

The effects of advertising in Twitter on the regular 20-30 year old users

Advertising in a social networking medium

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<p>Abstract:</p> <p>The purpose of this thesis work was to investigate and analyze in what way online advertising in Twitter affects its regular users nowadays. More specifically it focused on the young (20-30 years old) frequent Internet users of the social networking medium. The theoretical part of the study introduced Twitter and methods of advertising in it. The empirical part of the thesis was conducted by using a quantitative research method. The data was gathered from discussions of a focus and a control group interviews. The interview questions contained subtopics for free debate in order to obtain more information. The aim of the research was to find out how much the young Twitter visitors used the site, how much they were aware of the online advertising and how their daily encounter with ads affected their user behavior. The research results revealed what impression advertising had on Twitter users, and how advertising influences their user habits. The research supports the statement that despite the negative impact of advertising in Twitter on its users, the site's attractiveness to its clientele does not suffer from the advertisements.</p>	
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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research question and purpose of the study

Today, in the times of a growing use of the Internet and social networks together with immense spread of online advertising, several issues arise related to both these phenomena. People who use online social services face virtual advertising in their networks on the daily basis. In one way or another, new marketing techniques applied in the global net affect the regular users. Marketing in the Internet has broadened its barriers and expands to all the sites despite of their themes, purposes and types of followers. It is therefore interesting to find out in what way the online advertisements affect young frequent users of social media, and on Twitter users in particular.

The aim of this study is to investigate and analyze how the current marketing announcements, links, posts and ads influence those who make use of online social networking services. Twitter is one of the numerous online social services with millions of users worldwide, and just like all of them is an attractive base for online marketers and promoters.

Based on this information, the research questions of this thesis work are:

1. What impression does advertising in Twitter have on its young users?
2. Does advertising in Twitter affect Twitter's attractiveness to its users?
3. Is advertising in Twitter a threat or an aid to the site?

1.2 Description of material and method

This paper is structured as follows: first the theory part will describe social networking media with more detailed explanation of Twitter. In order to answer the research questions a closer look will be taken on frequent young Twitter users. The author clarifies what kind of Internet consumers they are and portrays a typical Twitter user. That helps to understand how Internet advertising can affect such people. In the theoretical part,

the author also presents the different ways of online advertising. The emphasis will be put on simple advertising techniques and currently known marketing tools that can be and are repeatedly applied in Twitter. The foundation for theoretical part is found in the Internet and Internet marketing related literature.

To be able to answer the research question of the study a suitable method needs to be selected. There are four main methods that can be functional in one's empirical studies. They are survey, focus groups, interviews and observation. To achieve the best results and obtain most reliable information one should opt for a single method. The information for this study was collected through 2 qualitative focus group interviews. The data gathered during the study helped the author to understand what effects advertising in social networking media can have on young Internet users as well as how these young users affect social media in return. After analyzing the results the author had the courage to predict the site's tendency to grow or to decrease in popularity.

1.3 Limitations of the study

The research focused only on young Twitter users, which gives us a limited view on the overall Twitter population. The qualitative study was conducted with participation of the people from one particular university in one European country, thus, narrowing down the Twitter users' community to a slim certain region and culture. Consequently, the author can not refer the findings to global trends even though the theoretical part explained global tendencies.

Furthermore, the participants of focus group interviews are not experts in Internet marketing and had little knowledge in the field, which could limit their contribution to the study.

Another possible restraint of the study is that the data obtained for the research may have a very limited validity time due to the continuous changes in the situation with on-line social media sites. During the time when this thesis is being written and the time after it is completed many alterations may occur in Twitter, its position in popularity charts, and the whole perception of social networking sites by their users in general.

1.4 Background

There have been several other studies conducted in the US regarding the attitude of users towards ads displayed on Twitter. Among them is The Digital Future Report which contains several points specific to Twitter. The research has introduced some impressive results. One of them states that "...49 percent of Internet users said they have used free micro-blogs such as Twitter" and another important finding is that "...half of Internet users never click on Web advertising, and 70 percent said that Internet advertising is "annoying." The report also says that "users express strong negative views about online advertising..." The author of this study found it very interesting investigating this phenomenon. She decided to conduct another study on Twitter in her own capacity within smaller sample environment to get her own findings and see if they coincide with the results of the previous researches. (2010 USC Annenberg Digital Future Report. University of Southern California(USC). Annenberg School. 2010).

2 THEORY

2.1 What are social networking media?

The use of the Internet and the social media has grown significantly in the recent years after the access of the global net had become more feasible. According to the statistics from World Internet usage Statistics News and Population Stats, around 1,802,330,457 people globally use the Internet (*stats of Dec. 2009*). Among these online users there are millions of social network media users, such as Facebook, MySpace and Youtube. To be able to understand the phenomenon of social network media we need to define it and see what exactly makes it so attractive to millions of people worldwide.

Social media in its basic simplest meaning, as defined by the Wikipedia dictionary, is media designed to spread social interaction using highly available techniques. (*Wikipedia*) Nowadays, the most available way for the most convenient interaction of social media users from all over the world is the Internet. Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein, in their book *The challenges and opportunities of Social Media*, define social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content ". The meaning of Web 2.0. could be interpreted as any web applications that "facilitate interactive information sharing and collaboration on the World Wide Web". When we talk about Web 2.0. site we imply a place in the World Net where its users can freely interact with each other and contribute to the site's content. That is no longer being a mere passive user of Internet sites, but being an important provider of your individual something, being a co-creator of a common online space. Each participant brings his/her own virtual character and personality to the joint web community. (*Web 2.0. and beyond. Introduction. T. Funk. 2009*), (*The challenges and opportunities of Social Media. Kaplan A, Haenlein M. 2009*).

The era of new technologies and widespread Internet use has made dramatic changes in the way people communicate and share the information daily with each other. The current period in time is known to be called Attention Age. This period is described by the

“ability of individuals to create and consume information instantly and freely as well as share it on the Internet using social media. The period is believed to have begun with the emergence of social media in the first years of the 21st century.” (*Wikipedia*) There seems to be a growing desire of people to be not only real life persons but also representatives of themselves in the media showing their significance in the age of the high importance of being popular and accepted, for what one really is, by others.

However, Bernardo A. Huberman claims that “scholars, advertisers and political activists see massive online social networks as a representation of social interactions that can be used to study the propagation of ideas, social bond dynamics and viral marketing, among others. But the linked structures of social networks do not reveal actual interactions among people. Scarcity of attention and the daily rhythms of life and work make people default to interacting with those few that matter and that reciprocate their attention.” (*Social Networks that Matter: Twitter Under the Microscope. Bernardo A. Huberman. December 5, 2008*).

The list of major working social networking websites stated by Alexa web traffic report says there are over 150 of them including well known Facebook, Friendster, hi5, Twitter and MySpace. Of course, these are only the most often visited with the most number of users. The actual number of social networking sites is hard to define. The major ones also include sites with certain themes, for example, traveling, dating, photography, gays, movies, entrepreneurs, extreme sports, etc. The sites vary in concepts and focus members; location of most users and language but the main idea remains the same - to connect people and organizations with similar interests and values, and to let them interact with each other.

The table in (*Appendix 1/2*) presents some of the main categories of social media with short descriptions of what they are appropriate and used for.

2.2 Twitter

Twitter, defined by Wikipedia, is a social networking service which is a combination of messaging and micro-blogging. (*Wikipedia*) It was founded in 2006 in San Francisco by 10 entrepreneurs. The main figures among them are Chairman Jack Dorsey, CEO Evan

Williams and Creative director Biz Stone. The central idea of the site is that people should enjoy an “always on” virtual presence.

