

## THE ROLE OF THE SOCIAL NETWORKS, BETWEEN A UTILITY AND A NEW ADDICTION

Annalisa Colucci

Neamente Association, Naples, Italy  
CTU (Court appointed expert), Court of Nola, Naples, Italy

### SUMMARY

The reality of social networks in recent years has taken on new and enriching scenarios, to learn more about the problems and complex dynamics of life that surround the generations of preadolescents and adolescents. This work has matured over several years, interacting with schools in the Campania region (southern Italy), meeting and talking with teachers, parents and students, observing the reality that surrounds them. The territory of Naples and its province was the one in which the activity was mainly carried out. It has been found that the new frontiers of youth language find their maximum form of exposure in sharing, exhibition, media "exposure", through the channel of the narration of their daily life "live" (most of the time), often it implies a high probability of incurring dangers and dangers that are difficult to manage, as "children" of an age in which to exhibit is in conformity with the historical moment. The definition given by the experts is "Digital Natives", "Digital Immigrants" are adults, who have a different and less fluid approach compared to the reality of youth. Dangers, pitfalls and others are amplified through the simple sharing of one's own experiences. This work benefited from the help of various professional figures, which made sure that some difficult aspects and contexts could emerge. Some problems of this reality linked to social networks are distinguished in a more specific and authentic way.

**Key words:** social network - Internet addiction - grooming (priming) – hikikomori – loneliness- social phobia

\* \* \* \* \*

### INTRODUCTION

In this work the presentation of an Italian reality, through a more accurate and complete vision of the life aspects of most of the adolescents of this territory, has been of great impact. The collection of data that emerged from a large part of the territory has brought out an interesting psychophysical and emotional involvement for many students, teachers and parents, often not aware of the correct management linked to certain situations. It has been found that there is a new type of behavior related to addiction, through the exchange of information in the network, and there is a multifaceted language, which is fascinating and at the same time dangerous, because the network is a resource for everyone, but also a source of dangers and pitfalls, traps from which it is difficult to get out of it.

### SOCIAL NETWORK ... NEW CHALLENGE, NEW CHANGE ... OR NEW ADDICTION?

During these years of "knowledge" of the resources and problems of social networks in Campania through meetings, but also conferences and seminars in schools, it was found that the institutions have visited in the same way the behavior at risk for both boys and girls for adults, especially in communication that is not always understandable, because it is not "on par" between the different generations. Despite the meeting between the adult world and the youth world has always been difficult to manage, the new generations have important

difficulties in interacting and relating to each other, due to the lack in some contexts of "emotional reactions" to events. Until a few decades ago, the youth contexts were linked to interactions with the "familiarity" of their context, because they behaved according to examples of parents, siblings, grandparents. Now the experiential experience is observed, cultivated, often elaborated through the social network, which works for images and not emotions through sensory experience, but through the visual and the auditory, penalizing the sense of smell and touch, important in the sphere of the senses, to know emotions and sensations. The topics touched mainly, the compliant problems and finally the interface with pupils, parents and teachers led to review and reiterate very clearly some studies to refer to.

### METHODOLOGY

The team made up by "network" specialists (psychologist, law enforcement specialists in communication, pol postal), with active participation in some contexts of teachers and parents. Presentation of the difficulties and dangers of the network, cognitive exposition of the problematic; *cognitive questionnaire* (questions related to competence, social experience, use if considered "aware and safe" with examples of peers involved in risky activities for themselves and others), assessment of the degree of *knowledge and sharing of the network* by boys (teenagers from 10 to 18 years of age), then with the vision of some movies, shows the importance and effectiveness of "mirror neurons", studied by *Gallese, Rizzolati et al.* (1996) and their functionality.

**Table 1.** Epidemiological data

School Year	Students (numbers)	School visited (number)	Teachers (number)	Parents (number)
2014/2015	7502	54	653	667
2015/2016	30975	228	2665	2033
2016/2017	31060	240	2750	2118
2017/2018	31900	280	2798	2958

Mirror neurons are a class of neurons which are selectively activated both when we perform an action and when we observing it activate areas that allow both the observer and the observed subject to perform the same action. They activate what happens in the subject's mind. In fact, many children tell of episodes of "emulation", or "popularity syndrome" to be part of a role-playing game that seems important to them; various risk situations have emerged in the network where most of the adolescents are involved, precisely because they often expose a private trait, without understanding the real unknowns they will encounter. The overwhelming difficulty is related to the comparison with adults ("digital immigrants"), because less experts of children with technology and less prepared to damage "veiled" on the net. This amplifies the "dependence" on the network, also creating episodes of stress, discomfort from "deprivation from the network". At the end of the meeting, the return is often of great impact, since there is an observation that the reality of social media is of great impact, however it is a probable weapon (bomb), of very difficult management.

