

# Regional and Global Dimensions of Social Networking

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## Abstract

The contribution is focused on social networks development in recent years, in the context of East-European countries, especially Slovakia. Social network is an example of global media, but we can find it's origin in relatively small communities. Anyway, their development is not evolutionary, but rather revolutionary – not forced through regional levels, but through the global perspectives of MySpace and especially Facebook. Many young people (university students) have to act on this situation: they used to use regional social networks, not available for their friends from abroad (language barrier), so now they have to leave them and register elsewhere e.g. on Facebook. What this situation brings to local networks? Are they going to disappear? Or are they going to transform in some way? Is there going to be hegemony of one or two global networks in future? We will try to answer these and similar questions both on theoretical as well as practical levels: qualitative-quantitative research conducted on university students in Slovakia. Important part of this study will be focused on economics of social networks as an important factor of competition between internet services.

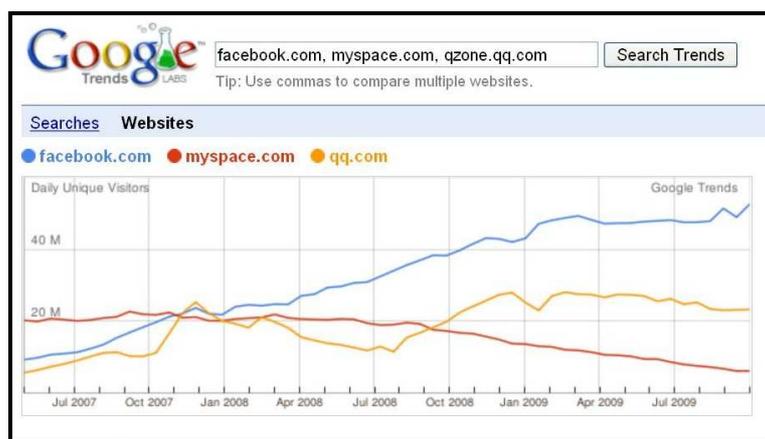
## Key words

Social networks, Global/local perspectives of social networking; Facebook; Social networking in East-European region; Small social communities; Development of social networking.

## Introduction

Social networking has been a new media phenomenon all around the world. In particular way, a success and fast growth of social networking in some countries is tightly connected to spreading of one service: Facebook. No matter whether it's good or bad – sometimes the Facebook is a synonym for social networking (e.g. Kalamdani, 2009). Fast growth of Facebook is taking place under the similar scenario in many countries all around the world. From very global perspective we can see an important milestone of social networking development in 2008, when daily unique visitors of Facebook exceeded 40 millions (according to Google Trends), leaving the most important competitors far behind. At the beginning of 2008, there was a moment, when the popularity of most important social networks reached about the same numbers, at the end of that year, everything has changed:

**Figure 1: Global statistics (trends) of social networking sites<sup>1</sup>**



Source: Google Trends

Figure 1 shows remarkable movement in the distribution of social networking users. According this, Facebook is so far a global winner. However, what needs to be considered, are local perspectives. Facebook as a global player fights on many fronts with smaller local rivals, scattered all around the world. Then, also many things depend on national internet markets. As figure 1 shows, Chinese market by itself is able to compete even with the global market – at least from the daily unique visitors viewpoint. Of course, all other local markets are smaller, dependent on the population, internet and mobile technologies spread and amount of advertising market. Even relatively small European countries such as Slovakia<sup>2</sup>, are „big“ enough to create competitive environment for social networking. Recently, just like in many other countries, the main competition has reduced into two major players – one is global (Facebook) and the other one is local (Pokec.sk).

Facebook is still relatively new service, started in 2004. It was founded by Mark Zuckerberg as web limited for university students. But founder himself and his co-workers understood the growing potential of social networking services for the whole world very soon. Facebook was globally the first one, who moved social networking from the limitation of anonymous playground to the substitution of real communication with real (never quite anonymous) people. Especially, they focused on off-line friends, what is still – with particular changes – the main social field for communication. Nielsen research report (2009) lists 6 factors contributing to Facebook's growth:

- **Design**, which is organized and friendly, easy to become familiar with. Facebook's layout is default, contrary to some other networks (such as MySpace) with possibility to accommodate the environment. Facebook's design became a subject of various level imitations all around the world, like StudiVZ site in Germany.
- **Broad appeal**. Although Facebook started as university students' community web, nowadays it is not targeted towards specific demographic segment. This matter is

<sup>1</sup> Figure 1 shows the most popular social networking sites in the world. However, qqzone.qq.com is a Chinese website, so from the viewpoint of this paper it is considered to be a local one. Also, myspace.com is not easy to consider being a prototype of global network – it is much more popular in USA than elsewhere, however its global impact (especially in pre-Facebook era) is remarkable. Facebook is different, because it is known and popular all over the world.

<sup>2</sup> Slovakian internet market consists of 850.000 unique daily users (15,8 % of population), 1,6 millions of weekly users (29,7% of population) and 2,2 millions of monthly users (40,9% of population).

supported by the fact that Facebook's greatest growth in global audience numbers is coming from people aged 35-49.