If we want to understand what Twitter is, first we must identify what blogs are. Normally blogs are simple sites with regular updates and, in general, they include text, images and links to other pages. One main feature of blogs is they are informal with a diary or journal tone. Most blogs support dialogues and allow the readers to comment on the content. However, Twitter is different from typical blogs and is usually referred to as a micro-blogging service. “...The micro-blog site Twitter, where users post “tweets” of 140 characters at a time, is another twist.”(*Larry Weber. Marketing to the Social Web. 2009*) “Tweeters” send and receive short “tweets”, from a computer or a mobile device like a mobile phone, Blackberry or iPhone, on Twitter’s site. Twitter has become an online instant messenger, since people who access it with phones can share their news with all their “followers” by short messages. Tweets differ from most other instant messages by running among networks of friends. Users, called “followers,” can also select to receive the tweets of people they find interesting.

Top 25 Social Networks Re-Rank

(Ranked by Monthly Visits, Jan '09)



Rank	Site	UV	Monthly Visits	Previous Rank
1	facebook.com	68,557,534	1,191,373,339	2
2	myspace.com	58,555,800	810,153,536	1
3	twitter.com	5,979,052	54,218,731	22
4	fixster.com	7,645,423	53,389,974	16
5	linkedin.com	11,274,160	42,744,438	9
6	tagged.com	4,448,915	39,630,927	10
7	classmates.com	17,296,524	35,219,210	3
8	myyearbook.com	3,312,898	33,121,821	4
9	livejournal.com	4,720,720	25,221,354	6
10	imeem.com	9,047,491	22,993,608	13
11	reunion.com	13,704,990	20,278,100	11
12	ning.com	5,673,549	19,511,682	23
13	blackplanet.com	1,530,329	10,173,342	7
14	bebo.com	2,997,929	9,849,137	5
15	hi5.com	2,398,323	9,416,265	8
16	yuku.com	1,317,551	9,358,966	21
17	cafemom.com	1,647,336	8,586,261	19
18	friendster.com	1,568,439	7,279,050	14
19	xanga.com	1,831,376	7,009,577	20
20	360.yahoo.com	1,499,057	5,199,702	12
21	orkut.com	494,464	5,081,235	15
22	urbanchat.com	329,041	2,961,250	24
23	fubar.com	452,090	2,170,315	17
24	asiantown.net	81,245	1,118,245	25
25	tickle.com	96,155	109,492	18

Figure 1. Top 25 Social Networks Re-Rank. (<http://blog.compete.com/2009/02/09/facebook-myspace-twitter-social-network/>)

Compete. Com revealed interesting facts about Twitter that has made a giant leap from the 22nd position up to the 3rd with a growth of 1,227% in 12 months (2009) in the rankings of the top 25 social networking sites evaluated by monthly visits.

Now Facebook remains the most visited social networking website, with around 1.2 billion visits in January 2009. MySpace fell on the second place at the end of 2008 and then only has been seeing visits dropping at about 810 000 per month.

The big winner in the social networking area has been Twitter which jumped from the 22nd most visited social network at the start of 2008, to third most visited in January.

Twitter and other status updates have been used for many other purposes besides social blogging, which included the airing of complaints against companies, sharing ideas, forwarding interesting material, documenting events, conversing and flirting. ("Twitter

and status updating". Fox & Lenhart. 2009). Many global news are first tweeted by the witnesses of the events. There have also been cases when people kept hostages in some extreme situations managed to tweet for help and get rescued.

As we have mentioned before each social medium has its own theme, focus members, concept, location and language. The Twitter theme is a blog, an ever updated journal of each and every user in particular. Twitter is international and later we will examine the most spoken languages on the Twitter accounts.

2.2.1 How to navigate twitter?

Logging into Twitter is as simple as logging into any other social networking site. Each member has a Login name and a password that are created through registration.

The very first thing you face when you log in to Twitter in the Internet at home or by the cell phone is a question. You are asked to tell "What is happening?" in less or 140 characters. In Twitter there are not as many features as in Facebook or other similar sites. The upper panel has several basic services that include: Home, Profile, Find people, Settings, Help and Sign out buttons. An example of a Twitter page is displayed in (Appendix 1/3).

Amanda Lenhart with her colleague write in their article that Twitter's open development policy now allows outside developers to build add-on applications to increase the service's functionality. Twitter users can select from a variety of third-party Twitter interfaces, browser plug-ins, photo- and video-sharing applications that enhance mobile and computer-based use of the basic application. Users have themselves expanded the information carried in a twitter message through the development of in-tweet shorthand and symbols that allow for the sharing, replicating and searching of tweets. (*Twitterpated: Mobile Americans Increasingly Take to Tweeting*. A. Lenhart, S. Fox. 2009).

A very popular sign in Twitter messages is @ which indicates that the message is meant for a selected follower. Usually the name of that follower is also underlined to make it

more visually noticeable. When you have hundreds of followers but you need to attract attention of a particular individual, one must use an @ sign with the follower's name to address it to the right person.

Since its foundation Twitter's speedy growth has manifested in its being an object of big interest as well as ridicule. It has contributed to the number of high-tech time-wasting devices. It has drawn incredible amount of attention to the media and celebrities. Still the question remains about Twitter's actual purpose, its main genuine function. Twitter can be a contact service for friends, groups of people and organizations; it can be a means of free self-expression, or it can as well be simply a very powerful marketing tool.

2.2.2 Twitter and competitors

Twitter has enjoyed an explosion of popularity since 2007. As with any service there are bound to be competitors and Twitters case is no exception. Micro blogging services such as Foursquare and Gowalla are mobile device based blogging programs that are gaining popularity. They have the added advantage of automatically updating the users profile with his or her current location, using Geolocation technology that is built into the respective devices they are used on. Although these newer services are attracting a growing crowd of users, and are direct competitors to Twitter, they still have a long way to go before making a significant dent in Twitter's 105 million strong user base. (*At SWSWi, Twitter may finally have met its match. Danien Terdiman. 2009*).

2.3 Internet advertising

2.3.1 Advertising and different ways of marketing in Twitter

The Global Language Monitor declared Twitter, being only three years old, the top English word of 2009. That was the very first time when a Web company has earned such distinction; says Jose Antonio Vargas in his article "Why Twitter is the Most Popular

Word of 2009”. He also states that in many terms Twitter is not a mainstream, not yet for everyone, because still many people find it useless and they don’t know how to use it and what to use it for. However, people who need to promote their products and services, companies, those who need the world to know about them find Twitter a very convenient and user friendly way of spreading word and advertising. (*Why Twitter is the most popular word of 2009. Vargas J.A. 2009*).

Nowadays it has become so much easier to advertise in the global net. People are tempted to earn easy money by advertising different things in the Internet in forums, chats, social networking sites by using affiliate marketing sites or independent spam-free ad networks. Advertisers have noticed Twitter a while ago and got an idea to advertise there too using a simple mechanism for creating ads. In the case of Twitter we can give examples of RevTwt.com, BeTweeted.com, Twittertise.com, TwittAd.com, sponsoredtweets.com, etc. This is only a short list of examples of the numerous sites that concentrate on marketing on Twitter particularly. The main idea is to connect advertisers with tweeters. Twitter users who want to earn money from publishing someone else’s ads need to register on one of those sites. One of the best known is RevTwt network with over 32 million Twitter followers. There one can sign up for an advertiser account, create 10 free Twitter profiles and start posting ads worth from 8 up to 20 cents on each account daily. The pay comes on a CPC (cost per click) or CPT (cost of per tweet per thousand followers) basis, which is very similar to Google AdSense.

