E- BOOK AND INTERNET USAGE IN THE TEACHING PROCESS

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Abstract:

Nowadays, we are witnessing major technological changes that affect the overall society, current way of living, education and reading habits of young people. This paper highlights both advantages and disadvantages of E-book compared to traditional printed books. E-book is a non- printed version of the traditional book, which remains in the electronic form and can be used only on a computer or some other device that allows reading e-books in several formats. The Internet represents a modern media that has surpassed all its predecessors and facilitated communication and transmission of information in general. On the other hand, it has brought a lot of danger. This paper also discusses the issue of children safety on the Internet. Besides that, it gives practical examples of the Internet usage in teaching. The use of the Internet in teaching undoubtedly increases motivation of young people, but it has greater benefits when used moderately together with other teaching methods. There are great challenges and innovations lying ahead of students and their professors, and only through mutual ideas, improvements and interaction can we contribute to establishing a high quality education.

INTRODUCTION

This paper deals with topics related to education and possibilities to improve teaching process in the field of humanities. The Internet, as a teaching tool, has considerably influenced educational process. Those changes are reflected in improved and faster communication and nowadays remote communication is a rather common term. The paper primarily discusses digitalization process of various contents and converting printed books into electronic ones by providing examples taken from languages courses. Futurists predict an electronic book to become a prevailing teaching tool in the future. Therefore, the paper attempts to discuss both advantages and disadvantages of the e-book by providing multitude of examples. The second part of the paper focuses mainly on the Internet and its possible uses in classrooms, but also on possible threats the over extensive use can bring along. Each and every teacher has to work constantly on their own further education and their work must be evaluated on regular basis. The paper can be useful not only to students and professors, but also to parents interested in the teaching processes their children are exposed to.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF E- BOOK

Electronic book represents a non-printed version of a traditional book. It is in digital format and can be used on computer or some of reading device, namely e-book readers [5]. They are widely available on the Internet. Nevertheless, they are not yet so adopted in our country. Libraries still serve as centres of culture and knowledge. It cannot be guaranteed that the e-book would be demise of the printed one, though it is widely believed that printed book would be popular among readers for quite some time. Printed books have been used for centuries, and it is well-known that it takes time for an innovation to be fully accepted, as the case was with Gutenberg printing press [1]. Even conversion from hand-written to printed books has been rather tumultuous and lots of time was needed for it to be widely accepted. If everything is in digital format, the concept of the library would be changed completely; and not only the concept of the library, but the overall lifestyle.

On one hand, printed books are hard to carry along. Five books being carried could very well amount for more

than two kilos. On the other hand, electronic books occupy virtual space and are no burden. Digital format enables numerous books to be preserved and carried along. E-book is convenient for it saves space. Libraries can have only as many copies of a book, whereas a book in digital format can be used by unlimited number of users at the same time. Visiting libraries can be time-consuming – on occasions, one has to wait in line for a book or even to wait for a book to be sent from another city. On the Internet, however, it takes several seconds to type in the title and for a book to be found. Search engines are very efficient. E-book cannot wear out or be torn – its maintenance is rather simple. We serve as witnesses to the number of books being destroyed because of the material they are made of. This could probably be the most significant advantage of the e-book. It can preserve and save old manuscripts and texts from decay and thus make it available for generations to come. Digitalizing old books and manuscripts is actually a humane thing to do. Thus, they are protected from decay, and kept in a very simple way. The idea underlying the e-book is that knowledge, science and cultures of all the peoples should be available to everyone through the Internet. This idea promotes equality and equal right for everyone to learn, though in the underdeveloped countries this knowledge has not been and probably will not be equally available. Also, it should be mentioned that e-book saves time needed for printing process and reedited work does not have to be reprinted [7]. Copying and reproduction of a digital format is easy and not as expensive as would be copying a printed book that requires to the least printing paper. It is assumed that technology would advance and the e-book is yet to show its genuine potential. Reading of the e-book would not be hard on the eyes [3]. In time, it would be so perfected that its use would be convenient and pleasant. Fast technology advancement will help perfect all the faults the e-book has at the moment. Linguists are aware and can testify how often they use online dictionaries instead of printed versions. The same goes for thesauruses. Online dictionaries make it possible to look up a word within seconds without having to unnecessary flip through a book and search for the right input word. It offers all the options a printed version has but it is much simpler when it comes to the actual use. On one hand, digital formats preserve books. On the other hand, not having them preserved in libraries or museums, as is the case with many priceless items could lessen spiritual value books have. Interiors of our houses would seem empty with no books on the shelves. A book is often given as a gift and this makes it priceless. The cover and inscription make it unique and different from any other book. It is a force of habit. We are used to printed books and now the e-book seems to many too complicated and tedious.

