffo, 2009; Gómez, Roses & Farías, 2012; Monge & Olabarri, 2011), the idea here was to include all the university centers of Madrid. The distribution of profiles per academic establishment is shown in the table below (Table 1):

Table 1. Percentage of the Sample According to College/University

UNIVERSIDAD	PORCENTAJE
UNIVERSIDAD COMPLUTENSE DE MADRID	58,3%
UNIVERSIDAD REY JUAN CARLOS	18,9%
UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE MADRID	4,9%
UNIVERSIDAD POLITÉCNICA DE MADRID	4,4%
UNIVERSIDAD FRANCISCO DE VITORIA	2,9%
UNIVERSIDAD DE COMILLAS	2,9%
UNIVERSIDAD DE ALCALÁ DE HENARES	2,4%
UNIVERSIDAD CEU SAN PABLO	2,4%
UNIVERSIDAD CARLOS III	1,9%
UNIVERSIDAD EUROPEA DE MADRID	0,5%
UNIVERSIDAD CAMILO JOSÉ CELA	0,5%

Source: the Author

3. Methodology

The data presented here is the result of the analysis of 250 Facebook user profiles belonging to young college students in Madrid. All of them form part of a network of contacts of a profile created specifically for academic purposes. In other words, all the subjects observed were informed that they were being included in an investigation and they gave their consent to be so, which is necessary for any ethnography study. The study is limited Data collection was carried out by classifying the information gathered from the profiles by the following variables: sex, birthdate, hometown, sex of interest, language spoken, current relationship status, school enrolled in, high school, companies worked in, groups of friends that they belong to, email, mobile number, "like" (music, books, movies, television, games, sports, teams, activities, etc.), third-party applications that are connected to Facebook, games they play on the network, the number of friends they have and the pictures they have uploaded (profile, cover, total).

In addition to analyzing 250 profiles in terms of the fields previously mentioned, user activity was tracked for two weeks in order to know within what limits their activity fell and what they shared specifically on a day-to-day

basis. The period students were tracked were June 1 - 15 and June 17 - 30, 2014. The data, therefore, represents a snapshot of the relationship that these young people had with *Facebook* before the rise of other networks like *Instagram* and *Snapchat*.

Activity was classified into the following variables: pictures uploaded to the social network (of themselves, with friends/partner, with family, of animals, jokes, of places, others), status (mood, a quote, related to politics, to college, to work, a reflection, a joke, current issue, where they mention their friends, others), interaction (comments, comments on pictures, "likes" on photos, "likes" on others, "likes" on pages), shared links (music videos, funny videos, other videos, current news, interesting news, blogs), interaction with others on the timeline (photos, links, videos, mentions, congratulations, comments) and friends added. Finally, there was a particular interest in knowing the following of communication media via Facebook. Thus, also counted were the number of newspapers, television, magazines and radios that the observed users looked at via this social network, during the period of analysis.

The problems with method that came from this type of investigation had to do with the changing origin of both the sample as well as the environment. Some subjects (in the case of students from Universidad Alfonso X El Sabio) recruited on the profile as friends opted out during the period of the study. In order to maintain the same representation per college, we had to search for an individual with similar characteristics, who was not always found.

Conclusions reveal that young people seem to not have a problem sharing their age or hometown. However, they seem to be reluctant to share more personal information, like sexual orientation. And, although interactivity is one of the hallmarks of the new media communication, users of social media spend a considerable amount of time observing others.