Leslie Meredith in her online article “advertise on Twitter?” mentions that “some analysts are skeptical that advertising will catch on in a meaningful way on social networks, arguing that companies are reluctant to contrast their brands with unpredictable, and potentially offensive, user-generated content. However, existing moderation tools on Twitter solve the problem. Moreover, other analysts point out, that users of social networking websites tend to spend a lot of time on those sites, providing an attractive platform for advertisers to promote their brands, especially if preferences are tracked.” (*Advertise on Twitter? Meredith L, 2009*)

Those who have started publishing ads in their Twitter accounts are interested in having as many followers as possible. For their convenience there are special sites like tweets-tats.com, twittercounter.com, twitteranalyzer.com, etc that help to show the tendencies

of gaining or losing followers, build graphs and charts for you, show top Twitter users, and so on. Once started publishing ads on Twitter, one has to create more and more different Twitter accounts, which in practice means that one person can be represented by a number of profiles with various names. Imagine if you have 200 followers of which even 10 have multiple profiles and some of them are among your followers. It makes your 200 followers less than 200 actual users.

Plus, getting involved in obtaining more followers one needs to find the best solution for finding the right people who might be interested in following you. To help you with that come special software that one can download, for example twitter-ally.com, tweetwhistle.com, tweetadder.com, and many more. Most of them are not for free so those who are seriously planning to make money on Twitter should be ready to invest at least 30 USD to new software. As mentioned above there are profiles on Twitter that are not real and not welcome in the followers list. For this case there are special tools like FakeFollowers.com that can help you identify which of your Twitter followers are fake, and then block them.

The people who follow you are also looking for the benefits of being your followers. Some of them are also into social media marketing and some might be expecting useful information coming from you in the form of your tweets with links and references to other sites and blogs.

2.4 Demographics of social networking media

The percentage of social network users across all ages is presented in (*Appendix 1/4*).

2.4.1 Portrait of a Twitter user

To be able to distinguish a typical Twitter user we must first take a look on some statistics. Amanda Lenhart (Senior Research Specialist) and Susannah Fox (Associate Director, Digital Strategy) in their work “Twitter and status updating” of February 2009, state that approximately 11% of online adults use Twitter or update their status online. That is not surprising since the recent exponential growth of social networking and different internet applications has made it very convenient to communicate online, express one-

self in updating moods, statuses, locations and other personal details. The widespread use of blogging sites, especially Twitter, make it almost expectable to constantly revise and renew one's own electronic identity in the social networks.

We can talk about a gradual elevation of the curve representing the percentages of Americans using blogging services. Lenhart and Fox write that in early 2008 the number was 6%, with following 9% in the late fall and growing up to 11% in only one month. Although the percentages show how many people use any blogging sites besides Twitter, Twitter remains the most well known among other short messaging services.

What kind of people use Twitter? To make it short, Twitter users are mobile, flexible and young. The researches of Fox and Lenhart revealed that Twitter and other similar services have been most eagerly applied by young adults. Almost one in five (19%) on-line adults aged 18 to 24 have ever used Twitter and its peers just like other 20% of on-line adults from 25 to 34. Use of these services falls increasingly after age 35 with 10% of 35 to 44 year olds and 5% of 45 to 54 year olds using Twitter. The decline is even bigger among older internet users; 4% of 55-64 year olds and 2% of those 65 and older use Twitter. One more interesting and apparent finding is that since the average age of the regular Twitter user is 18-24, they come from lower-income households.

Most social media users who are frequent in blogging and social networks are more likely to be Twitter users as well. Nearly one quarter (23%) of social network users claim they have ever Twittered or used a similar service. In comparison, just 4% of those who do not use social networks have ever used Twitter or updated their status online.

Even though the average age of Twitter users is rather young, the users' median age is 31. In comparison, the median age of a MySpace user is 27, Facebook user is 26 and LinkedIn user is 40. There is also evidence that Twitter users are more diverse by races and ethnicities and more of them come from urban areas (35%). That also contributes to the fact that Twitter is a global and multinational blogging service.

Twitter users more mobile in news consumption

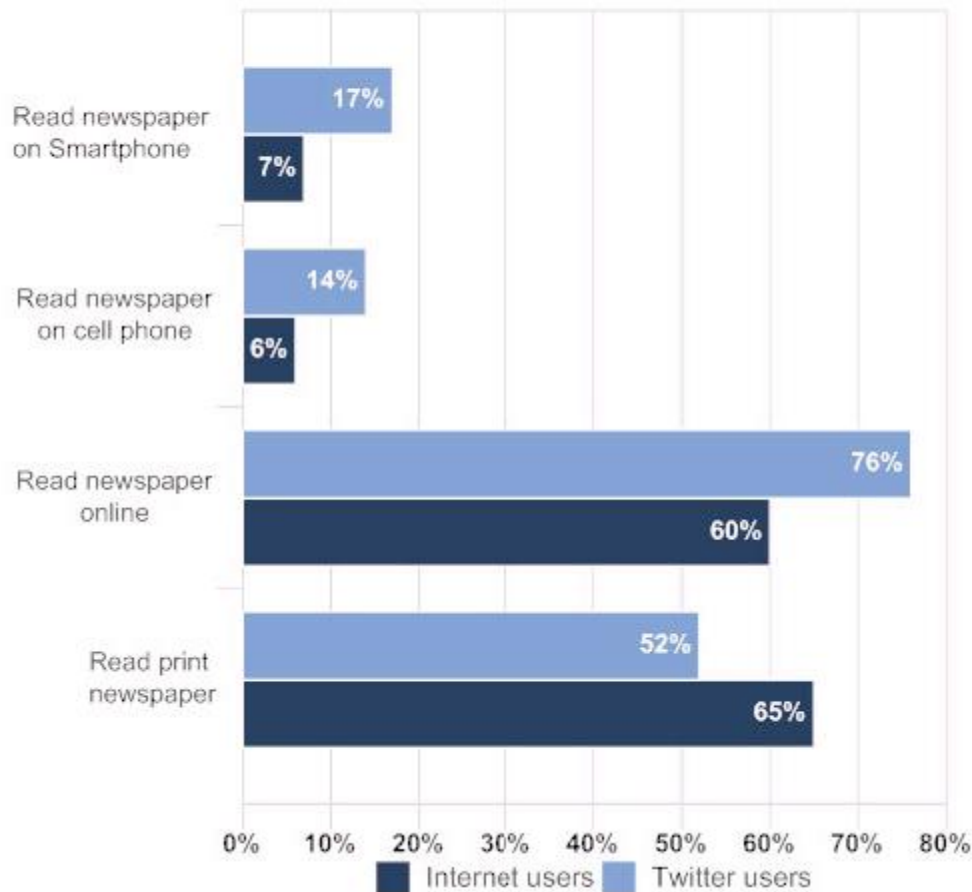


Figure 2. Pew Internet & American Life Project. Twitter and status updating. Fox and Lenhart, 2009

In terms of being more mobile in communication and information consumption we can observe an interesting tendency that Twitter users are keeping up-to-date more than other Internet users. The figure above from Pew Research Centre gives us some proof of that. It is more likely that the Twitter users are accessing the World Web by wireless technologies. Around 76% of Twitter users have wireless Internet. That is very understandable. To stay mobile and updated you need to be able to access the net from anywhere you might be, and wireless devices (e.g. laptops, cell phones) provide such an access. Frequent Twitter users are more likely to go online to tweet on the phone than those who do not use Twitter and use the phones only for messaging.

Twitter users are also very likely to learn the latest news and important information from their wireless devices. That indicates how mobile and modern the Twitter users really are. They are more likely to receive news from mobile devices rather than from traditional resources. The figure above shows that Twitterers are expected to read the latest news online and share them online with others too.