The young today do not read books as they used to. A book has always served as a source of amusement and enjoyment. Nevertheless, due to great competition – the Internet, television, radio, the book has been increasingly less used for the stated purposes. Reading is important for it helps develop critical opinion and allows imagination to develop and every reader to employ his/her own mean-

ings. When a movie is made or a play is performed based on some literary piece, it disrupts our unique experience of what we have read. Regardless of its format, the fact remains the book has hit the crisis.

Some fundamental advantages and disadvantages of an electronic book are given further on. Internet data are easy to change or lose. Also, it is well-known fact that by burning books or demolishing monasteries, the whole nations can be destroyed. Language used in online communication is impoverished and debased. General aim is to convey information fast and this disregard for the rules leads to vanishing of languages and overall mixing of two or more languages. The language has become simplified, often used incorrectly and with multitude of grammar and spelling mistakes. All this is due to the fact that there is a tendency for the language to be incorporated into a new system in which, as it has been already mentioned, speed is highly appreciated. No one has time to consider the beauty of language and manner of expression in written form if information can be and must be conveyed more efficiently by using the improper language. Social networks are a source of invented languages. Also, nowadays one can hear different mixes of English and German serving as means of communication. Abbreviations and slang are also used widely. For example, in the English language l8r stands for later, and abbreviation hdl in German stands for Ich habe dich lieb- I like you. Ever more present both in spoken and written (at least when it comes to text messaging) English is an abbreviation btw meaning by the way. Young people use the language without thinking of grammar rules, exploit slang and misspell the words intentionally for it is not cool to write correctly. That is how new words are formed. Considering that books are not as read as before and that media with its significant influence exploit the same words repeatedly, it is not strange that language has come into crisis. Electronic books mostly contain pictures. Pictures and illustrations make reading easier, but also they distract the reader from the text, thus shifting the focus of the reader. The reader is distracted by too many pictures on a page. Also, most of the pictures and photos on the Internet are copies, thus lessening the current value of unique artworks. This has caused a crisis in painting as well. Paintings and pictures are increasingly made on computer. Photographs have been in digital format for quite some time, thus causing photo stores to be empty because people are not printing photographs as often as they used to and instead they store all their photos in digital formats. Nowadays, movies in theatres use particular 3D technology. Instruments lose importance. An old, massive, grand piano is being replaced by an electric piano which is practical and not as heavy, and the electronic music itself is becoming more popular than classical.

It should be added that in the learning process focus and ability to understand what is read is of great importance. Too many shortcuts in interpretations, illustrations and different understanding of a work can lead to uncritical thinking and laziness in studying. For instance, when more computer programmes are opened at the same time, our attention is divided between them. It is generally

recognized that by doing more things at the same time, none of the things is done as it should be and one could experience the feeling of anxiety. Learning online hardly ever comes only to that. There are too many temptations in the form of social networks, music, video games, email, etc. In combination with a mobile phone that constantly rings and interrupts the person studying, the studying process can easily be turned into chaos. Any interruption in reading can lead to bad results and exhaustion. Electronic book offers well laid out text that enables to skip the unimportant and thus save time [3]. Some additional explanations and interpretations are often available; all this leading to served knowledge. When reading philosophy books or scientific papers, possibilities and advantages of digital content can easily be confusing and reading numerous texts could lead to memorizing not as much.

Nicholas Carr published well-known article "Is Google Making Us Stupid? What the Internet is doing to our brains" in the renowned magazine Atlantic that points out to disadvantages of the Internet use in educational purposes by providing abundance of examples [2]. It is important to emphasize difference between those generations raised in the era of the printed book that use the Internet for the scientific purposes, as an addition to the book, and younger generations that use the Internet in their education from the very beginning. The former are taught to critically assess things, use scientific information and not to believe everything they read online. The latter are used to the Internet as the main source of knowledge and practically are not taught to look for information elsewhere. Reading more than one article at the same time, reviewing abundance of information offered online easily make the reader shift from one content to another too fast whereas none of the contents are processed appropriately. In order to develop critical thinking, it is necessary to dive into the science given that it is the only way to come up with new innovative and creative ideas. According to [2], online learning creates superficial knowledge. Also, as [11] claims, children who use the internet excessively are prone to become isolated to a degree and show less interest in things that usually occupy their peers, such as sport, dance, singing, etc.