4. Investigation Results. Snapshot of Young College Students in Madrid

Young people share a wide range of information about themselves on social networks. In fact, these sites are designed to encourage information exchange and network expansion. Nevertheless, few young people

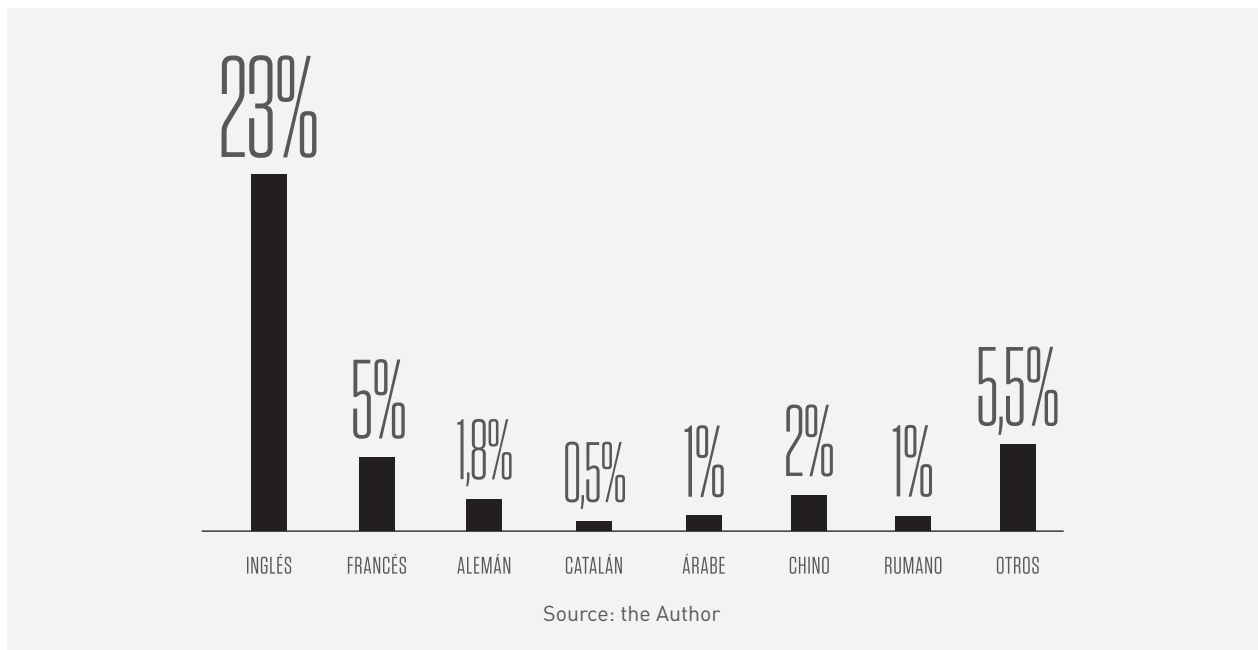
adopt a totally open, public stance. In other words, the number of college students that fill in all the personal information fields that Facebook provides is very small.

Date of birth is one of the first bits of information that Facebook requests when creating a user profile, given that it does not allow for the registration of users under age 13, or 14 in the case of Spain due to current laws that protect personal information. Although it is a required piece of information, you can hide it. However, 92% of sample subjects left it public. Hometown is also public in 90% of cases. Thanks to it, we know that 41.7% of sample subjects are from Madrid, 47.9% are from other communities, and 10.4% are from outside Spain.

The most personal information, like sexual orientation, is the least specified. To the question: "Who are you interested in? Women, men or women and men?", only 36.9% of the sample responded. Of the 63.1% who didn't respond, the majority were women (55.3%). Of those who did respond, 82% of men responded they were interested in the opposite sex and 18% in boys and girls; no one put that they were interested in the same sex. On the other hand, 75% of the women who answered this question were interested in men, 20% in men and women, but in this case there were responses (5%) of women who were interested of their same sex. This information indicates that women are a little more uninhibited when revealing their sexual interests outside of what is considered traditional today.

The same trend is present when sharing their relationship status (37%). Of the sample, 17% are single and 13.1% are in a relationship. This relationship is stronger in only 1.9% (engaged). There are also those who are married (1.9%), while 2.9% define their status as "it's complicated". It is not common for users to make public the languages they speak, although this is probably not due to wanting to hide it but because they do not speak other languages. English is, undoubtedly, the language most spoken, regardless of sex: 23.3% of the sample speaks this language (Graph 1).