Twitter users are also actively engaged in blog activities. They read other people's blogs and update their own posts. Approximately 57% of Twitter habitants have ever read a blog. Twitterers are active both in writing their own and reading other people's chronicles in blogs. (*Twitter and status updating. Fox, Lenhart. 2009*)

To conclude we can underline that Twitter users connect to news and own technology at the similar rates as any other internet users, but the ways in which they use the technology different. They communicate, gather and share information in a more mobile, unlimited, untied manner via social interactions. Twitter application allows expansion of these unbound opportunities.

Since an average Twitter user is a young adult who is constantly online using wireless devices to upload or receive information from the Internet, it is very likely that such an individual would be aware of the possibilities to earn money online by advertising and marketing through tweets. Plus, such a person is evidently not working full-time or even if so, still spends most of the time in the Web. This may mean that such a person would be very eager to get income from his hobby, from what he is good at and from the place where he spends most of his time-the Internet and social media.

2.4.2 Twitter languages

To better understand Twitter users we should have some knowledge about the language most used on Twitter, meaning not only what world language is most widely spoken in tweets but also if there are any "secret Twitter society" language that only Twitterers communicate.

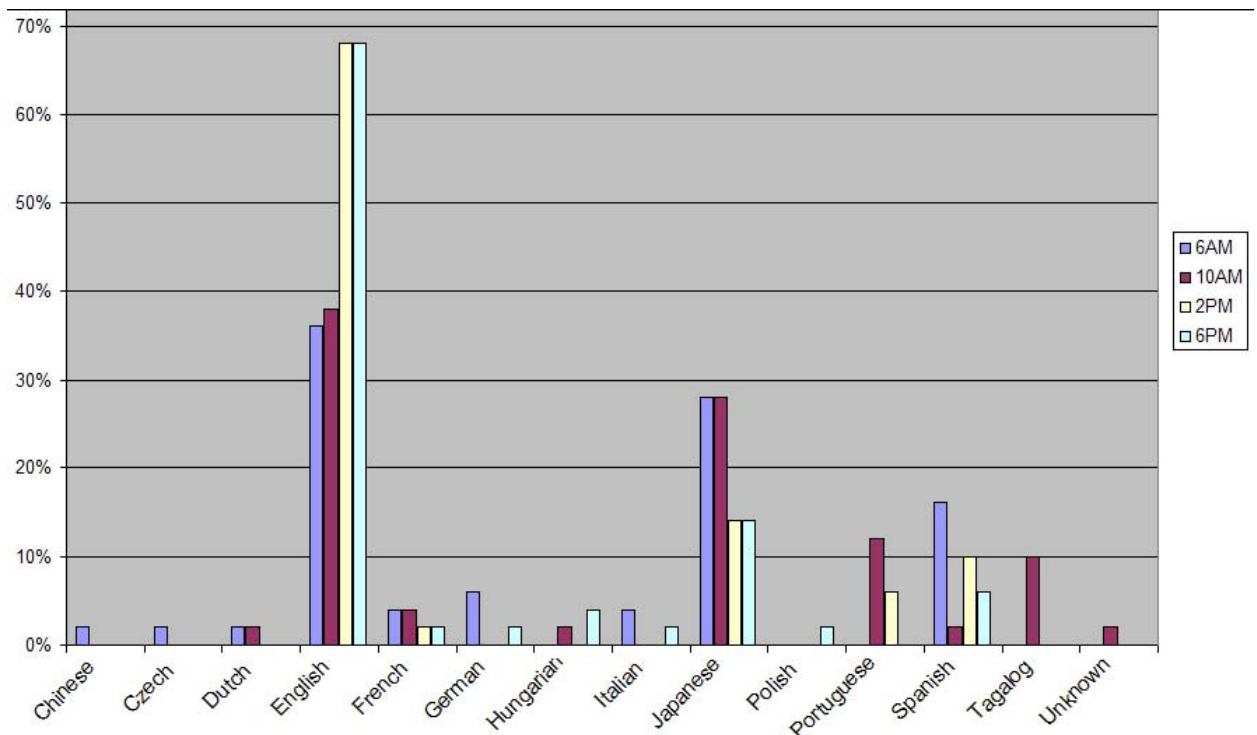


Figure 3. Tweets posted by language and time. (*Beyond microblogging*. Honeycutt C., 2009)

The figure above provides a pattern of tweets posted by language and time (*Eastern Standard Time*).

As we can see, the one prevailing language was English, followed by Japanese and Spanish. That gives us a general idea about not only the language spoken by the Twitter users but about the extent of how much Twitter is used worldwide. So we can conclude that Japanese and Spanish talking segments are very significant in the Twitter society. In April 2008, a Japanese-language version of Twitter was released, and Twitter-like tools have been developed for use in other cultures. (*Beyond microblogging: Conversation and Collaboration via Twitter*. Honeycutt C., Herring S., 2009.)

Moreover, English language is dominant in Twitter also because it is probably spoken by many people who are not native speakers but prefer English as a more convenient tool for communication online. However, with an example of Japan we see that Twitter can be managed and be available in different language versions to simplify application for non-English Internet users.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research method

What impression does advertising in Twitter have on young adult regular users? Do Twitter users find the advertising useful for themselves? Do they advertise in social media too? Do they dislike social media advertising and find it irritating for frequent users? Are they even aware of the advertisements in social media? To be able to answer these questions of the study one should have a suitable method to get the answers and to make proper conclusions. There are four main methods that can be applied in one's empirical studies. They are survey, focus groups, interviews and observation. To achieve the best results and obtain most reliable information one should select single method or max two of them in combination.

For this research it has been decided to use focus group interviews of the purposely selected people among volunteering Arcada students. The average Arcada student is in his/her 20's and that is the age we are interested in for our investigation.

The following research is going to be based on the focus group interviews conducted in Arcada premises. The focus group interviews will be operated according to the framework from the Carson et al. book "Qualitative Marketing Research" of 2001. The framework is given in 5 main steps with sub-steps to facilitate the research process. These steps will help us benefit the most in our study. Accurate pre-planning will aid us conduct the research more efficiently, collect the data we are most interested in and save time. The steps are:

Step 1: Define A Problem

Our research question is how the advertising in Twitter can affect young users. There are several inherent topics in our question. These topics might all be topics for discussions in the group interview. The topics are, for example, what advertising techniques are being used in Twitter, why people advertise there or what do users feel about advertising in Twitter. For our study the main discussion will be circulating around the users' awareness, attitudes and responses to the advertisements posted in Twitter posts.

Step 2: Establish The Groups And Plan For The Session

This part of planning is more technical and requires organization of the interview process and other details.

Step 2.1: Determine The Number Of Groups

The selection of participants will be deliberate rather than random. For a focus group study we need people who can offer relevant reasoning on the subject. It is important that the focus group has the characteristics of a homogeneous group, so that the opinions of participants are more likely to be common. In our research homogeneity will be achieved by commonality of age, lifestyle, and general knowledge of the matter.

The number of focus groups will be 2. The first group will not know about the existence of the control group. The second (control) group is needed to help predict the answers and compare them to the ones collected from the first group. Of course, the more group interviews held, the more additional information and details we obtain. However, in our research 2 focus group interviews will be considered sufficient. Since our study is more exploratory in nature, 2 sessions will suffice. Plus, we assume that the more homogeneous our selected groups are, the fewer sessions we would require. Since the selection of participants will be run in only one university among students of similar age and experience, it is fair to assume that the groups will be homogeneous. 2 focus groups is an optimal number in our case, also because the higher number of groups will not necessarily provide us with more accurate results.