USE OF THE INTERNET IN TEACHING LANGUAGES

An expression digital native is new even in everyday English. If we take into account that the expression native speaker signifies a person whose mother tongue is, for example, English and who learnt the language spontaneously, then the expression digital native is to be understood as a playful one denoting all the new generations growing up with the Internet and computer who are self-educated in all the skills necessary for operating the device. Therefore, introduction of the Internet into the classroom comes as no surprise to those children, but it can serve as an additional motive. Attention and intense focus of children lasts for approximately twenty minutes. This makes us look for new methods to prevent children from talking or completely losing interest during the class after the stated period is over. A possible one would be the element of surprise that can be used to present new, interesting contents to the students and in such way to make them interested for the class. Therefore, it should be emphasized that the Internet as a teaching tool can be helpful in getting students' attention [8], but only if it is being used occasionally and accordingly. Students who spend certain time on the Internet show better results than those who do not spend any time online, especially when they like to learn online. This is due to the fact that the Internet serves as a convenient tool to find necessary information. Also, spending too much time online (time usually spent on social networks, playing video games, listening to music, etc.) leads to lower achievements compared to the students who use their time online in an efficient manner. The main problem with children is that they consider all the information they get from the Internet valid and accurate; they do not question the sources or relevance of the information. And that is where teachers play the most significant role, the pedagogical-didactic role. The teacher is there to teach their students to critically accept all the information from the Internet and thus to become independent in their studies further on. If we take into consideration well-known concept of lifelong learning, it should be clear why, according to recent studies, many countries do not dispose with enough trained professionals, and do have too many unemployed. Modern era demands for individuals to master additional skills, aside from the formal education one receives in certain field. The importance of mastering foreign languages must be mentioned. Most of the European universities require their students should speak at least two foreign languages, and certainly is desirable to speak even more.

According to the research [6], the Internet in Serbia is used by 4 107 000 people, which comprises 56.2% of the overall Serbian population. Compared to some other European states, such as Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, etc. the biggest percentage of users are in Serbia. The fact that could be seen as worrying is that Serbia has as many as 3 173 440 active facebook users, which comprises 43.4% of the overall Internet users. Every individual has right to privacy and personal information, unless otherwise published, should be kept private in accordance with [10]. The Law serves as a reminder of how much our privacy is in jeopardy while online, in particular by social networks, such as facebook, twitter, etc. Nevertheless, statistics in Serbia show that people voluntarily open one or even more facebook accounts, which is not known to be the case in other countries. This Law also points out to the dangers children are presented with online for they could, without even being aware of it, reveal all personal information to offenders, child abusers or criminals. Therefore, the role of teachers is to constantly remind their students of these threats and offer many bad examples in practice in order to teach them that facebook is more than a social network offering entertainment.

One of the advantages of the Internet being used in teaching is that it is (or it should be) available to everyone. Whether a student is in Vranje, Kragujevac or Užice, they

have equal rights to various learning contents. Some students are prevented to attend classes due to health problems. However, they could keep up with their peers by using the Internet. When teachers living in two opposite parts of a country start collaborating and sharing their teaching materials (hereby following the Law on Copyright and Related Rights), the Internet makes the teaching process even more enjoyable and easier. Nevertheless, it would be fair to state that principals often encounter disapproval from the teachers. Teachers, in particular the older ones who find the Internet a bit confusing, lack motivation for additional training. They use the excuses such as low salaries and that younger colleagues are supposed to know that. Furthermore, computer equipment and the Internet can be expensive and many schools still lack basic means to put all this into practice. It is true that teachers are occasionally hard to motivate. Nevertheless, the paper emphasizes several examples when it is possible to do so:

A. When a teacher is truly motivated to implement some innovative concept and follows all the steps and guidelines and expects their colleagues to do so as well, they could gain the trust of their colleagues more easily. Therefore, motivation is transferrable and every schools needs a leader;

B. Children like the Internet and consider it to be fun. There is no greater satisfaction for a teacher than to make children happy and satisfied;

C. It is a possibility to learn something new, to experience new things;

D. It is possible to encompass some outer motivation. According to [12], motives are divided to inner and outer based on the source. Outer motivation refers to awards, marks, titles, cups, etc., whereas inner motivation represents establishing the goals for no other purpose but fulfill the goal itself. For the purpose of this paper, an example of outer motivation would be award given in the form of credits or some field trip to teachers who are obliged to spend hours working on their professional improvement.