- **Activity focus.** Many social networks (at least from the beginning) are set up by their developers to serve as playground, communication tool for seeking people to chat with, play with, maybe date. On the contrary, Facebook is primarily an extension off-line lives of users. It can be used for activities such as reuniting old friends, business networking, sharing photos and videos etc. It is not a monothematic tool, but rather very broad, combining many communication possibilities known from some other community sites.
- **Architecture.** Facebook is open for new features, including applications developed by own users. It's architecture is open.
- **Privacy.** Very important aspect for majority of users is privacy. Facebook's privacy is dependent on users' personal choice, but default setting allows only some people (friends) to see one's profile and contents.
- **Media coverage.** It can be seen as a synergetic effect caused by connection of above mentioned characteristics. Now it isn't easy to say if rapid growth of Facebook was caused by huge media coverage or vice versa (Fandelová and Spálová, 2008)

A success of Facebook at the global level can be understood at least from these viewpoints:

- **Connection,** possibility to meet literally everyone one could ever met on the planet, the way of meeting is comfortable and easy.
- **Social status,** do being connected there (at least in some demographic groups) means being socially out.
- **Focus aspect,** Facebook is not only a playground, but also a tool for serious communication, in many ways a substitution and/or extension of off-line communication.
- **Global possibilities,** creation of web sub-systems on regional levels and/or different language versions.

With no doubt, access for literally everyone in the world is the most powerful weapon in Facebook's hands. This benefit emerged as a combination of unique communication possibilities offer along with new communication needs of computer users, which connected to the snowball effect – high level of reflection by mass-media all around the world. Suddenly, almost every internet user knew about Facebook, and soon it started to generate huge number of daily visitors. For many people Facebook has opened new door to their social life and the question: „to be on Facebook or not to be“ emerged as a fear from impending social communication gap (Šramová, 2007). Facebook was also very generous in the way it broke regional barriers, especially the language one. It opened its platform (respectively launched free application called „Translation“) for users to let them create any language version they desired, which can be looked at as regionalization movement of global medium.

On the other hand, there are several advantages of local social networks comparing to global ones. According to research document Global Faces and Network Places (Nielsen research report, 2009), Facebook plays global game only for last 2 years, after 3 years of lower than global level development. This launch helped local networks to reinforce their influence. Second reason for local players' success could be language barrier, as we mentioned earlier. For example, Slovak language version is available only from 2009. As Nielsen report shows, there are many countries where local networks succeeded, like Japan, Brazil or Germany and nowadays they are much more popular than Facebook. There is special situation in China with domestic social networks homogeneity because of Facebook's censorship. And surprisingly,

Facebook is number one only from July 2009 in its home country - USA (according to Google Trends).

In many ways, Pokec.sk<sup>3</sup> is similar to the Danish social networking site Arto.dk. The service started in 1999 and as it was the first one of its kind in country it accumulated large number of users. At its beginnings, Pokec.sk was chat playground for teenagers fascinated by possibilities of internet, but from the beginning it had potential of social community. As most pre-Facebook sites, it was anonymous, what refers to non-formal and entertaining character of the platform – at least from beginning. Nowadays Pokec.sk tries to be more serious with support of its users who grew older with this service and became adults. According to Pokec.sk mediated information, more than 83% of users are 18 years old and over and average user is logged in 77 minutes daily. The most frequent age segment is 18-30.

Pokec.sk is a part of Azet.sk, the biggest domestic player on the Slovak internet market. Facebook's launch was a challenge for domestic social networks all around the world. The question is how to react to "facebookization" of the internet. Many things depend on pre-Facebook position of social networking providers. And there are big local differences – for example, there is no equal competitor for Facebook in Czech republic – domestic services are usually oriented too unilaterally, not covering and offering much from recent inventions in this area. There is different situation in Slovakia. Pokec.sk was well known, popular especially in the group of young people looking for fun, friendships, relationships etc.

The 2008 breakpoint, clear from figure 1, had a strong impact for Pokec.sk, too. In 2009 Pokec.sk started huge advertising campaign, the biggest one in its history. They decided to use mass media, such as television, radio and outdoor. Using of outside of the internet devices is not typical for Slovak internet market and it reflects the to necessity of Pokec.sk to react to the challenge of Facebook. At the same time, Pokec.sk went through the one of the biggest redesigns in its history. However, instead of new services or functions, the process of re-designing could be decoded as particular „facebookisation“ – implementation of both the look and some functions of Facebook. On the other hand, media campaign didn't focused on redesign, but, instead, it has simply ensured potential recipients, that Pokec.sk is the most important place for their social activities on the web. Here are some examples of outdoor ads:



Figure 2<sup>4</sup>



Figure 3<sup>5</sup>



Figure 4<sup>6</sup>

Surprisingly, it isn't easy to say, if Pokec.sk is still the most popular, or if Facebook.com is already winning the competition in Slovakia. There are some measuring services and tools, but we didn't find any research reporting on these two sites side by side. Because of different methodology, it is really hard to compare results in various reports. So instead of official chart of daily unique visitors we present Facebook's daily unique visitor statistics for Slovakia

<sup>3</sup> Pokec is Slovak word that could be translated to English as a "chat" or a "talking".