In Arcada many students know each other. Even if they do not personally know each other, it is easier for them to interact because of their common study place, shared friends, frequent encounters in the restaurant and library, same language spoken and the main collective motive to be in Arcada in the first place. All these factors make Arcada students homogeneous. For our study it is essential, because then the groups can concentrate on the topic of discussion without feeling uncomfortable in the group of total strangers. In our research we can even have participants who know each other well, so that they can talk freely. That will not affect the results of the study negatively as long as the participants fit into the age and “Twitter user” categories.

The participants, even though, very much alike will still have different knowledge and experience in the matter of investigation. That will give us a wider and deeper insight. Different opinions on the same issue will be pooled and analyzed. Since the participants are unlikely to be experts in the field of online marketing, their views and judgments will be a great contribution to the research and answering its core questions. Nevertheless, if some of the group members have some knowledge in the Internet advertising and in how to actually apply it, they will share a more sophisticated vision on our research topic.

The study will benefit more from the focus group interviews than it would from the too general impersonal surveys. Focus group interviews can be controlled and can bring richer understanding of the issue discussed, since each participant will contribute something to the discussion.

Step 2.2: Determine The Number Of Participants In Each Group

Each group will consist of 6-8 people. There should not be too many or too few members, so that everyone can participate in a debate and no one is left aside. The optimal number should also be around 6-8 people because for some individuals a bigger crowd can be uncomfortable and create pressure to talk freely. We should also keep in mind that not all participants may turn up to the event which may affect the session. So, even if 8 people agreed to come and only 5 of them arrive, there still will be a decent group for the interview.

Step 2.3: Decide On The Length Of A Session

The time of one session per one group will be estimated 1 hour. It is preferable to have it shorter, because students normally do not want to spend their free time in the university and most of them have part-time jobs. 1 hour should be enough to have a good discussion and not steal too much time from the participants.

Step 2.4: Select The Site

The venue for the group interview will be in Arcada, in one of the free rooms. That would be most convenient for all the participants. Usually there are some rooms available in Arcada where students can have meetings, where there is a quiet and calm atmosphere. The participants could have the discussion right after their study day in the uni-

versity, so that they are not too relaxed and will be able to concentrate. The furniture will be arranged so that the members will face each other at a round table to allow a free conversation and comfort for everyone.

Step 2.5: Decide On The Timing Of Sessions

The assumed best time for the session could be straight after day lectures in Arcada, when students had already had lunch and still have some time before their evening chores, jobs, etc. That time could be somewhere between 13:00 and 16:00 in the afternoon. Other times like later evening are unlikely to be convenient because many students would not want to return to Arcada building after a long day, and some may have to take a long trip to Arcada every day, so it is better to have the group discussion when the students are still in the building. In the mornings it is almost impossible to make anyone come early to the university, so the midday seems to be the best alternative.

Step 2.6: Recruit The Participants

The finding and recruiting participants for our study will be done via Arcada webmail system that allows emailing to all the Arcada degree and exchange students. All Arcada students will be emailed and asked for assistance in the research for a final thesis. All graduate students in the last semesters of their studies will have to write a thesis at some point, so it is hoped that they will understand the importance of their aid for a peer graduate. If the number of volunteers will be lower than needed for the study, some compensation could be offered (e.g. a draw of a free movie ticket among the participants) or other means of finding the volunteers could be applied (e.g. asking personal contacts, or inviting Arcada students via Facebook).

Step 3: Select The Moderator And Assistant Moderator

For any focus group interview the moderator is the key figure who can catalyze the discussion and lead it to the right direction. As a researcher the author is willing to be a moderator in both focus group interviews to be able to pick up the information we need for the study. Besides genuine interest in obtaining the best outcomes from the focus group sessions the author is most concerned in hearing what her peer students have to say on the subject. Being one of the students will ease the flow of the discussion because the members of the group will not feel observed by a superior as if when the

moderator is a lecturer. While trying to motivate people to talk the author will attempt to avoid biases and any conflicts that may arise during the discussion.

Another reason why the author's candidacy would be the most appropriate for the position of moderator is because she is already familiar with the topic at stake and will be able to coordinate the debate and provide the members with relevant ideas.

In our group interviews moderator might hire an assistant moderator whose duties would primarily be to control the environment issues, take record of the participants' reactions and comments during the session. Those small tasks will facilitate the job of the moderator and help make the whole interview go more smoothly without distractions. The notes taken by an assistant during the interviews might be helpful in analyzing the results later on.

Step 4: Conduct The Focus Group Discussions

In order to have a successful focus group interview several preparations need to be done in advance. For this research the author is planning to record the group interview to be able to analyze the results with greater accuracy. The participants will be notified in advance that the discussion will be recorded so that no one feels deceived or used.

Step 4.1: Determine The Level Of Moderator Involvement

For the researcher who decided to take part in the focus group session in a role of a moderator the level of involvement is greater than for any outsider, because the researcher is personally interested in getting the most information in the most accurate manner. Since the researcher is most familiar with the topic and most interested in it, he/she will be most competent to present the topic and stimulate the participants for response. The moderator's personal characteristics are crucial when people of different personality types meet in one group and the moderator is the one who has to make them talk and not feel threatened to express their opinions. The moderator's duty is also to make the thoughts come into words from shy people, and let the more active people be patient and listen to others.

Together with the assistant, moderator will try to keep the balance where the needed information is obtained without too much involvement and prejudice. One more important thing for the moderator (and researcher in our case) is to have a pre-planned structure of the discussion which can flexibly fluctuate if the participants' conversation opens up some new and unexpected ideas and thoughts.

Step 4.2: Decide On The Number Of Topics In A Session

The number and order of topics for the interview play an immense role in the overall flow of the discussion. The structured and unstructured interviews also determine the extent of moderator's involvement in the session. The moderator might have as much as only 5 topics but organize the entire discussion so that everyone gets to say something and contribute to the debate. The greater amount of topics does not mean the more information will be gathered. More topics might just overload the participants and tire them. In literature it is advised to have up to 10 topics for one session. Depending on the group's eagerness to discuss certain topics the order of topics can be altered during the session. The same order might be applied for the "control" group interview as well.

Step 4.3: Identify Topics Or Questions For Discussion

Our research is based on collecting qualitative data. In order to accumulate maximum amount of useful information we must state the topics using the right wording to avoid misunderstandings. The manner in which topics are presented should also be very thoroughly thought through. The topics for discussions should be open-ended and stimulate the members of the group to discuss them. First it has to be made sure that the participants are all aware of what the discussion will be about and then gradually develop the conversation into more details. The questions should not be stated with expectation of a certain answer or by using ambiguous words. The participants must feel that they all can reply to the questions.

Step 4.4: Pre-Test The Moderator's Guide

Prior to the focus group interview the guide should be pre-tested to ensure that the questions are appropriate and clearly formulated. The questions should also be evaluated so that they can arouse a thoughts exchange among the participants of the interview. That

might seem as an irrelevant procedure but it gives some certainty on how the actual group interview will go.

Step 4.5: Run The Beginning, Middle And End Of Sessions

The beginning of the focus group interview does not have to be very formal or stressful. The opening of the group discussion should be friendly and hospitable with some words of introduction of the moderator and her/his assistant, so that each party of the interview feels at ease and welcome. The introduction has to include some information about the topic and the rules by which the discussion will be held. People could also shortly introduce themselves to make the further discussion more alive and personal for each member.

Mr. Carson writes that the basic rules for such an interview are simple and can be listed as following: the participants will be anonymous in the research paper; there are no right or wrong answers; each person must speak one at a time loudly so that the recording succeeds; if anyone has a thought while someone else is speaking, he/she should make a note of that to get a turn to speak.