The previously mentioned training usually does not require hiring a professional programmer, but actively involving younger colleagues to help and train their older counterparts. Some good examples from practice are presented further on. First, we should consider learning a language over the Internet. Apart from online courses and many grammar and vocabulary exercises available, a teacher could use websites such as YouTube to play music in target language, which significantly motivates students. Listening to the music in target language primarily improves ability to hear and understand what has been said. This put aside, singing songs in target language enables students to master pronunciation and accent. German consonant R can serve as a practical example. This consonant sounds the same as in Serbian, but it is not equally valued as a phoneme. German R is also called guttural R and its acquisition is often hard for students for they have never encountered it in their mother tongue. Singing songs in German will make it possible for students to learn faster to pronounce German phonemes in proper manner. The

hardest part is to pronounce it after guttural consonants, after K, G, and H, whereas the easiest for pronunciation is when placed after vocals. It is harder to pronounce it in the word kriegen /krigen/ than in the word werden /veadn/. Pronunciation and accent may not be of crucial importance when learning a language. However, it does give away impression that you have mastered the language better. Students who are considered to belong to an auditory type master it better than those considered to be visual types. For visual types it is better to prepare pictures that can be found on the Internet in abundance. Here, we could give the following example. A teacher and English professor Nada Purtić has decided to try and make her students find some easier way to memorize vocabulary. Having checked that all her students had a mobile phones and option to take photos on the devices, she instructed them to take a photo of any object they found useful, and to insert the caption below the photo which would be English word for the object [9]. Those photos were supposed to be stored in a separate programme thus representing their own picture dictionary. In such a way, not only has she influenced the method of acquiring new vocabulary, but also possibility to broaden her students' perspectives by taking pictures of some particular things or tourist destinations and in this way learning about new cultures which is equally important when learning a language. Meeting a culture (history, customs, geography, art, etc.) of the language we learn closes the gap between ourselves and people belonging to a particular culture. Finding out about most compelling and unavoidable issues of a society significantly influences our knowledge of the culture.

Other language skills could be mastered over the Internet as well. Listening skills are improved by watching movies and advertisements in a foreign language, reading skills by reading texts and newspapers dealing with current affairs, and writing skills can be improved by writing an email to the teacher in the target language by following requirements of formal and informal style depending on the purpose of the email. Students could write formal email as an example of business correspondence or it could be a private informal email. This would help them learn to distinguish between both styles of writing. It is generally recognized that learning a language is best done if it is put in a context, by introducing students to various real life situations, which in this case, would be writing a business email.

There are websites, such as www.lifemocha.de where one can learn a language and expand their vocabulary completely free of charge and in a very interesting way – by connecting the sentences, choosing between correct and incorrect answers, describing pictures, etc. This website also offers tests that evaluate the level of knowledge for free. This is of great use before starting to learn a language and to monitor the progress. It should also be mentioned that Singidunum University uses platform for the distance learning study programme [4] which is available to all dls students (distance learning students). Platform offers syllabus of a course, all the materials, and activity exercises adapted for all the language skills (teachers can even put up activities recorded in order to improve listening skills).

Therefore, the platform with all the materials it offers is no less than an e-book created by the teacher.

Skype can also find its application in the teaching process, at least when it comes to teaching a foreign language. Skype is software that enables its users to communicate over the Internet free of charge regardless of where they are. Language classes can also be and are organized over the Skype.

CONCLUSION

Nowadays people live fast and lead stressful lives. Various machines and devices serve to help us transfer information fast. TV sets, mobile phones, and the Internet are used on regular basis. On one hand, those media do make our lives easier. On the other hand, they also make younger generations lazy to conduct research or to try to gain new experiences and knowledge on their own. Changes are eminent and desired. Everything changes – society, professions, and education systems. The book that has existed for centuries as such is experiencing radical changes. Nowadays, apart from printed books people can opt for electronic ones, which should not be seen as a threat to the former. They exist in order to complete the circle, for their purpose is fundamentally the same. They exist in order to broaden and preserve knowledge. Regardless of its format, the book is to be used in the most humane purposes. Digital format has been increasingly used in the teaching processes worldwide and according to many futurists it would be reality in schools soon. This paper tried to point out advantages, as well as disadvantages of the e-book. The paper also deals with examples of the Internet use in classes, in particular when teaching a foreign language. Nowadays, the electronic book is seen as another teaching tool that coexists with the other tools that have been used for quite some time. The Internet as a part of the teaching process can complete the circle when it comes to the existing teaching methods and to introduce some fresh ideas in the classrooms. It has been already mentioned that traditional and modern methods should not stand opposed. On the contrary, they should complete each other in order to make classes more interesting and what is even more important, to make them productive and efficient [3]. The aim of teaching is to pass on knowledge and to help students realize their potentials by enabling them to independently continue with their work and constantly improve themselves even after they have graduated from their universities in order to discover new patents and to spread knowledge further on.

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