Graph 1. Languages that Young People Speak According to Their Facebook Profile



A slightly higher percentage (32.5%) publicizes the name of the company where they work. This percentage is due to the fact that many of them do not work given their age. There is 19.9% who have worked in a company, but there are also those who have worked in two (6.3%), three (3.9%), four (1.9%) and even in seven (0.5%). Many of these companies are clothing stores, coinciding with the reality seen on the streets where many dependent young people work in these stores.

They are proud of the institute or high school that they attended given that it is a piece of information that most publicize. Only 26.2% of the sample did not respond to this question. It seems logical: some of their friends come from this phase of education and it also represents a period of awakening in their lives.

In regards to contact information, email address and cellphone number, the results are conflicting. Some 85% of young people give an email address. However, it is the account with the Facebook.com domain, which is rarely used. On the other hand, their cellphone numbers are not posted: this information was only given on 7% of profiles. They consider that the telephone is for exclusive use within their closest circle and that its use is separate from the social network.

The image is without a doubt one of the most important aspects for young people on Facebook. Some 99% of

the sample has, at least, a profile picture and 86.4% has a cover photo. Profile pictures are the most common: on average, young people have 21 pictures of this kind, while they only present seven, as an average, on the cover. By sex, women have double the average number of photos that the boys have in the section referred to as profile pictures (26 compared to 13 photos), as well as cover (nine compared to four). In total, young college students in Madrid have uploaded to Facebook an average of 460 images since they first logged on to the social network, this number being slightly for the women (504) and slightly lower for the (381). The majority of the young people in the sample joined Facebook in 2009. In other words, the average number of images uploaded correspond to four years of activity within the social network, 115 photos a year. For a generation for which "the visual" is so important, it is not a very high average.

Facebook is used to share tastes in music, although it also features movies seen TV programs watched. The social network provides a series of categories for the users to classify and share their tastes in a way that is organized and easy. The categories that Facebook provides are: music; books; movies; Television, where they include both programs and channels; online games that connect with the website so that users can compete with their friends that play. There are virtual spaces all

the way from farms to quizzes, including the genre of battles and taking care of pets; athletes; teams, from all types of sports; activities; and others. In the latter, there are all types of pages, from political parties, famous people from all walks of life, restaurants, to silly pages such as “Old Women Who Cut In Line At The Supermarket” and “I have also sung the song ‘yo soy español, español, español’ when I have spent too much time listening to Erasmus”.

The young people analyzed have shared on average more information in the sections of Music, Movies and Television during the period analyzed (Table 2). Variables with fewer elements are games, athletes, teams and activities. Despite what one might think, young people do not show much public interest in sports, neither participating in them nor watching them, nor is books, despite being college students.

These users integrate external services within Facebook. The most common are Instagram and Spotify. The first of these is a photo sharing social network, and the second, a music social network. It confirms, once again, that music and photo sharing are of particular importance to young college students. In other words, it has been revealed that this collective prefers active leisure over passive leisure (high culture, reading, press, etc.).

Table 2. Average Number of Elements that Appears in Each Category of “Like”

“ME GUSTA”	MEDIA
MÚSICA	21
PELÍCULAS	9
TELEVISIÓN	8
LIBROS	3
DEPORTISTAS	2
ACTIVIDADES	2
JUEGOS	1
EQUIPOS	1
OTROS	146

Source: the Author

According to Facebook data, 260 million users play some game on the social network (Oreskovic, 2013). In fact, its revenue coming from games increased 18% compared to the year before. Contrary to what one might think, young people do not represent the age group that plays the most on Facebook. Analysis results show that profiles show an average of one game. The most played game is the popular Candy Crush, a variation of “tic tac toe”. You have to consider that games, on Facebook, are successful due to trends. Tons of users have taken care of virtual pets, farms, and now are playing with candy. This is regardless of gender, given that games seem to fascinate young people of both sexes.

In regards to the number of friends, the average is 320 friends, but in this case, the men outdo the women: 369 to 297. This difference coincides with the different research done proving that men have better social skills, mainly as a cultural legacy to a sexist education (Encabo 2003, Cardozo et al., 2011, Cohen et al., 2011, & Juárez et al., 2010).