The discussion will go more effortlessly if the participants break the ice in the very beginning of the session even if they already know each other. Name tags or badges can be used for a better teamwork and avoiding the awkward situations when one participant is addressing another one.

After the discussion has successfully commenced it is important to balance it. By asking some questions, simply observing and not expressing own opinions; the moderator can manipulate the group to get answers from every member. Sometimes action needs to be taken to prevent the same answers from all the members. In that case some tricky but fair questions can be asked to change the direction of the thought. Some words of appreciation can instigate a more lively discussion in cases when people feel too timid to speak up.

In the study the author will use a real-world situation example where the participants will be asked to react and respond to the circumstances. That technique should help

people use their imagination and place themselves in situations where they might have never been.

The ending of the session has to have the same friendly approach as the beginning. After the discussion is finished, some major points and conclusions can be summed up to let the members know that their words had been noted. If some words or ideas have been understood wrong by the moderator, the participants will have a chance to correct the moderator. The participants can also be asked to give their feedback on the experience and thanked for their time and contribution.

Step 5: Analyze The Information

The next step of the focus group interview is to analyze all the amassed data. With the qualitative data the researcher faces a challenging task. In the case of the author, moderator, analyst and researcher are a single person. The task will be to analyze the material in an unprejudiced fashion. (*Qualitative marketing research. Carson D. et al. 2001. (p. 117-127)*)

3.2 Validity and Reliability

The reliability of a study is measured by how similar the results would be if another researcher conducted the same study. (*Reliability and Validity in Quantitative Research. Kirk & Miller, 1986*) The results of these particular focus group interviews can vary from group to group depending on many factors. There are several causes that could affect the results: for instance, willingness of the participants to tell everything they had to tell on the subject, or time limits set for the interview. The respondents' knowledge on the subject varied a lot and that could be affecting the results too. Those participants who hardly knew about Twitter but claimed to have used it before could not contribute and be as much interested in the service as the participants who use Twitter on the daily basis. The author who played a role of the moderator during the interview could as well influence the outcome. The study conducted by another researcher in similar conditions in the same university would most likely bring the same results, excluding the influence the researcher him/herself put on the study group.

4 RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Results of the first focus group interview

The focus group interview was planned with 5 main topics to discuss, 4 of which contained subtopics for open debate and the last topic for any comments and additions. (*Appendix 1/5*).

- The first topic focused on what Twitter is used for by the participants. It has been found that Twitter is preferred mainly as an alternative replacement for the status updates on Facebook and as a service for getting information about friends and expressing oneself. Thus, Twitter's core duty seemed to be entertainment, e.g. keeping up on certain interests, celebrities' news, etc. However, some more experienced social media users from the focus group mentioned using Twitter to keep track of "real time" news, following businesses, collecting information on stocks, interacting with "useful" online contacts. No specific data was obtained on that but the fact that for some users Twitter had a different role than just a plain chatting service needs to be pointed out.
- Another finding was about factors that attract Twitter users the most. The results were that Twitter is uncomplicated and user friendly. It allows one to express oneself freely without being afraid of being criticized or judged by parents, or friends e.g. in Facebook. Twitter lets its clients post brief, concise messages as well as select more personal contacts, or perhaps, even group absolutely different contacts than one has in other social networking sites. Some members of the focus group stated that they started using Twitter out of curiosity, and that the most attractive thing about Twitter for them, when compared with other social media, is the "real time feel".
- The last subtopic in the first part of the discussion was concerned with how long the group participants have used Twitter since they first registered there. The author discovered that the user habits and the amount of time the participants

spend in Twitter vary a lot. The majority of interviewees tend to have used Twitter for mere 2 days up to 6 months with preference of using Facebook instead. Nonetheless, 2 people have been using Twitter for more than 1,5 year and still wish to continue using it. Those participants who use Twitter for other reasons than entertainment seem to be using Twitter several times a day and for longer period since they first started.

- The second general topic of the focus group discussion was aiming at finding out users' habits and frequency of using Twitter services. Half of the responses revealed a low use frequency with irregular visits to the site. Those respondents said they rarely take part in updating their accounts, but still continue to occasionally read other people's posts. Another half of the group members claimed to be using Twitter frequently, especially when some information is needed or when bored. One participant admitted being addicted to Twitter at some point but lost interest in the long run.
- In the third section of the focus group interview the attendants were to exchange their knowledge about advertising methods used online and on Twitter in particular. Most Twitter users who seldom visit the site and use it for amusement only seem to be less acquainted with advertisement in social media. Those participants who use Twitter and the Internet in general more often have shown great familiarity with the subject of online advertising. They can easily notice ads in Twitter and recognize the spam which can randomly bombard any twitterer with advertisement tweets. All the participants said they could effortlessly distinguish an ad link from a normal message. They also confirmed to never have followed the ad links and ignore the ad posts.
- In the subtopic where the group members were to tell if they ever advertised in Twitter themselves the following results were obtained: all the interviewees have never advertised in Twitter, though some of them have heard or read of someone else who had done it successfully. Yet no one from the group interview participants showed any interest in trying to advertise on Twitter in future.

- The fourth part of the interview was a debate about the effects those ads in Twitter messages have on users. The most common replies were “I ignore ads”, “I block followers who send spam/ads”, “Twitter ads annoy me”, “Ads irritate me”. On the whole the effect of ads on Twitter users seems to be negative, but such posts and messages can simply be ignored. The respondents also mentioned that they found Twitter ads very unrealistic, unimpressive and very rarely actually of any value.
- The amount of posted ads seem to not play any significant role for the group members since they can ignore the followers who send spam and, thus, control the amount of ads posted on their wall.
- The last questions in the interview were “Did your user habits change with time since you first started using Twitter (and now)? Do you think ads in tweets of your followers (or from yourself) have any effect on your user habits (positive/negative)?” More than a half of the group members said they use Twitter much less now than when they first started, or switched to only reading other people’s posts rather than posting their own. However, one participant assured us that he is using Twitter much more nowadays than he used to. He is using it for the purpose of networking between contacts online and sharing information related to stock and financial expertise.
- The last topic was for any free comments and feedback about the interview session. All the group members answered that they had contributed their best and felt comfortable and free to talk on the subject. The time span of the interview was also conveniently short, and the participants were interacting in a relaxed atmosphere.

4.2 Results of the control group interview

The findings of the control group interview were very similar to those of the focus group, but differed in the members of the control group being composed of exclusively

casual users. The control group unlike the focus group exhibited no members who used Twitter for business related purposes. All members used Twitter either for communicating with friends and family, or for following celebrities and keeping up to date with world scandals.

Just like the focus group members the control group could recognize the advertisements in Twitter and paid no attention to them. Similarly to the first interview the control group discussion revealed that no members had ever used Twitter as an advertising platform, even though some of the members were familiar with the opportunity.

The author discovered that both groups surprisingly had almost identical answers to the discussion questions and were equally knowledgeable about the Twitter itself and the ad links posted there.

4.3 Results concluded

The results obtained from both interview sessions can be summarized in the table below

QUESTIONS	FOCUS GROUP	CONTROL GROUP
What is Twitter used for?	Entertainment, gather information, alternative to other social media	Communication with friends, entertainment
Why Twitter?	User friendly, uncomplicated	Very simple service
Length of use	from 2 days to 2 years	from 2 days to several months
Habits	From occasional infrequent to daily use	Infrequent, irregular use
Notice Twitter ads?	yes	yes
Familiar with online advertising?	Everyone is familiar with it to some extent	Everyone is familiar with it to some extent
Can make distinction be-	yes	yes

tween ads and normal posts?		
Advertised in Twitter yourself?	never	never
How do ads affect you?	annoy	annoy
Did your user habits change with time?	Yes: some quit using it, others use it much more than before	Yes: some quit using it, others still use it frequently

5 DISCUSSION

The main objective of this thesis was to discover how young Twitter users (20-30 year old Arcada students) perceive online advertising in the social media site. Based on the information from the theoretical section of this study and the obtained empirical data, the author believes that she has answered the research questions.