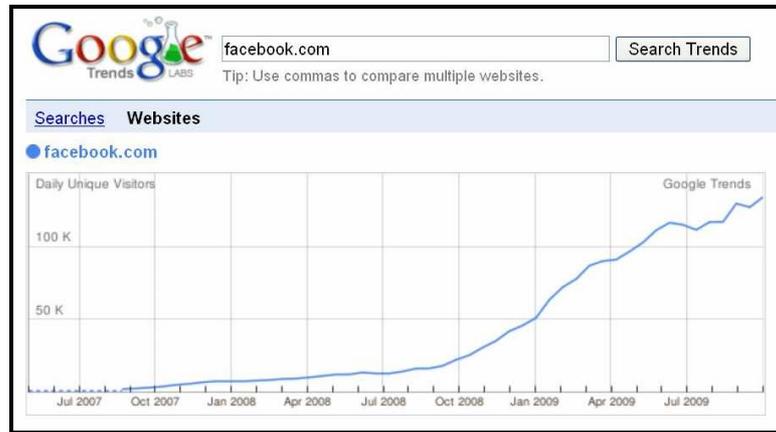
<sup>4</sup> Right in this second, there is 100.000 people at the Pokec.

<sup>5</sup> Today, more than 500.000 people will come to Pokec.

<sup>6</sup> This month, more than 1.200.000 people will come to Pokec.

according to Google Trends,<sup>7</sup> where we can see huge increase in usage of Facebook, similar to global scenario. However, from all available statistics and from our working positions as university teachers we can assume very similar popularity of both websites. A quantitative research – main part of this paper – fully supported this assumption.

**Figure 5: Facebook daily unique visitor statistics in Slovakia**



Source: Google Trends

## Research report

### Problem questions

- 1) Which social networks are known and which are used by university students in Slovakia?
- 2) What is a level of usage?
- 3) What are information sources about social networks in the research file of university students?
- 4) What are the most frequent reasons for using of social networks by the researched file?
- 5) Are university students in Slovakia focused more on local, or on global social networks?
- 6) What is frequency and quality of social networks used by the researched file?
- 7) What level of use can we identify with mobile phones?
- 8) What are estimates on social networks usage by their users – university students in Slovakia?

### Methods and methodology

To answer the problem questions, we decided to use the explorative method: combined questionnaire containing items of dichotomic character, scaling items (Likert scaling), as well as one open question. Data obtained by questionnaire were processed by proceeding of descriptive statistics (arithmetic mean, modus, median, max. and min. values, standard deviation), some data were processed by comparative statistics (two-sample T-test).

<sup>7</sup> We decided not to include Pokec.sk, because there is significant difference between official reporting (AIMonitor) about Daily unique visitors and Google Trends (in more than 300%). Also numbers for Facebook are more illustrative than exact, what is sufficient enough for the purpose of this paper.

## Research file

Selected file consisted of university students in Slovakia, Nitra region (Slovak University of Agriculture, Constantine the Philosopher University). For the purpose of study we evaluated data received from 182 respondents; average age was 21 years and 6 months. Males/females ratio wasn't balanced, respecting percentual saturation at the universities (40 males and 142 females).

## Results

Familiarity and level of usage of particular social networking services is showed in figure 6. It shows that the most favorite social network is Facebook.com (statistic significance is presented in figure 7). According to obtained data we can claim that almost all university students know Facebook (only 3,2 % respondents is not familiar with this service) and use it several times per week. Information about standard deviation indicates sufficient homogeneity of this group. Pokec.sk is also very popular. However, research shows inter-individual differences in level of usage by respondents, indicated by higher standard deviation. Respondents mentioned they use it several times per month. Other social networks are being used on very low level, or they marked them as unknown. The lowest level of familiarity with research file indicated these networks: www.linkedin.com and www.Tagged.com. Respondents had also possibility to write down other networks, not just ones presented on the list. This way they wrote down networks such as www.myvip.hu (8,2 % respondents), www.ivip.hu (4,3%), and they've even mentioned www.icq.com (6 % respondents) as a social network.

