

**European Conference on Information Literacy  
(ECIL)**

October 22-25, 2013, Istanbul, Turkey

**Abstracts**

Editors:

Serap Kurbanoglu, Esther Grassian, Diane Mizrachi, Ralph Catts,  
Sümeyye Akça, Sonja Špiranec

Hacettepe University  
Department of Information Management  
Ankara, 2013

# Social Media Skills as a Requirement for Information Literacy - An Empirical Investigation of Secondary School Students

Lisa Orszullok and Lisa Beutelspacher

Heinrich-Heine University, Düsseldorf, Germany. {lisa.orszullok, lisa.beutelspacher}@hhu.de

Digital natives are strongly involved in the challenge of using Social Media in their everyday lives. Our present study examines the use of Social Media of children and teenagers as part of their information literacy. It focuses on the differences between students of class 6 and class 11 at German schools and points out how they use Social Media.

## *Methods*

The case study is based on a survey which was administered at two German schools. This survey was conducted using a paper-based questionnaire. The investigators were always on site during the completion of the questionnaires, so questions that arose could be answered immediately. In total, 211 students in class 6 and 254 in class 11 were questioned. The response rate was almost 100%.

## *Results*

In terms of evaluating an online situation, older students perform better than younger students. They are more able to judge critical situations before making a decision. Nevertheless there are deficits in information literacy in both age groups. It is obvious that the usage of Social Media services increases at a higher age and is more strongly integrated into everyday life.

The most frequently used services beside social networks are YouTube and Wikipedia. It is apparent that Wikipedia, in particular, is just used passively. Only 5% of the participants stated that they actively write or correct articles. Students in class 11 seem to be more active in using blogging and micro blogging services. But even here the activity is mainly passive. This is also reflected in the fact that about 50% of all students do not know about the existence of tags. Only a few participants know and also use tags for indexing content on Social Media platforms.

## *Discussion*

The results show that teachers and parents should train students in evaluating critically Social Media services, to give them an understanding of crucial aspects like data protection and privacy. It is also apparent that information literacy instruction should not only consider static, but also dynamic information, like the kind that appears in Social Media services.

**Keywords:** *Information literacy, social media, students, web 2.0, media usage*