Some 2% of the sample over 30 has the least average of friends (105). However, the number does not increase as the age decreases. Young people between 27 and 28 have an average of 520 friends, but those that are 21 and 22 show an average of 256 friends. The youngest, those that are 20 years old, have 412 friends. Therefore, there is no direct relation between age and the number of friends on Facebook.

What is seen from the profile analysis is a snapshot of young people that carry out a series of actions to manage the limits of their privacy on social networks. Far from being indifferent, they are aware of what they post. However, their main objective and the motivation to post content is often to transmit a certain image to their audience, their network of friends, college classmates and family.

They are young people who do not have qualms with sharing personal information, but they are careful with the most private information such as their sexual preference. College students in the sample are a reflection of a society in which the audiovisual dominates. Taking pictures, thanks to the ease with which their cellphones let them, is one of their main forms of expression. The other sense they use frequently is hearing. They don’t just listen to current music, there are also young people who prefer to listen to classical music, including *la copla*. There is less variety in the television programs

they like, the majority of them being series, and many of them comedy. These details reveal the characteristic personality of the majority of young people: fun, happy, don't play sports and reading is not included in their cultural activities.

4.1 Comments and Pictures Are Young People Really Feeding the Social Network?

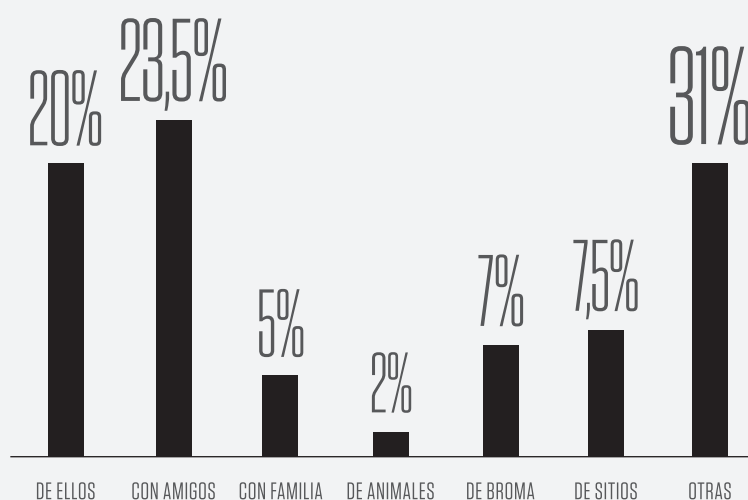
A clear trend that results from this analysis is the lack of symmetry in activity on Facebook. In general, sample users received more than what they gave in terms of content shared on Facebook. Results suggest that, although the majority of the sample showed to be barely active during the 2-week period of time, there is a group of users that are disproportionately more active. These advanced users represented between 10% and 30% of the sample of young college students depending on the activity. In other words, users tend to specialize: they are more active in one particular aspect of Facebook. For example, some are very active at uploading photos; others changing their status or sharing links. Only 1% of users show to be very active in all these aspects. It is this group of intensive users

in each activity that explains why the average number of contributions per user to the social network seems higher than it really is.

Just as has been seen in the profile analysis, the image is one of the most important aspects in terms of presence of young people on Facebook. More than half of the sample (55.8%) posted at least one photo during the 2-week tracking period, whether it was their profile picture, or cover photo, directly on their timeline or in an album. On average, they posted seven photos, but you have to consider the percentage of very active users that cause an increase in this number. Some 2.5% of young people uploaded more than 50 photos, while 46.5% uploaded between 1 and 10 photos. In conclusion, the majority of young people upload photos frequently but there are just a few that do it intensively.