**Figure 6: Results illustrating a level of social network services familiarity with research file and level of use**

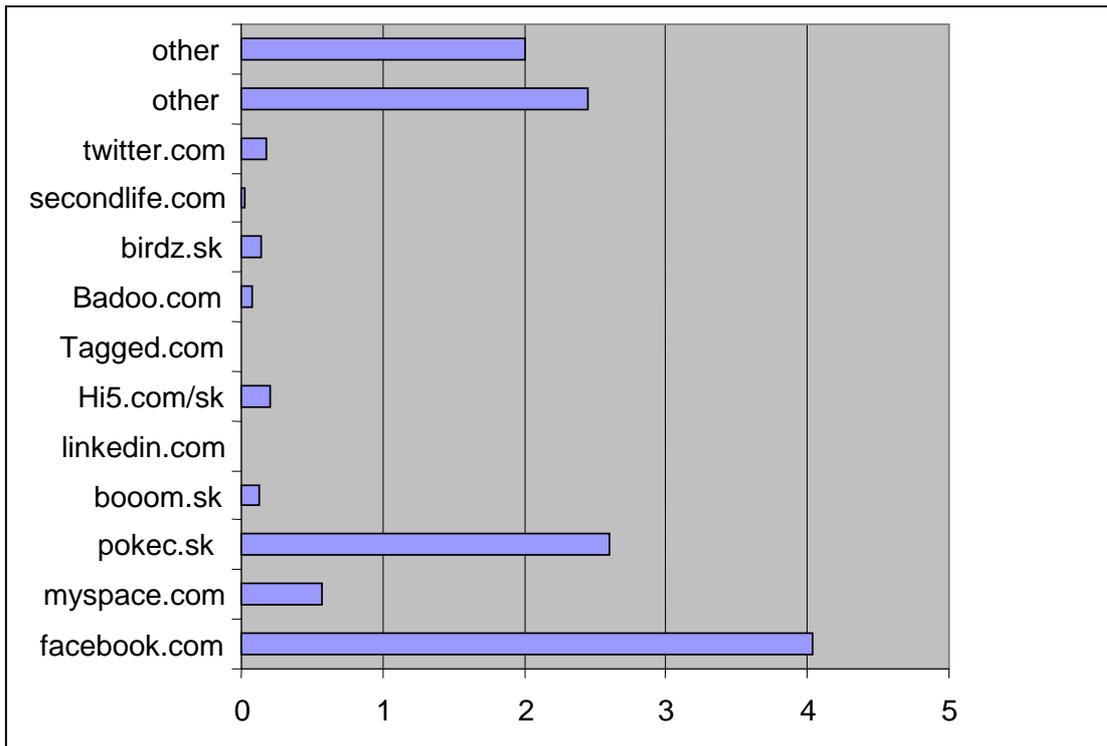
	AM	sd	MED	MOD	MIN	MAX
www.facebook.com	4,04	1,32	4	5	0	5
www.myspace.com	0,57	0,80	0	0	0	4
www.pokec.sk	2,60	1,66	3	4	0	5
www.booom.sk	0,12	0,52	0	0	0	5
www.linkedin.com	0,01	0,11	0	0	0	1
www.Hi5.com/sk	0,20	0,56	0	0	0	3
www.Tagged.com	0,01	0,11	0	0	0	1
www.Badoo.com	0,07	0,31	0	0	0	2
www.birdz.sk	0,14	0,41	0	0	0	3
www.secondlife.com	0,02	0,14	0	0	0	1
www.twitter.com	0,17	0,65	0	0	0	5
Others (write down):.....	2,45	1,63	2	0	0	5
Others (write down):.....	2,00	1,76	2	0	0	5

**Figure 7: T-test. Level of social network services use by research file**

	myspace.com	pokec.sk	booom.sk	Linkedin.com	Hi5.com	Tagged.com	Badoo.com	birdz.sk	secondlife.com	twitter.com
Face book.com	6,7E-40	5E-15	6E-54	2E-79	3E-55	1E-76	3E-67	0	3E-70	0

Legend: all presented differences are significantly on the level  $\alpha$  0,001 of mistake probability.

**Figure 8: Results illustrating a level of social network services familiarity with research file and level of use**

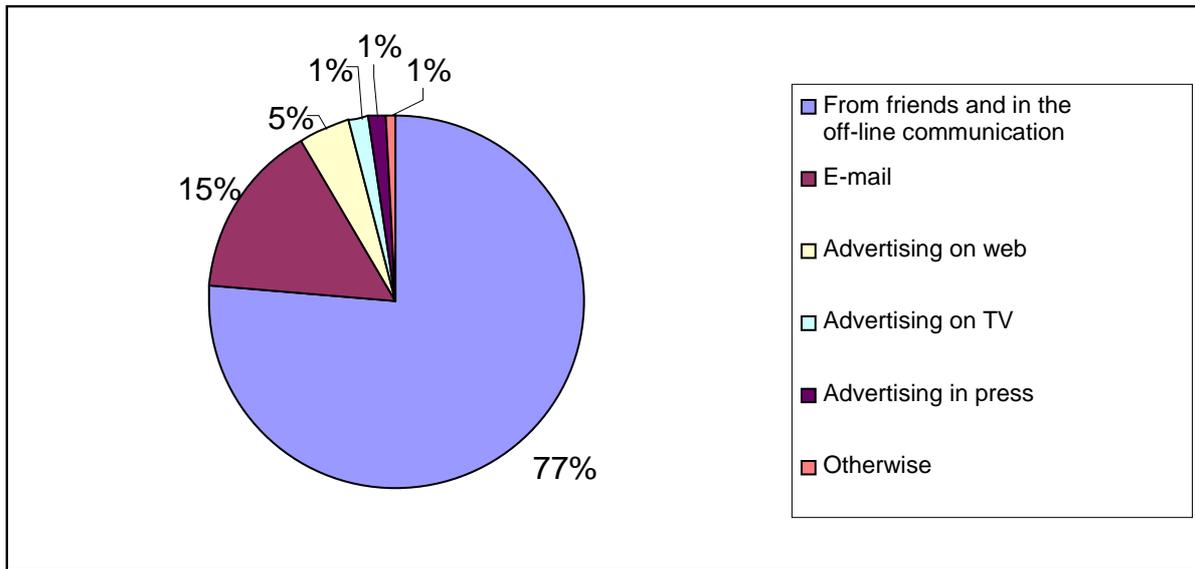


Legend: Figure also shows the frequency of placing one or two other networks

Only a small percentage of respondents know and use more than 4 networks, as showed by the analysis mentioned above. In Figure 9 we present the sources of information about the existence of Facebook. The figure includes only those respondents who indicated familiarity with this network, and in response to several sources mentioned about its existence. The figure shows that the majority representation in informing about network have off-line friends in the normal communication (up to 77%), an important source of information about the existence of this network can also be email correspondence (15%). Advertising on the site as well as other types of ads are relatively insignificant source of information.

