

Use of Smartphones in 6th and 7th Grade (Elementary Schools) in Istria: Pilot Study

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Abstract : Younger and younger children are now using a smartphone, a device which has become 'a must have' and the life of children would be almost 'unthinkable' without one. Devices are becoming lighter and lighter but offering an array of options and applications as well as the unavoidable access to the Internet, without which it would be almost unusable. Numerous features such as taking of photographs, listening to music, information search on the Internet, access to social networks, usage of some of the chatting and messaging services, are only some of the numerous features offered by 'smart' devices. They have replaced the alarm clock, home phone, camera, tablet and other devices. Their use and possession have become a part of the everyday image of young people. Apart from the positive aspects, the use of smartphones has also some downsides. For instance, free time was usually spent in nature, playing, doing sports or other activities enabling children an adequate psychophysiological growth and development. The greater usage of smartphones during classes to check statuses on social networks, message your friends, play online games, are just some of the possible negative aspects of their application. Considering that the age of the population using smartphones is decreasing and that smartphones are no longer 'foreign' to children of pre-school age (smartphones are used at home or in coffee shops or shopping centers while waiting for their parents, playing video games often inappropriate to their age), particular attention must be paid to a very sensitive group, the teenagers who almost never separate from their 'pets'. This paper is divided into two sections, theoretical and empirical ones. The theoretical section gives an overview of the pros and cons of the usage of smartphones, while the empirical section presents the results of a research conducted in three elementary schools regarding the usage of smartphones and, specifically, their usage during classes, during breaks and to search information on the Internet, check status updates and 'likes' on the Facebook social network.

Keywords : education, smartphone, social networks, teenagers

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