5.1 What impression advertising in Twitter makes on its young users

After empirical investigation and analysis of the acquired results the author came to a conclusion that advertising in Twitter generally has a negative impact on young Twitter users. The common reaction to the ad messages (tweets) and links was irritation or total lack of interest (blocking the followers who send ads). No one from the both interviewed groups found advertisements in Twitter useful or convincing. Most users learnt to ignore the spam posts and block the followers who can potentially post ad tweets.

The findings of this study are very similar to the ones of the American researchers, where strong negative views were expressed about advertising in Twitter by the interviewees. This study has gained analogous results as previous studies on this subject, thus, it can be described as valid and reliable.

5.2 Advertising in Twitter and its effect on Twitter's attractiveness to its users

Advertising in Twitter did not seem to have much effect on attractiveness of Twitter to its users. Although ads caused negative criticism, they were not crucial in influencing the users' habits. Twitter users are usually attracted by Twitter's logical interface and simple navigation; and the advertisements do not seem to affect how much or how often the users browse the site.

People who are very frequent Internet users and who have become skilled at dealing with ever-appearing online ads do not seem to care much about the presence of advertising tweets in Twitter. Twitter remains attractive for those who have found a better and more productive way of using the social medium e.g. for keeping track of the most up-to-date news, collecting important information from carefully selected followers, post their own relevant and useful tweets. Those users, who visit Twitter for entertainment only, as a tool for spending excessive free time, tend to use Twitter less or quit using it because they simply get bored and then switch back to Facebook or the likes. Thus, we can conclude that Twitter's attractiveness has nothing to do with the ads posted in Twitter but with the purpose one visits the site.

5.3 Advertising in Twitter. A threat or an aid to the site

Twitter is one of the numerous social media sites. Just like any of those social networking services Twitter has its own strengths and weaknesses, pluses and minuses, and just like any other sites like that it is used by online advertisers as a huge market with millions of potential customers. Nowadays it is impossible to use a social media site without facing ads, spam, banners, pop-up ads, etc. That is now an indispensable part of any popular site.

Whether advertising on Twitter threatens it or not is questionable. The future of social media sites depends usually on other factors like user friendliness of the site, its popularity among friends and connections, the reputation of the site in the mass media, the

site's appearance, easy navigation, smart marketing, etc. Online advertising is present on all the sites in the global net, and the Internet users have learnt to not fall into traps and avoid clicking on spam and useless ads. Advertising itself does not necessarily threaten the site. However, what might be a threat to such a site like Twitter is the lack of control and means of managing the amount of appearing ads for regular users.

There is no aid to Twitter from ads. All the advertisements there are usually spam and contribute nothing to the site's maintenance, for example. The ads are posted to make tweeterers click on the links and visit the landing pages with an advertised product. When the product is bought, a certain percentage from the sale goes to the one who posted the ad. The site itself does not benefit from the ads. It plays a role of a stage where the users are free to interact with each other, whether it is a free friendly chat or a camouflaged buyer-seller transaction.

The author dares to predict a few more years of prosperous future for Twitter. The site has a huge user base and even if for some reason things go bad for Twitter, it will still take a while for the site to fade away from the social networking media arena. Of course, online advertising will as well develop in the following years, but it will not necessarily be a threat to online social services. The author assumes that in the future advertisers will work together with the sites' developers. That would be beneficial for both parties. If the money gained from advertising is partially spent on maintaining and developing the sites, the users will also advantage from this cooperation.

6 CONCLUSION

This thesis presented Twitter, which is nowadays one of the most popular and widely known social networking media worldwide. The author tried to define the functions and theme of the site, its characteristic clientele (frequent users), and its main purpose. The study's central topic was the Internet advertising in social media sites (with Twitter in particular) and the ways it influences regular young users of such sites. That is why the

main methods of advertising in Twitter and the portrait of a typical Twitter user have been described in the study.

The empirical research was conducted in order to collect information from young (20-30 year old Arcada students) on the subject of online advertising in Twitter. The results were analyzed and summarized. The advertising in Twitter has clearly a negative effect on regular young users. However, that does not affect the site's attractiveness as much as one could have imagined.

An important finding of the thesis is that Twitter is not so popular among young people in Arcada, Helsinki, since it has been very problematic to find participants for the focus group interviews who use or even ever used Twitter in their life. Most participants used Twitter for a very limited amount of time, and seemed to prefer Facebook. The author assumes that Twitter is not yet as popular in Europe as it is in the US, and that the site may become more popular later on.

6.1 Limitations of the study and further research

In any research there are a number of possible limitations that create obstacles to obtain the only right answer to the question at stake. In this study there are several limitations due to which the findings are not guaranteed to be the only correct ones.

First of all, any investigation is biased no matter how scientific and precise the author is trying to be. It is inevitable to include personal opinions and ideas that may influence the end result of the research. All the findings are analyzed by the researcher and he/she includes his/her own perspectives. In the instance of this study the author took part in it as a moderator in the focus group interviews and as an analyst of the findings. In the end result, the thesis is influenced by a one person perception.

Secondly, even in quantum physics there is an effect of observer. What it means is that in any exploration, the researcher, the one who studies an object, will have an impact on

the object by his/her presence. The experimenter effect in the case of this study is that the people, who participated in the focus group interview, knew they were being observed and evaluated. Their discussions were recorded and analyzed. The participants were aware of this and it could have impact on the whole discourse. They also knew that some information is expected from them, so they could unintentionally respond to the questions giving pre-deduced answers. Although, in the absence of an observer the outcome of the interview could be varying, it is impossible to compare or predict what the results would be. (*The observer effect. Alex Paterson. 2008.*)

Thirdly, since the research has been done in the field of Internet media, there is no way of providing the most up-to-date information in the findings. The online communities, social media sites, blogs, online services and ways of interaction are changing continually. The latest statistics today might be absolutely outdated tomorrow. The research results can only be considered relevant in the particular time span. In the era of a constantly growing global Internet use we can only roughly estimate the extent to which the results of this study were accurate. However, the results can present a cornerstone for further investigations in the field of Internet social media and advertising in them.

The fourth and one of the main limitations of the study is that Twitter is not so popular among Arcada students (who are mainly Europeans), as it turned out during the research. Consequently, the results could most probably differ if the investigation was undertaken for example in the US or Japan.

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APPENDIX 1/1

THE CONVERSATION: THE ART OF LISTENING, LEARNING, AND SHARING. 2010



APPENDIX 1/2

SOCIAL MEDIA CATEGORIES AND USES (EXCERPTED FROM: SOCIAL MEDIA 101 OVERVIEW: THE WHAT AND THE WHY. 07.2010)


Category (Example)	Generally appropriate for...	Generally NOT appropriate when...
Aggregators  (Digg)	Increasing the reach of a blog or other often-updated public site	Used to promote a static Web site
Blogging  (WordPress)	Telling a story, i.e., narrative writing (about a finite event or an ongoing issue/project)	There aren't resources or content to post regularly
Content Syndication  (RSS)	Sharing Web site content with others, highlighting often-updated site content	Used to promote a static Web site
Microblogging  (Twitter)	Providing real-time updates; obtaining feedback; interacting at conferences, etc.	There aren't resources to participate regularly (as in posting and responding)
Photo Sharing  (Flickr)	Engaging with stakeholders and building community (e.g., for a specific event)	There aren't resources to post photos of your work
Social Bookmarking  (Delicious)	Sharing multiple links with stakeholders (see Aggregators too)	Used to promote a static Web site.
Social Networks  (Facebook)	Engaging with stakeholders and building community; obtaining feedback	There aren't resources to participate regularly (as in posting and responding)
Video Sharing  (YouTube)	Broadcasting events, interviews, tutorials, etc.; building community	The content could be expressed in a podcast (aka "talking head syndrome")

APPENDIX 1/3

AN EXAMPLE OF A TWITTER PAGE. USER KALABASHH.

