Participation on Facebook, MySpace and Twitter

Motivation for content creation, a comparative study between Australia and the Netherlands

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Abstract

An explorative research is conducted on Facebook, MySpace and Twitter as they are the most popular international social networking sites of the past years. This study focuses on the different user motivations for content creation between Australian and Dutch participants. These two western countries are not yet compared in this way.

Two datasets have been collected. The first dataset concerns the comparison of the three social networking sites. It was collected through a content analysis. The second dataset concerned the users and was collected through an online survey (N = 467). The uses and gratifications approach was the guiding theory in this project. It was employed to find different motivations between users of the three social networking sites and users in the two countries.

Previous research defined different user motives for the use of social networking sites. The results of this research suggest that Australian users are more motivated than Dutch users in using social networking sites and creating content on these sites. The main motivation for the Australians is the fulfilment of their social needs. The other two motivations were; the need for identity construction and the need for entertainment and diversion. These motives proved not to be significant. Though they can be seen as motivators in both countries for using these sites.

Keywords:

Social Networks, Uses and Gratifications, Motivation, User Created Content, User Participation, Social Media, Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, Australia, The Netherlands.

Preface

The thesis you are about to read is written on four different continents and in six different countries over the past ten months. This thesis is a Master Thesis for the Master Media and Culture at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam. This thesis represents the end of my student life and an amazing journey around the world while writing this piece. Meanwhile I found an interesting job and I'm happy to finish off my student life with this thesis and start the next phase of my life.

I would like to thank my supervisor Prof. Dr. J. Jansz for the rapid answers on my e-mails when I had questions and all the feedback by mail and Skype. I am happy that Prof. Dr. J. Jansz was able to perform as my supervisor during the months I was studying in Australia. Moreover I would like to thank Dr. E. Hitters for his flexibility to perform as my 'last minute' second reader.

Finally I would like to thank my classmates in Holland for providing me with up to date information and cheer up's when I needed those.

I experienced the writing process of this thesis as complicated. I underestimated a lot of things for instance my knowledge of SPSS and how time consuming certain parts would be. Nevertheless I've learned a lot from these difficulties. And as the Australians would say; I also had heaps of fun!

Maartje Smeele
Melbourne and The Hague, 2010

Table of Contents

1. Inducement

This thesis is written as a final assignment for the Master Media and Journalism. In the final months of this master I participated in an exchange program between the Erasmus University Rotterdam and the Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne. While preparing my time overseas and designing the outline for this thesis I got interested in the different user motivations between my home country, the Netherlands, and Australia, were I have spent six months.

While studying my bachelor and masters I worked with different media companies. Most of them focus on selling media content. My last employer owned a local Dutch social networking site. Therefore I became personally interested in social networks sites. During my work within this company I witnessed several social networking sites grow extensively and others fail and eventually pass away. Furthermore more and more youngsters started to use social networking sites and I got interested in their usage of these sites. Combined with my exchange program, the outline of this research was set.

These backgrounds led to my personal interest in the differences in motives for content production on Social Networking sites and why people may use these sites without producing content, or why they do not use these sites at all. The focus on two different countries may give a better insight in the different user motives, and will be a contribution to previous research.

1.1 Introduction

Nowadays social networks are used by many people to communicate in private or professional ways (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Most social networks have interactive tools incorporated such as blogging, photo and video sharing or status updates (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). It is a common thought that a lot of content is created on these networks. According to the OECD (2005) high rates of content are produced and shared on social networking sites. The data that are available on content creation show that it is a growing activity among youngsters. But according to the European Commission, quoted in the OECD rapport, only 13% of the European youngsters in 2005 were "regularly contributing to blogs" (OECD, 2007). This group is also called the 'digital natives' they are currently between the 16 and 30 years old (Prensky, 2001). Many people are active as they lurk and view someone's creations, but a few

really produce content themselves (Tancer, 2009). This research will focus on youngsters. Most of them are online but not all are creating.

The Internet provides many different platforms to create and share user created content (UCC), mostly focused on youngsters. As the range of platforms on the Internet is too large to investigate this research focuses on the reasons to create online content on social networking sites and using these sites without creating content. The research is conducted in Australia and the Netherlands. The user motivations between the users in these two countries are compared in this research. The cases used in this research are international social networking sites, heavily used in both countries. Three social networks are addressed: Facebook, MySpace and Twitter. In the top 100 sites by country on Alexa.com (2010) Facebook is on the second place in Australia, Twitter on the tenth and Myspace on the 45th. In the Netherlands Facebook is ranked fourth in the top 100 of Alexa.com (2010), Twitter is on the eleventh place and Myspace is on the 37th place. The most general differences between these two countries are shown below in figure 1. By using the same platforms for content creating to compare the users in these countries, the differences between the user motivations to create or not create content will come forward.