Similar results can be found even in the analysis of sources of information of other networks, although their reputation is rather sporadic in our research group of respondents. Even the second most famous and most widely accepted network of university students: www.pokec.sk, indicates that the most important source of information are friends (in total 74.51%), secondly it is advertising on the web (10%), advertising on TV (6.7%) and email (5.2%). MySpace users referred to friends (64.34%), advertising on the Web (14.68%) and email (6.99%) as a important sources of information.

**Figure 9: Percentage of all sources of information about the existence of www.facebook.com (respondents could give more information sources simultaneously)**



Legend: figure includes only those respondents who replied; 2.74% of the respondents did not supply information, most of those did not know about Facebook.

Reasons for the use of social networks reported by research group are in average focused on maintaining contact with people with whom they also meet regularly outside of the internet social networks (off-line friends). This response refers to relatively homogeneous and uniform file (sd = 0.8).

It is also possible on the basis of the results found that respondents maintained contacts with people with whom they don't meet out of the internet social networks (on-line friends). Again, file is relatively homogeneous.

**Figure 10: Reasons for the use of the social networks in the research file of university students - data of descriptive statistics**

	AM	Median	MOD	Min	Max	sd
I'm looking for friends	-0,29	0	-1	-2	2	1,210819
Maintaining contacts with people with whom I also meet on regular basis	1,52	2	2	-2	2	0,851882
Maintaining contacts with people with whom I don't meet otherwise, or I have met them only few times in life	1,14	1	2	-2	3	0,975058
Searching for contacts of people outside the country	-1,02	-1	-2	-2	2	1,077753
I do not have expectations, everyone is there, so do I	-0,85	-1	-2	-2	2	1,212427
Other	1,14	2	2	-2	2	1,573592

Other reasons mentioned only 6% of respondents (11), while the precise wording reported 10 of them. Among the reasons presented to respondents were as follows:

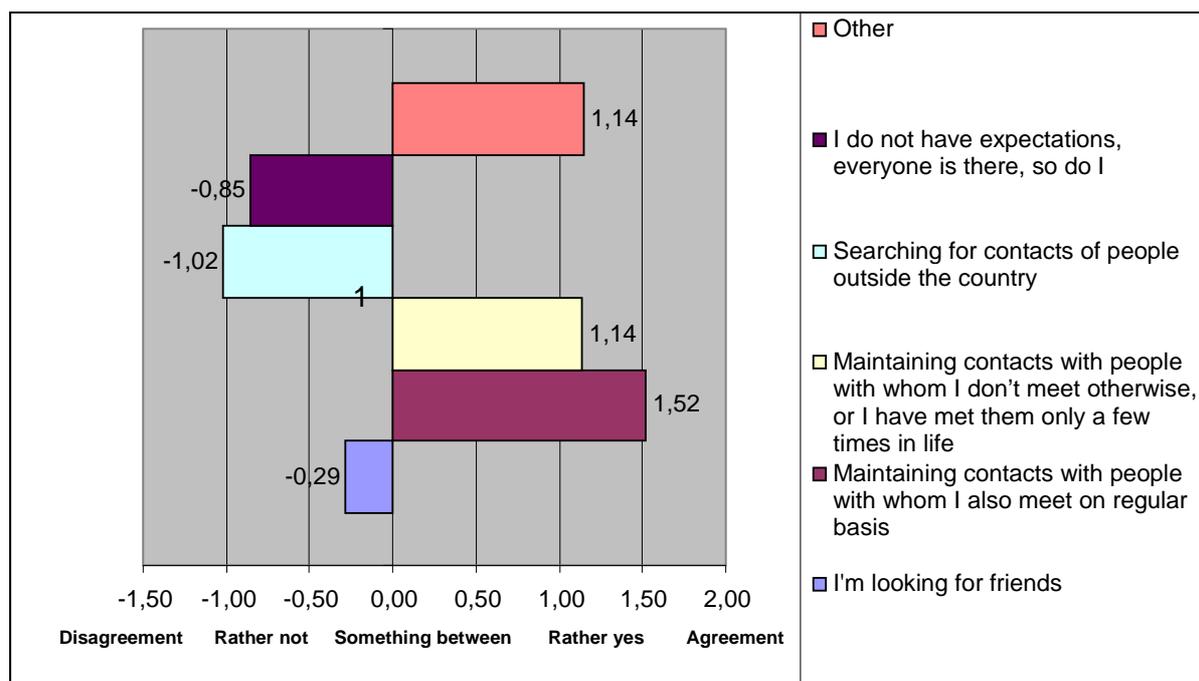
- *want to keep in touch with recent affairs;*
- *often use it instead of a phone or ICQ because there are many of my friends;*
- *obtaining information about public activities and events;*
- *presentation of my portfolio;*

- email;
- there are many friends there – it is easy to reach them;
- learn new information;
- inform about events;
- fun and games.

A group of researched university students does not take advantage of looking for new friendships outside the territory of Slovak Republic, although internet social networks provide such possibilities and they provide an excellent opportunities for these activities (detailed results are set out in Fig. 10 and illustrated in Fig. 11). Respondents tend to disagree with the argument of the so-called mainstreaming effect (Gero, 2005) that they register on these networks because "everyone is there, so do I..."

Knowingly, they don't consider social networks to be opportunities to search friends, although a high standard deviation (sd = 1.21) indicates that part of the research file have a different viewpoint so we can point out higher inter-individual differences.