In regards to this, the majority of the images have been classified in "Others" due to their variety. There are images of all types, some uploaded photos of food, shoes, cartoons, cars, flowers, and many other things. The second leading category is that of "Pictures with friends", followed closely by photos of the users themselves (See Graph 2). It is no wonder that these two categories stand out. On one hand, the age of the sample subjects is a phase of life in which friendship is one of the areas of their life that is most valued. On the other hand, it is also a time to reassert their identity

Graph 2. Themes of the Photos Posted by Sample Subjects During the Tracking



Source: the Author

and what better way than to use the images that they share as a showcase for their friends.

In general, the images are good quality. The technology available today makes taking pictures a much easier activity than it was a few years ago. The majority of the photos are improvised and taken with a cellphone. They are images that feature groups of friends at parties, landscapes and close-ups of users. What is true is that the aesthetic is not a priority for young people when taking the picture. Despite being photos whose only objective is to capture a particular moment, in almost all of them there is a premeditated pose.

Status updates are posts that users make on their profile pages and that appear on their friends' news feed. In the sample, it is an activity that is much less frequent than commenting on the content of others or clicking on "Like". Some 35% of the young people analyzed updated their status at least once during the 2-week observation period. On average, they only posted one update. Such a low average is due to the fact that 67.5% of users did not update their status even once. Women updated more (37.7%) than men (24.3%). There was a group that represented 31.5% that updated between once and ten times, 1% updated between 11 and 20 times, and 0.5% updated it more than 30 times (women). As update their status, but there was a group that did it on a regular basis. Comments like "I am in that state when I only want someone to caress my hair while I fall into a coma" or "These are the times when you realize who the people are around you, and it is interesting, the pleasant surprise that you get when you thought some people didn't even remember you" are common and show how important the support of other people is for this collective. The college is also present on the statuses of these young people, with phrases like "Monday and in an exam" and "Studying and my friend tells me to come right now and have a drink". According to their updates on Facebook, studying it not pleasant for college students. They would rather be doing anything else: college is an obligation.

And finally, the quotes. There are all types: "Picture taking skills are acquired by practice not by purchase", "If it doesn't light a flame deep inside you, don't do it", "No man should be a tool by which another man carries out his objectives". From the quotes they publish you can see that loyalty and friendship are valued, and lies and injustices are rejected. Current topics, jokes,

work and mentions (when they mention and tag other users in the status) are less frequent. you can see, the majority did not update their status, but there was a group that did it on a regular basis. Comments like "I am in that state when I only want someone to caress my hair while I fall into a coma" or "These are the times when you realize who the people are around you, and it is interesting, the pleasant surprise that you get when you thought some people didn't even remember you" are common and show how important the support of other people is for this collective. The college is also present on the statuses of these young people, with phrases like "Monday and in an exam" and "Studying and my friend tells me to come right now and have a drink". According to their updates on Facebook, studying it not pleasant for college students. They would rather be doing anything else: college is an obligation.

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Use of the "Like" button is one of the most popular activities on Facebook. It is a simple way to show interest in some content, to communicate something specific without much effort. Half of the sample (50.5%) used the button at least once during the two weeks of observation. Its use was unequally distributed. Due to those previous-mentioned very active users, the average amount of times users clicked "Like" on posts from others was three during the two-week period. But 34.5% of those that used this button only did it once. Photos are the content that received the most "Likes", 32.5% of all "Likes" were clicked on photos. Again, the percentage of women who clicked "Like" at least once on a photo is higher (36.1%) than that of men (28.6%). Some 17.7% of women and 20% of men did it on a commentary or other type of post, and 23.8% of women and 34.2% of men did it on a page.

There are some activities on Facebook in which the young people are prone to give as much or more than they receive. One of these activities is writing comments. More than half of the sample (51.5%) made comments

about the content of a friend at least once, compared to 47% that received comments on behalf of their friends. The average of four comments made on the contents of friends is less than the mean of two who received. From that half of the young people in the sample that made comments, 28.2% commented on a photo. Most are brief comments; many times they are not even phrases, but rather simple onomatopoeia like “hahaha”, “muak” or “argh”. Not even the current contents that could cause a debate generated opinionated comments. Among the women, it was common to see the comment “pretty!”, especially on photos, but they also do it on other types of content, for instance, under links to music videos.