The work of interaction begins through sharing, "focus group" or through stories in which children leave freedom and space to their thoughts, fears, uncertainties and often also to their safety with respect to the knowledge of the dangers and the belief that they manage to manage everything. An effective and synergistic intervention for the purposes of work, to understand the real difficulties, but created a communicative space in which to compare.

## RESULTS

The Table 1 illustrates not only the growth compared to the demand, but also the request for the training experience and the great involvement that has led to an important success.

### “Internet addiction”

Waking up and as a first thought check who is online or if someone has "posted" or "shared" or commented photos, states, this is a form of Addiction a condition of dependency characterized by patterns of "dysfunctional" behavior with a constant desire for control against his will, with repercussions on the psychophysical level. Addiction has the same effect as substance dependence. Change consists in perceiving through the brain, but also the organism. *Sharing emotions* through the network and in the network

involves not only a new language, but also a Challenge in which digital immigrant adults cannot access, which implies many difficulties.

### Intentional consonance

In the phenomenological field intersubjectivity is important; the consonance is the non-alienation from the actions, from the emotions or sensations that others feel, the world of others with ours. Thanks to the mechanisms of mirroring and simulation, the other is experienced as "other self", this "mirror" character is sometimes synonymous with decoding other people's feelings, through social networks some problematic situations do not have such decoding.

### Embodied simulation

Considering the cognitive strategy allows the experience of the other, Welsh speaks of a *Multiple Cognitive System*. Communication or understanding takes place through the reciprocity of intentions.

This implies the difficulty in the future of having to constantly "conform" to what is continually propitiated by social media, television sources, etc. Different behaviors have led some boys to be victims of cyberbullying, and to suffer from problems of stress, anxiety or depression. Table 2 shows the main risk behaviors .

**Table 2.** Risk behaviors

Specific disorders (obsessive-compulsive);
Compromised circadian rhythm;
Telematic solipsism;
IAD (Internet addiction disorder);
Relationship Difficulty;
H syndrome (isolation to navigate);
Second life (automatism, deprivation)
Depression;
Real relationships, greater needs;
Bullying, cyberbullying (Menesini, intentional social exclusion);
Surgical operations in the carpal tunnel;
Insomnia;
Irregularity of meals;
Nomophobia (blood pressure);
Reduction of melatonin function in the brain.

### Feedback of emerging problems.

In ALL the schools there were moments of hardship in bringing out circumstances, episodes in which there was a suspicion linked to an eventuality of risk for the

boy. Almost everyone was contacted by *Fake* (false profiles), probably victims of jokes among peers... other times by adults with intent about something else. The greatest probabilities of risk emerging are related to grooming.

### Grooming

Priming, charm of the many characters that are present on the net. Because of techniques of multimedia and psychological manipulation, the victim suffers the charm of a character, through online knowledge and can incur harmful situations for himself or his family.

### Idealization of the character

The idealization of the character involves six phases:

- 1) election of the victim;
- 2) Creating friendship;
- 3) Creation of the relationship;
- 4) Risk assessment;
- 5) Exclusivity of the relationship;
- 6) Physical relationship/ sexuality.

### THIS CRUSH

It's a social network to get insulted (Instagram). New fashion, new social: allows you to post, even anonymously, messages with content mainly rich in insults, violence and sexual sphere in very vulgar form. The problem that emerged is that of cyberbullying that would "explode" even more. Teenagers who "target" other teenagers. Luca Pisano, psychologist and psychotherapist, internal supervisor of the national observatory, recently reported this social, highlighting the dangerous aspects, because it works like a real media pillory; the problem is that to make use of it more are the boys of 12 years, the age of children on the net decreases more and more, without "protection". There have been episodes of defamation, parents are unfortunately not informed of the relevant danger.

### Kiki Challenge

"In My Feelings" by Drake, the track record of the summer, a record, in which the Canadian rapper tells the attempt to regain the woman he loves. In the video appear some international celebrities, such as Phylicia Rashad or Shiggy, the comedian that with a video on Instagram has made viral in a very short time the choreography born on the notes of the single of Drake.

Thus began the "Kiki Challenge", improvised dance moves on the refrain of the song "Kiki, do you love me?". But if the comedian was dancing on the street, the phenomenon with the hashtag #DoTheShiggy became viral and many users were improvised dancers, getting caught while they drifted down from the cars in the race, causing concern for the danger.

- **Knockout game - extreme game**, you hit a passer-by and you throw it on the ground, even kicks and punches;
- **Planking, eyeball** - amaze, challenge, get noticed;
- **Balconing** - launch from the balconies;
- **Horsemanning** - body separated from the head, decapitation illusion;
- **Chocking** - suffocation, oxygen blockage to the brain;
- **Eyebanning** - pour on alcoholic eyes.

### Depressive phenomenon

Several studies have dealt with the depressive phenomenon with *social abuse*, Instagram would be the worst. A British survey (Royal Society for Public Health), through a sample of young people (nr 1479) between 14 and 24 years, has studied how young people suffer the social phenomenon and how they suffer risks for their mental health. We move from pro-anorexia to the more complex phenomena of self-harm, up to the "mediaticity" of suicide.