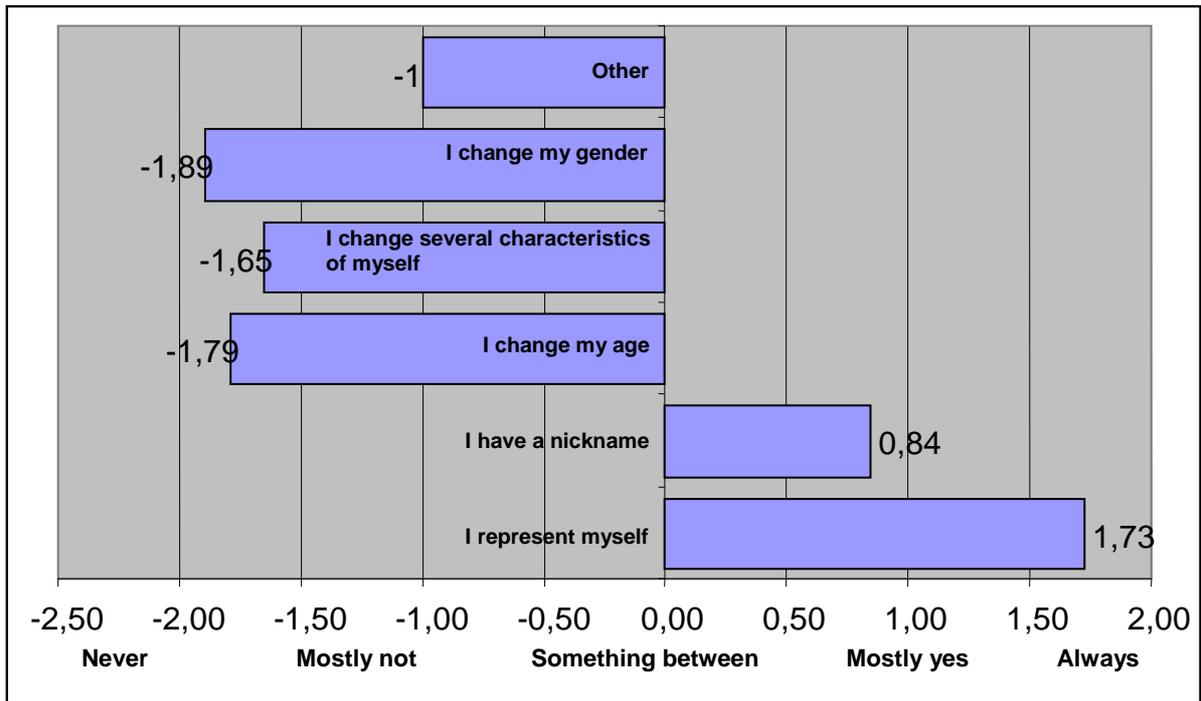
**Figure 11: Reasons for the use of the social networks in the research file of university students - the average score**



Social networks offer place and opportunity to experiment with individual identity. In our questionnaire, we also address this issue, although it would be more appropriate to ask a projective type of question, but to incorporate it into the scaling of the questionnaire with direct questions would be too transparent.

Results indicate that most university students (almost always statement "Always") are representing themselves, and this response is substantially identical (sd = 0.63). Respondents very often use aliases (nickname use up to 47.8% of respondents), but our group is not uniform (high sd - compare with Fig. 13); not always, but the majority stated enjoyment in using of nicknames (22.53% of the respondents); only 15.38% don't used them on regular basis, and just over 4% not at all (Fig. 14).

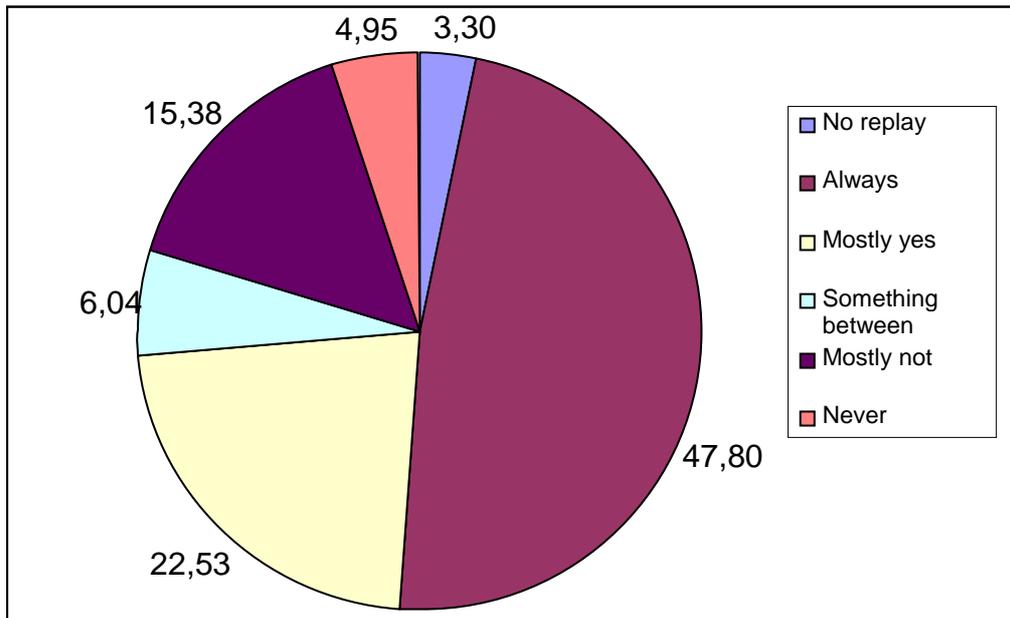
**Figure 12: The identity in the internet social networks - research file of university students**