In regards to the number of friends, the sample of users made on average one new friend in two weeks. In general, women made more friends than men. Perhaps in this environment women feel safer and develop more social skills. If you analyze the relation between the number of friends and the frequency in which they participate in various Facebook activities, the relationship is not directly proportional. Having more than 500 friends is not related to being more active on the social network.

4.2 Information selection. Links, much more than a URL

Only 34% of users from the sample shared a link. From the total amount of links (141), 51.5% were links to audiovisual material, which is to say music videos, funny videos and other videos. Meanwhile, the percentage of links that lead to mainly written texts (current news, curiosities and blogs) is 48.5%. This proves that once again the preferable way to interact is via image.

In regards to news, it can't be said that young people whose profiles were analyzed exchange much information about current news. In two weeks, only 34 links were shared with this topic. The most popular communication media linked to was *elpais.com* (six links), followed at a distance by *elmundo.es* (three links); and *publico.es* and *eldiario.es*, both with two links. Therefore, progressive-centrist ideological media dominate, and there are few links to foreign media. What's interesting is the presence of media that explain news (*Inquirer*, *ARN digital*), which is to say, young people could be demanding more in-depth news, beyond that which is just information.

In terms of the sections of the media that appear in these links, politics stands out in first place (eight links). Although, it is clear that the young people's view towards politics is focused on activities featuring young people, topics related to human rights, and political corruption. In contrast to what one might think, the reaction of young people to sports victories –such as those of Rafael Nadal or even the Spanish National Soccer Team- is not to share it on Facebook.

In the selection of information, the presence of audiovisual material has not made a difference, because only four links have a video posted on their webpage: two correspond to the Bécenas case, the other is a fashion show and the last a scene from a movie. It is true that the presence of photos is higher: the represent 75%, but do not constitute an especially important material. Except for three ladies going topless, the rest are senior citizens playing dominos, portraits of famous people (Wert, Blesa, Obama, the Italian prime minister, etc.) or “neutral” photos, getting water from a spout, an airplane, a screen shot of Google, people leaning against a car waiting, etc.

This is to say that this type of link, with only written information, gets the attention of their friends, given that the presence of audiovisual elements does not constitute a significant attraction.

Social topics also peak their interest. An important topic is immigration, but also the issue of emigration of young Spaniards. Evidently, they are concerned about their future and about their professional options in the future. In terms of information posted on their profiles there is a noted special attention given to marginalized groups: rural populations, children, handicapped, victims of the war in Syria and feminist demands. To a lesser degree there are references to new technology such as some publications about Facebook or Google.

To estimate the relevance of this information, a scale from 1 (less relevant) to 4 (very relevant) has been created, applying the journalistic criteria of currentness, proximity, consequences, general interest, suspense, rarity and conflict (Edo, 2003). The result reveals that what appears in these shared links are not questions of currentness or general interest. More than 40% can be classified as a 1, which is to say, they are interviews or comments of little importance, or have to do with sports, social issues or are distantly related to education. The information classified as a 3 represent 31%

of the total. It has to do with news that goes from the reactions colleges have to cuts in education funding (specifically in scholarships) to the non-recognition of the right to forget on behalf of the European Court. Among the news classified as very relevant, the topics that covered the front pages of the main newspapers during the period of analysis. Despite having been the most important news of those days, it only represented 7% of the links to news that were shared on the social network.

Although a large number of timeless news can be observed, the current daily news makes up the majority of these links. This data indicates that young college students try to stay informed of news that occurs daily and have a certain degree of interest in it. Nevertheless, the geographic area of this news is limited mainly to Spain, at 81%. Their immediate surroundings are what affect them and neither globalization nor the general community created by internet has been able to divert their attention to the next closest area around them.

Intriguing news that was shared is not related to current events, or with politics or sports. In some cases, it's about morbid news; sometimes unlikely to be true, like the one where a man discovers at age 66 that he has ovaries. In others, emotional news, like the video posted by some newspapers in which you can see both a baby and a cat get excited at the same time when they see the father arrive home. Meanwhile other cases are about extraordinary events like how an McDonald's hamburger is conserved intact during 14 years stored in a coat pocket.