The phenomena that affect the boys most are the lack of expressiveness; anxiety and depression (forms of exclusion throws in panic); disconnection; unrealistic representation of the body (second life); famous or followed profiles involve the risk of depression; depersonalization. However, the subjects at risk do not always through the "like" change their malaise, their state linked to the disease.

### HIKIKOMORI

Hikikomori is a phenomenon known, viral and present in almost all families who have a teenager at home. It has the following characteristics: stay in disparts; insulate; withdrawal; social withdrawal; 90% male cases: medium high social extraction; unique children, graduated parents; autostima / revaluation; physical / school foby.

### CONCLUSIONS

During these years the field experience has had an enormous response with optimal feedback; in every reality, the territory forms and influences the growth of children, social networks are a great resource, but also a large container of deception and also makers of "addictions" that are now on par with "addictions to drugs." worrying relationship between social and depression should reflect on the use "improper", the phenomenon does not only affect adolescents, but also a large share of adults, already suffering from relational problems, low self-esteem and depressive aspects.

## Acknowledgements:

Thanks to the P.D Silvestri D. ssa Fabiola, Manager of the Postal and Communications Police "Campania" for the availability and professionalism with which I could interface my work, thanks to Mrs. Rosaria Galbiati for speed and efficiency with which he accepted my requests, a special thanks to the Ass.C. Dr. Francesco Giobbe, in which I found great competence, effectiveness in interventions, love and professionalism for his immense work and for his territory, and for the synergy with which my professional requests were accepted, thank you very much; a heartfelt thanks to Dr. Francesco Franza for the exchange and help in preparing everything, a thank you to Dr. Giuseppe Tavormina.  
*Thanks to my affections ... my beloved Rosalba, of great help...*

**Conflict of interest:** None to declare.

## References

1. AA. VV: *Chat, network relationship scenarios*, Meltemi publisher, Rome, 2007
2. Aboujaoude E, Koran LM, Gamel N, Large MD, Serpe RT: *Potential markers for problematic internet use: a telephone survey of 22.513 adults*. *CNS Spectr* 2006; 11:750-5
3. Abraham FD: *Cyborgs, cyberspace, cybersexuality: the evolution of everyday creativity in social and spiritual perspective* (Ruth Richards, ed) APA, Washington DC, 2007
4. Andreoli V: *Digital life*, Rizzoli, Milan, 2012
5. Arkowitz H, Westra HA, Miller WR, Rollnick S: *The motivational interview for the treatment of psychological problems: è un libro o un articolo? Mancano le referenze* Baratta A. *Chat and instant messaging*, Apogeo, Monza, 2006
6. Bouna-Pyrrou P, Mühle C, Kornhuber J, Lenz B: *Internet gaming disorder, social network disorder and laterality: handedness related to pathological use of social networks*. *J Neural Transm* 2015; 122: 1187-1196
7. Cantelmi T, Grifo LG: *The virtual mind*, Sanpaolo Edition, Milan, 2002
8. Cantelmi T: *Online betrayals*, Franco Angeli, Milan, 2006
9. Carli VI, Durkee T, Wasserman D, Hadlaczky G et al.: *The association between pathology and the use of comorbid psychopathology: a systematic review*. *Psychopathology* 2013; 46:1-13
10. Ferree M: *Women and the web: cybersex activity and implications, sexual and relationship therapy*. *Sexual and Relationship Therapy* 2003; 3: 385-393
11. Giusti E, Iacono M: *Abuses and ill-treatment*. Sovera, 2010
12. Giusti E, Militello F: *Mirror neurons and psychotherapy*. Sovera, 2011
13. Lewis B: *Raising Children in a Digital Age*. Lion Hudson plc, Oxford, England, 2014
14. Padriani P: *Chat place and time of communication and meeting*. Effatà Editrice, Cantalupa, Torino, 2006
15. Suler J: *Cyberspace as psychological space (online)*. <http://users.rider.edu/~suler/psyber/decade.html>, 1999
16. Wallance P: *The psychology of the internet*. Raffaello Cortina, Milan, 2000
17. Welsh V, Goldman A: *Mirror neurons and the simulation theory of mind-reading*, *Trends Cogn Sci* 1998; 2:493-501
18. Welsh V, Migone P, Eagle MN: *The embodied simulation: mirror neurons, the neurophysiological basis of intersubjectivity and some implications for psychoanalysis*. *Psychotherapy & Human Sciences* 2006; 3: 543-580
19. Windley PJ: *Digital Identities*. New Techniques, Milan, 2006

## Correspondence:

Annalisa Colucci, MD  
Neamente Association  
via San Pietro 27, - 80035 Nola (NA), Italy  
E-mail: merida71@libero.it