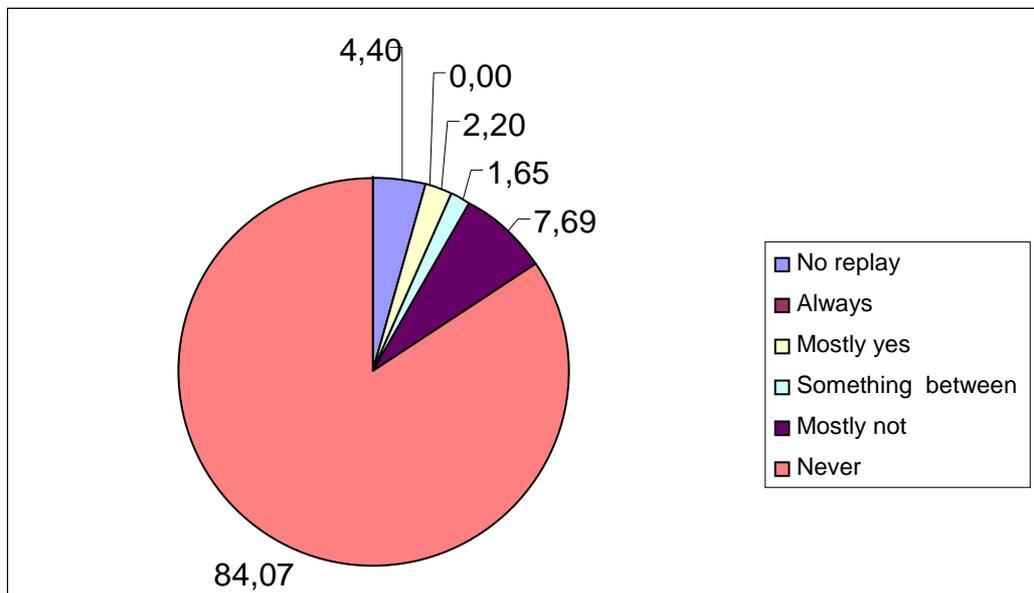
**Figure 13: The identity in the internet social networks - research file of university students**

	AM	Median	MOD	Min	Max	sd
I represent myself	1,73	2	2	-1	2	0,63
I have a nickname, but otherwise I represent myself	0,84	1	2	-4	2	1,51
Beside nickname, I change my age	-1,79	-2	-2	-2	2	0,64
I change several characteristics of myself, interests and other things	-1,65	-2	-2	-2	1	0,74
I change my gender	-1,89	-2	-2	-2	1	0,45
Others	-1,00	-2	-2	-2	2	2,00

**Figure 14: Using nicknames in social networks environment - research file of university students**



**Figure 15: Changing age (present incorrect information) in the social networks - research file of university students. (Item: I change my age)**



From the research file of university students 84.07% provides correct information about their true age while on internet social networks (for details see Fig. 15) and they never faked this characteristics. From Fig. 13 it is evident that this aspect follows very homogeneous group. Similarly, students do not change other identifying information, whether individual characteristics such as personality characteristics, interests, and others (74.18% never, 14.84% mostly not). Only 1.1% of respondents changed their age and/or personal characteristics (also gender), while the item left without answers 3.85% and 1.65% of the respondents stated the

answer: "something between", which in this context means that in some cases they even change their identity this way. Only 89.56% of respondents indicated they have never used this option.

**Figure 16: Use of languages in communication on the internet social networks - research file of university students**

	Slovak language	English language	Other languages
AM	1,439306	-0,24848	1,08
<b>MEDIAN</b>	2	0	1
<b>MOD</b>	2	-1	2
<b>MIN</b>	-2	-2	-2
<b>MAX</b>	2	2	2
<b>sd</b>	0,904166	1,211762	1,084962

Legend: respondents labeled the use of language on 5 points scale from -2 never use to 2 all times using

While using social networks, our respondents use predominantly Slovak language and partly also other languages (most frequently reported other languages are Hungarian and German). English is used, but to a smaller extent. In this question, there are significant differences among respondents, as evidenced by the results of the descriptive statistics presented in the Fig. 16, especially the high sd, but also min. and max. and the median value.

In the problem questions formulated above, we also focused on identifying the extent of use of social networks through the mobile phones. Results obtained from the questionnaire are presented in Fig. 17. The most common way to connect to the internet social networks is a notebook, followed by desktop PCs, respectively PCs at university (in item "others", where respondents mostly reported university PCs - which are intended mainly for learning purposes as well as the administration of study, in our case through the AIS-academic information system). Finally, students also use mobile phones for the communication through the social networks.