Young people also show their interest in music in the links they post. Some 32.6% of these links are music videos, 9% more than current news. If young people already shared their favorite music groups on their profiles, now they share the songs themselves, often accompanied by some comment explaining why they posted the link. The majority are related to memories of certain moments passed and, mainly, from parties. They also post songs to indicate their current mood.

The video website they link to the most is YouTube. Only two young people linked to Vimeo and one to Spotify. These are two website that are very similar to YouTube, just as easy to use and to link to as Facebook. Young people link to YouTube not because it has a particular characteristic, but simply because it is the most popular video website. It has 1 billion unique visitors per month

and 72 hours of video is uploaded per minute, according to Google (owner of YouTube since 2006).

Young people in the sample prefer Spanish music above the rest. 12 of the 46 music video links were of Spanish groups or singers like Vetusta Morla, Los Piratas and Pedro Guerra. In second place is American music (10 links), some bands linked to were Aerosmith, Led Zepelin and Lana del Rey, and British music (eight links) like the Beatles, Aluna George and Arctic Monkeys. Plus, they listen to Italian and French music, as well as Brazilian, Russian and Jamaican. But of all of these, they only shared one or two links. Regardless of nationality, the genre most shared was rock, classic and its other variations (symphonic, hard, alternative). Another genre that was popular is indie music, like The XX, Florence and the Machine and Biting Elbows. They also shared pop, rap, hip-hop and dance. They tend to post current music: 31 of the videos shared were songs from the 21st century, 16 were from the current year. However, it is interesting that there were 7 links to music from the 60's and 70's, like Elvis Presley, Rolling Stones and Los Destellos.

Among their activities, what they didn't share was funny videos. Once again, YouTube is the preferred website, and only one video was uploaded directly to the Facebook video platform. This video shows a young person who seems to be riding a broom thanks to an overlapping of images. The other three videos were content previously broadcasted on television: a commercial belonging to an English campaign against boredom, a collection of funny moments of a character in the Spanish series "7 vidas" and a selection of images of reporters falling while reporting.

In the category "Other videos" there are 31 links. Although in this category the leading website is YouTube (19 links), there are more videos uploaded directly to Facebook (6). Other websites used were *Vitaminl.tv*, *Vimeo*, *Nowvideo*, *Puntoencuentrocomplutense.es* and *Zurnal24.si*. The most common content are short films (7). Some of them are professionally made, presented in film festivals, including in the Oscars. The amateur videos are funny short films. The advertising content also repeats. There are four links to commercials: one from Atlético de Madrid, another promoting a web series festival, a third belongs to Coca-Cola and finally one from a NGO *Acción contra el hambre*. The young people also use video links to share current topics. There is

also, for example, the video about political corruption in Brazil, and another about police violence in protests, as well as a video of the speech a congresswoman (UPyD) made in session. However, this type of content is rare in the sample.

Finally, another type of content shared with relative frequency is the blog. Young people in the sample shared a total of 23 links of this type. The preferred blog website is Blogspot (39.1%), followed far behind by WordPress (8.7%). The rest of the links come from blogs inserted inside other websites. More than half of the links are blogs in Spanish five were in English, one in Turkish and another in Portuguese. The theme of most of the blogs linked to is photography and cinema. Another theme that repeats is the personal blog, ones in which young people talk about their daily lives, their reflections or their knowledge of technology. They evidently make an effort in their writing so that their comments are not lost among the millions of blogs there are on the internet and that are read by their friends. They link these blogs to their Facebook profile. Without a doubt, the links shared by young people reflect a large part of who they are, of what they like and how they want to be identified. This activity also converts social networks into new windows of information, giving users the chance to stay informed without having to look at traditional communication media.

4. Conclusions. Apathy in Facebook

One of the main tasks of the first stage of adulthood is determining one's own identity in regards to romantic relationships, work and one's worldview. In this sense, Facebook offers a unique opportunity for young people to exhibit their identities.

