Adolescents' Perception, and Attitudes Towards Social Media Networks in Egypt
A survey

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Introduction

- Facebook - as one of social networking sites- is one of the major characteristics involved in web 2.0 technologies, as it involves information sharing and communication between different users.

- The term "social networks", have different connotations in the literature:
  - "socially interactive technologies" such as instant messaging and text messaging,
  - the networks that offer fast-paced, inexpensive, online communication which allow youth social interaction to start and evolve.

- The nature and quality of activities conducted on social media networks have also been discussed by researchers:
  - online and offline relationships, uses of social media networks.
Purpose of the Research

To investigate the online usage habits of the Egyptian teens with focus on social media networks – specifically Facebook.

The survey sheds light on the role played by the Facebook in enhancing teens attitudes towards political and social changes currently occurring in Egypt.
About Egypt

- Total number of population is 80 820 654
- Internet users according to latest statistics reached 25.76 million users, with a monthly growth rate of 1.8%.
- Internet penetration reached 32.09% last May
- Proportion of households using internet from home 32.86%.
- ADSL subscription is 1.56 million subscribers, while mobile internet users are 9.1 million users
- Political change started January 25, 2011
Surveying Social Media Networks in Egypt

- Simple random sample
- N= 200, 10-17 years old, boys and girls
- All have a Facebook account
- Fieldwork in August 2011
- Self-completion questionnaire
- Validation via pilot testing
Conceptual Framework

- The Uses and gratifications approach

- The advent of new media – with its ability to dissolve boundaries between telecommunications and broadcast industry – have changed what we expect from the media we use.

- The approach stresses that social and psychological motivations can make people use a specific media for: companionship or other gratifications as using it as a substitute to face to face interaction.
Research Questions

- What are the patterns of usage of Egyptian children for internet in general, and social media in specific?

- Are teens in Egypt aware of social media possibilities and risks? How do they perceive risks? What do they do?

- How far parents supervise their children internet activities?

- What are the uses and gratifications of Facebook among Egyptian teens?

- What is the role played by social media in enhancing teens participation in political change?
# Questionnaire Design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>patterns of usage for media and internet</th>
<th>Online risk/Attitudes and perceptions towards Facebook</th>
<th>Uses and gratifications of Facebook</th>
<th>Facebook and revolution in Egypt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internet usage</strong></td>
<td><strong>Risks, perceptions of SMN</strong></td>
<td><strong>Conceptual framework</strong></td>
<td><strong>Egyptian perspective</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>favorite media</td>
<td>Exposure to risk Perception of risk/actions Parental control</td>
<td>personal communication</td>
<td>Group formation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of traditional and new media</td>
<td>What does Facebook mean to them.</td>
<td>Spend time</td>
<td>Why join a group</td>
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<tr>
<td>What do teens do online</td>
<td></td>
<td>Functional uses</td>
<td>Activities done through groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours of usage</td>
<td></td>
<td>Social networking activities</td>
<td>Relationship between revolution and facebook</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How do Teens in Egypt place internet among other media

What do teens do online?
How they describe traditional and new media

- **Radio** is a very old media (N=154)
- **Television** is interesting (N=109)
- **Facebook** is cool (N=180)
- **Newspapers and magazines** are the most boring media (N=98)
- **Facebook** (N=87) / **Mobile phone** (N=84) occupies a great part of my life
- The most preferable media for me is **Facebook** (N=170)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Socialization purposes</td>
<td>Functional and utilities</td>
<td>Other activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chat (83%)</td>
<td>Make new friends (45%)</td>
<td>Conduct research (29%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Say whatever they want (66%)</td>
<td>Conduct research (42%)</td>
<td>Meet new people (24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upload and receive videos (57%)</td>
<td>Send and receive mails (39%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Play with friends (31%)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Hours of internet usage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internet usage</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than one hour</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From one to two hours</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From two to four hours</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than four hours</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am always connected to the internet</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Most of online time is devoted for Facebook

Males spend more time with Facebook more than females

- (43%) devote more than three hours for the Facebook.
- (20%) spend from two to three hours a day on the Facebook.
- Males spend more time with Facebook when compared to females
Online Risk

- 55% admitted they have been exposed to dangerous websites.
- “The most online action I consider risky is exposure to impolite sites (49%)”
- “Talking to people I don’t know over the net could be dangerous (24%)”
Parental supervision over internet activities

- (80%) of the respondents stated that their parents do not set any rules regarding internet usage.

- Very few warned their children not to download their pictures on the net.

- Only (3%) of the sample thought of “ask my parents or someone older about it”, when facing a dangerous experience on the net.

- (63%) of the sample disagreed to the statement: “My parents object to my having a Facebook account.”
Strategies teens follow when facing a dangerous website

- (47%) Neutral strategy: “ignore the experience”
- (21%) highly perceived the risk: “it upsets me and wish I haven’t seen it”.
- (14%) positive strategy: “I seek the help from friends”.
- (6%) risk taking attitude: “I pass it to my friends”
How do Egyptian teens perceive Facebook?
Attitudes towards social media networks:

- “Helps me know more friends and join groups”
- A daily routine in my life
- Gives me the power to say what I can’t say in person.
- “My page simply express me”
- “My way to express individuality”
Uses and gratifications of Facebook
Uses of Facebook

- For personal communication purposes
  - to keep in touch with friends
  - replacing personal com tools
  - expressing emotional feelings
  - to make plans with friends

- Pleasurable way to spend time
  - enjoy leisure time
  - escape from study

- Utilities and functional use
  - see photo comments
  - send and receive messages
  - post photos on the album
  - update the profile
Social interactivity purposes

- Interacting with others in the society
  - contact friends who are away
  - look at pictures of my friends
  - know who knows who
- Sexual attraction
  - look at profile of someone I find attractive
- Social comparisons
  - use FB to know what others are doing
  - see if others are doing better or worse than me
  - to know what everybody is watching about events.
Facebook & political change in Egypt
Groups are formed....

Reasons for joining a group:

- when invitation comes from a friend
- When the name of the group is expressive
- when the group has already started activities
- Not interested in groups at all
“Facebook made me do things I thought I would never do”.....
Major activities teens performed since the revolution

- Cleaning the streets
- Participating in public committees
- Charity work
They said (more than 50% of the sample)…..

- “I enjoy watching videos about the revolution”
- “Facebook made me know what is politics”
- “I like to follow the thread of comments about the revolution”
- “Facebook encouraged me to participate in political change”
- “I open Facebook to know the news of revolution”.
- “Facebook gave me the feeling I am an important person in my society”
Conclusion

- Facebook constitutes an important part in the lives of teens: interesting and cool media.

- They use the internet to express themselves away from any parental supervision.

- The Egyptian society is not fully aware of the risks that are associated with internet usage by children and teens.

- Teens understand what is considered risky over the net and they take a neutral strategy when facing risks by just ignoring the whole experience.

- They use Facebook for different personal and social communication reasons.

- Facebook played a role in creating the spirit of protest in Egypt. It attracted teens to be part of this massive change, and encouraged them to give a hand in change despite their young age.
Recommendations

- Incorporate SMN education in schools.

- Raise the level of awareness of children and teens of the different possibilities of risks through online awareness campaigns.

- Enhance parental awareness of internet risks through media campaigns.

- More interdisciplinary studies of social media networks is highly needed, specifically it’s role in enhancing political change.