Accessed on December 2009

twitter.com/

Home Profile Find People Settings Help Sign out


What's happening?


140


Latest: la-la-laaaa about 1 month ago


update


Home


 **GetDeals** Hot #Magazines! Clubhouse Jr Magazine Subscription Focus on the Family 212% Sales Rank in Mag...
[#Subscription #Deal](http://twurl.nl/74lsrq)
less than 5 seconds ago from twitterfeed


 **jafonso** Ensino Superior: Universidade do Minho abre em 2010/2011 cursos em horário pós-laboral - reitor
<http://bit.ly/7IzQhm> #actualidade
less than 10 seconds ago from twitterfeed

 **andreslara501** La cabezona es la puta cagada :P
less than 20 seconds ago from web

 **ettasb** User:Aglaia14: new user account <http://bit.ly/5Z0o2D>
less than 20 seconds ago from Ping.fm

 **ettasb** Tim Kazurinsky: ← Previous revision Revision as of 15:53, 7 December 2009 Line 12: .. <http://bit.ly/60usmF>
less than 20 seconds ago from Ping.fm

 **MarinePlaza** Chicago Hardware 222110 ONLY \$13.02 AT WWW.MARINEELECTRONICSPLAZA.COM
half a minute ago from API

 **Kalabashh**
136 tweets

993 334 1
following followers listed

Home


@Kalabashh


Direct Messages 326

Favourites

Retweets


What do you think of the retweet feature? [Send Feedback](#)

Search 

Lists 

Lists are timelines you build yourself, consisting of friends, family, co-workers, sports teams, you name it.

New List

Trending Topics 

#musicmonday

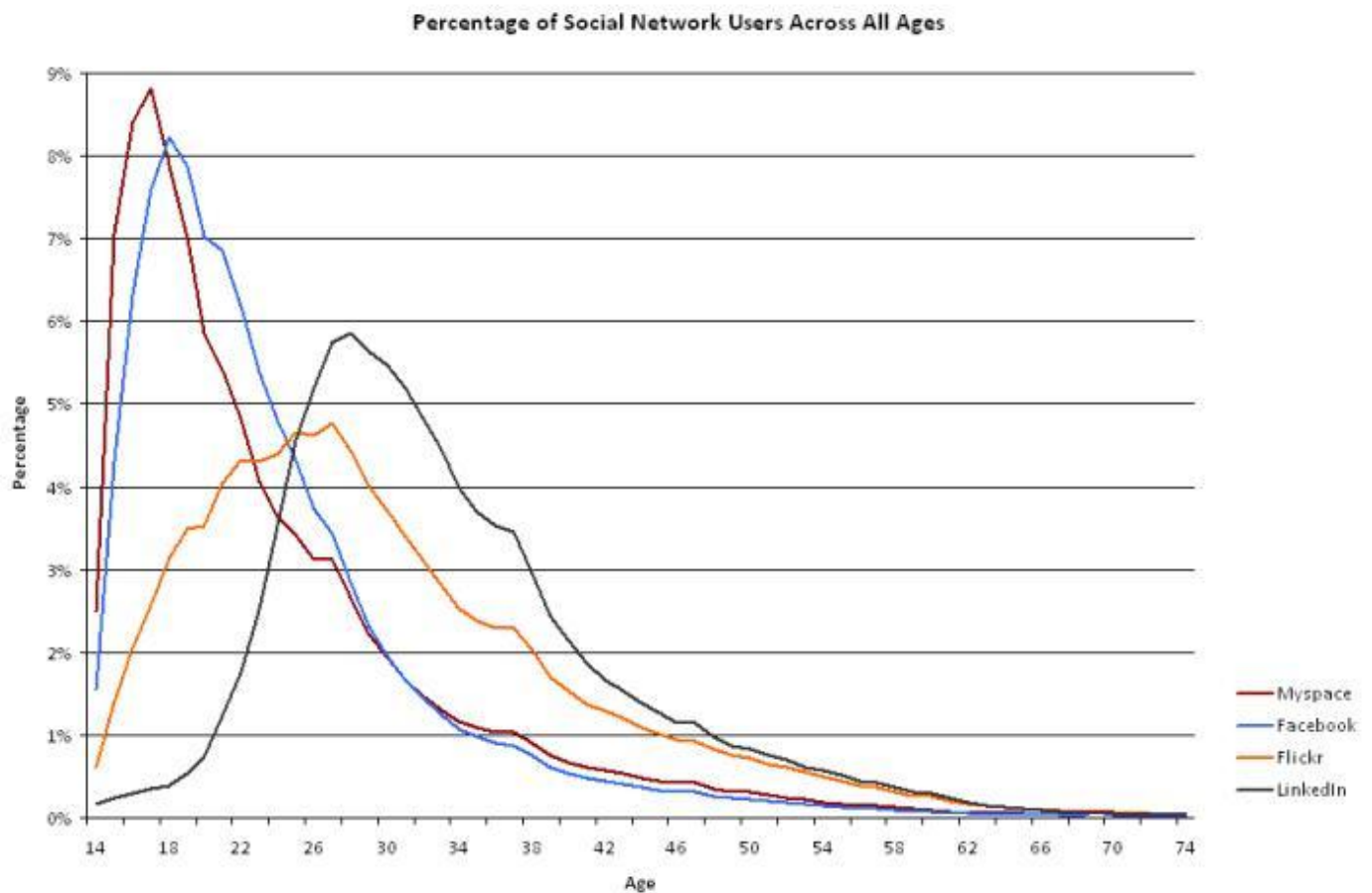
#MM

Pearl Harbor

APPENDIX 1/4

PERCENTAGE OF SOCIAL NETWORK USERS ACROSS ALL AGES.

(extracted from social media 101 overview: The what and the why .07.2010) <http://social-media-optimization.com/2009/02/top-twenty-five-social-networking-sites-feb-2009/>)



APPENDIX 1/5

TOPICS/QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS:

1. Ask for information on the following topics connected to the use of Twitter:
 - a) What do you use Twitter for?
 - b) Why do you choose Twitter as your social networking site? What attracts you the most in Twitter?
 - c) How long have you used this social networking service? Do you like it and want to continue to use it further on?
2. How would you define your habits of using Twitter? (In/frequent, addict, occasional, etc).
3. Ask to discuss Internet advertising:
 - a) Do you know any methods of Internet advertising in social media sites? (If yes, which?)
 - b) Do you notice (if yes, follow) the advertising links in Twitter?
 - c) Can you make a distinction between casual messages from the advertising posts in tweets?
 - d) Have you ever advertised in Twitter yourself? If yes, has it been a successful experience and are you willing to continue to advertise in Twitter in future?
4. Ask to think about effects of the ads in Twitter messages on user habits:
 - a) If you know that some of the messages from followers in Twitter are ads, how do they affect you? Do they irritate/interest you or you are indifferent to them?
 - b) Do you find the ads in Twitter messages useful?
 - c) Do you think there are too many /too few ads in Twitter posts?

d) Did your user habits change with time since you first started using Twitter and now? Do you think ads in tweets of your followers (or from yourself) have any effect on your user habits (positive/negative)?

5. Any other free comments on the topic