As shown, young people share personal information that appears on any official document, like one's national ID, college enrollment, and their résumé. Age, hometown, diplomas and degrees obtained or underway, as well as languages spoken make up the essential information in one's life. Although they prove to be reluctant to post more personal information like sexual orientation, perhaps it is because going outside the norm is still difficult for them. They also do not share information that could cause an invasion of their private lives, such as their telephone numbers or email addresses. Messages

of caution in disseminating this information seem to have left a mark on these generations. Their likes and interests are those that best define their identity on Facebook and, in this sense, there is consensus. There preferences in music, cinema and favorite TV programs the most common references posted on their profiles.

Photos stand out as the preferred medium of expression to communicate who they are, how they are doing and what they did during the weekend, simply and without effort. Posting photos is the activity most performed by college students. Photos and their rapid dissemination among the profiles of the rest of students, reflect the important role performed by technology in the development of young people's identity and their systems of communication. On the other hand, TV programs and movies, both of which are related to image, are the most shared preferences via the "Likes". Given the importance of the image on young people's Facebook profiles, another investigation has begun in order to address the topic further in depth.

It is proven that the most comfortable, easy, and simplest activities are the ones most used by this collective. Thus, sharing links is one of those activities. Analysis of these links has shown that young people are especially interested in music, constituting the most common interest, albeit with number of different styles. Films and photos are present in the activity developed on this social network. However, results show that we have to consider studies currently underway.

In terms of their ideology, it can be said that the majority of the sample is progressive-centrist, or they at least share news from communication media of this tendency and are interested in, based on what is seen, topics related to young people in protests, human rights and in generally social themes. It would be interesting if a future investigation to study whether or not these ideological manifestations translate into active political participation offline, in line with investigations like *Social Media Use for News and Individuals' Social Capital, Civic Engagement and Political Participation* (Gil de Zúñiga, Jung, & Valenzuela, 2012).

Despite all the interactions mentioned, the results show that the sample analyzed spent more time reading the news posted by their friends, looking at profiles and the photos of others that posting their own content or updating their profiles. Although interaction is one of

the hallmarks of the new communication media, social network users spend a considerable amount of time just observing the rest. This shows that the doubts young people have on this social network are focused on generally passive observation and accompanied, if at all, by a slight movement of the index finger on the mouse. This lack of interaction coincides with the other works that have indicated that, even when young people mature and take on roles including those relevant on the Spanish political scene, the interaction on their profiles does not increase (Díaz-Campo and Segado-Boj, 2015).

With new technology and platforms like Facebook, users become producers and protagonists of their productions. Young people are creating and disseminating information on social networks with a new ability: personal control of the content to be disseminated. But this communication model repeats “one-to-many” scheme, similar to the one television and radio have used since the beginning to address their public. In other words, Facebook permits interactive communication, but as a result of the uses that these young people are giving this medium, some guidelines of traditional media are kept.

In conclusion, social network sites like Facebook offer young people new spaces to express themselves and interact with each other. Results coincide with other investigations (Almansa-Martínez, Fonseca and Castillo-Esparcia, 2013) that indicate the use that young people make of these websites as media in which they can exhibit their personality and their likes, like cinema and music (Reguillo, 2012). Nevertheless, although a great number of interactive experiences could be expected, results show a mainly passive attitude, one of observation, just as works from other countries have shown. Social networks continuously change. Therefore, one could expect that their uses will as well. Future investigations could show interesting results on the evolution of both, websites and how users relate with them.

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About the Author

Lizette Martínez

Undergraduate and European Doctorate 'cum laude' in Journalism from the Universidad Complutense of Madrid. Masters Degree from the Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas en Investigación Social Aplicada y Análisis de Datos. Predoctoral fellowship from UCM taking place at the Universidad París IV - Sorbonne. Accredited as Doctor's Assistant by the Agencia Nacional de Evaluación de Calidad y Acreditación (ANECA).

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