**Figure 17: Using of the social networks via desktop PCs, laptops, mobile phones or other devices**

	Desktop PC	Notebook	Mobile phone	Other
AM	0,722543	1,136095	-1,35152	-1
<b>MEDIAN</b>	1	2	-2	-2
<b>MOD</b>	2	2	-2	-2
<b>MIN</b>	-2	-2	-2	-2
<b>MAX</b>	2	2	2	2
<b>sd</b>	1,356899	1,262721	1,114243	1,732051

Legend: respondents labeled the use of equipment on 5 points scale from -2 never use to 2 all times using

How the respondents of our research see the future of social networking? Responses to the open question were analyzed by quantified content analysis. No response stated 25.82% respondents; 7.14% indicated no opinion in this matter. From the replies of those with opinion we can create groups of respondents, who see the future of networks in their development

towards merging into one (13.74%), and those who see the future in developing more specified and more specialized networks is higher percentage: 18.68%. One of respondents gave an example: *"There will be more smaller ones, which will focus particularly on maintaining contacts with other people."* Some respondents positively inclined to the developing of social networks (12.08% of all respondents expressed clearly positive attitudes), eg. *"I'm sure these networks will find a place in people's lives, because there you can communicate with friends who are eg. living outside the country and where you can also find new ones."* However, part of respondents is concerned, whether this development will lead to disturbance of the face-to-face interpersonal communication, or deteriorate interpersonal relationships (8.24%), eg. *"It's everywhere, and it will continue. Anyway, it is going to absorb us ..."*, *"The best thing will be when people start to reject them and get back to communicating face to face, people are spending more time on the internet than in real life..."*, *"... replacement of the personal communication..."*, *"... they will divide people."* Some respondents expressed themselves only in the neutral level (46.15%), so emotional component of attitude could not be identified.

## Conclusions

We answer the presented problem questions on the basis of research results as follows:

- Students of Nitra region universities in Slovakia are familiar with several social networks. However, there are big inter-individual differences in the knowledge of these services. Respondents mainly use [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) and [www.pokec.sk](http://www.pokec.sk), just as we deduced from official statistics
- the most basic sources of information on social networking for the respondents are their off-line friends, followed by email, advertising is the last one
- the most frequent reason of the use of the social networks for our respondents is communicating with off-line friends, who they meet on regular basis, but also with off-line friends who are difficult or impossible to meet elsewhere to a variety of reasons
- university students we researched are more focused on the local networks of friends, usually using native language, looking for friends outside the country is occasional
- rate of the use of social networking via mobile phone is minimal in the research file
- predictions of the social networks future made by our research file were oriented in two directions: the creation of one super network or the simultaneous development of several networks. But beside positive reactions, respondents also presented some concerns about the development of interpersonal relationships and communication as such.

Based on the findings above, we concluded that despite the extensive opportunities that social networks provide - contacting distant people from different countries, our university students tend to use them especially in local intentions as an extension of the off-line social communication or as its substitution. Students mostly use laptops and school computers for this purpose. They see huge possibilities of the social networks (Wojciechowski and Mikuláš, 2009), some of them are fascinated and excited, but some of them present critical opinion and fear of alienation and compensation of the off-line interpersonal communication. We think that this type of communication can be enriching as well as feared - depending on the sophistication of both communication and the society.

Considering activities carried out by researched university students in social networks, we can see the future of regional networks like Pokec.sk quite positive. As illustrated, the main focus of university students is to maintain off-line contacts and local networks are fully sufficient for this purpose. Experiences and the tradition of local player (Pokec.sk) play great role, because of accumulation of a large number of users during the pre-Facebook period. The most popular networks, like we presumed from the basis of statistical results, are Pokec.sk and Facebook; these two networks are known by the majority of university students. Facebook is more popular network in our case, although considering given size of a research file such a claim is not valid enough. Our research also highlighted the significant differentiation of user interests, which are exposed to many networks. However, the question is, whether their membership in such networks is taken seriously, or if it is rather an innovating experience. Lack of interest in mass media advertising of social network sites pointed to questionable step of Pokec.sk, who tried to use this kind of promotion to consolidate, or defend its position of national number one. According to the experience of research file more appropriate tools of propagation are advertising on the internet, but most of all personal contacts with people outside the on-line communities. The research results also point to a particular reluctance of Slovak university students to link with people outside the country, what may indicate a lower rate of cosmopolitanism, but on the other hand, the preference for off-line friendships in this area. This fact corresponds to the weak interest in the use of English language. Almost exclusive use of native language could be interpreted as a communication barrier to global communication. It also should be noted that the reason for this situation is not likely unfamiliarity with English, but - as we mentioned above - a lack of interest in communication outside the off-line friends. Research has showed that users of social networks are mostly interested in serious communication (extension of off-line relationships), playing games, entertainment and less are interested on experimenting with identity. For many students this is compensation for off-line communication when there are temporal or space barriers. Only a small minority of respondents indicated some kind of social deviance.

The big surprise for us was very little interest in the use of social networks via mobile phones. Although data from the research can not be interpreted as the absolute numbers, compared to the many other European countries (see *Global Faces and Network Places* report, Nielsen, 2009), the use of social networks via mobile devices is clearly outside the mainstream. This fact is surprising because penetration of mobile devices is very high (around 86%), in relative terms comparable with other European countries.

The prediction of future trends through a pilot research is methodologically impossible, so we believe to repeat the research in future, because beside to the quantitative indicators (the official statistics on daily unique visitors) it is also important to monitor the qualitative ones, enabling more precise identification of present and future communication needs of young people in an environment of global and local social networks.

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