Australia	The Netherlands
22,525.398 people live in Australia	16,661.304 live in the Netherlands
80% of the population has an Internet connection	89% of the population has an Internet connection
310700 unique twitter users in the beginning of 2010	171600 unique twitter users in the beginning of 2010
Beginning of 2009 2.1 million active users were on MySpace	In the end of 2008 260.000 users were on MySpace
8.25.95.60 active users on Facebook	2.79.78.00 active users on Facebook
The surface of Australia is 7.741.220 m2	The surface of The Netherlands is 41.582 m2

Figure 1. Differences between Australia and the Netherlands (Alexa, 2010, Facebook, 2010, Sysomos, 2010, van Dijk, 2008 Wikipedia, 2010b, Wikipedia, 2010c)

The education I received at the Erasmus University and Swinburne University combined with my personal interests, made me start this research.

1.2 Research question

From this point of view the following research question for this exploratory research is developed. The research question is: '*In which way do the user motives of Dutch and Australian youngsters for creating and not creating content differ on the international social networking sites Facebook, MySpace and Twitter?*'

The answer of this research question will be found by employing different research methods. Firstly a literature study is done. This forms the theoretical basis of this research. Secondly an online survey is conducted among Dutch and Australian Internet users. This survey focuses on the user motives for content production on social networking sites and on the motives to not use or produce content on social networking sites. Thirdly, combined with the content analysis of the three social networking sites this research will give an insight in the different user motives between the Netherlands and Australia.

1.3 Relevance

The scientific relevance of this research can be found in the fact that the traffic on the Internet is still growing. The Internet population in Europe grew with 297,5% in the period 2000-2009 and the Internet population in Australia grew with 175,2% in the period 2000-2009 (Internet World Stats, 2010). According to Lenhart, Madden, Macgill and Smith (2007) writing for The Pew Internet & American Life Project 93% of the youngsters use the Internet for social interactions and communications. Moreover 55% of the youngsters have a profile on social networking sites such as Facebook and Myspace (Lenhart et al., 2007, Sysomos, 2010). Twitter has more than 13 million unique active accounts (Lenhart, et al., 2007, Sysomos, 2010). There is no research done on content creation by Pew, and almost no research done on the motives not to create content on Social Networking Sites. Furthermore the Netherlands and Australia are not yet compared in this way. The differences stated in figure 1 are big, geographical but the percentage of Internet connections are close together. Both countries are western and social networking sites are popular. Do the Dutch and Australian Internet users have different motives to use some of the fastest growing Internet platforms, social networking sites?

Ochoa, Xavier and Duval (2008) use the participation inequality rule. Anyone can produce his or her own content but still we can speak about the 1%, 9% and 90% rule also known as the inequality rule (Ochoa et al, 2008). So only 1% is actively producing content, 9% is producing little content and 90% is only watching and not producing the content. To gain more active users it is very useful to find out why 90% of the users are watching and not producing. What are their motives? There is no study done yet that proves or disproves the 1-9-90% rule (Ochoa et al, 2008, Tancer, 2009).

This research is socially relevant because a better understanding is created among the Internet users. After this research the motives or problems with creating content are revealed. Moreover this research provides an insight in the gender differences that consists in the production of UCC and provides a better understanding about the driving motives (not) to produce UCC. Furthermore this research is interesting for society because people are spending increasingly more time online and more social connections are about to take place online. In September 2008 68% of the Australian Internet users have an account on a social networking site and at the same time 61% of the Dutch Internet users have an account on a social networking site (Emarketer, 2009). A big part of the social communication and interaction has shifted from offline to online.

1.4 Structure

This thesis commences in chapter two and three by theory review and applying several theories on this research. The methodology in chapter four discusses how the research is conducted and includes a focus on youngsters. In chapter five the research findings are presented and analyzed. Finally, conclusions that rise from this research are given together with a discussion and recommendations for further research.

2. Theory: terminology and previous research

2.1 Introduction

The online media landscape offers consumers the opportunity to consume media and create new content online. The past years the Internet has emerged into a place where consumers can enjoy media content anytime and anywhere (Vorderer, 2001). The emergence of Internet has shaped it into a highly personalized information space; users can adapt or adjust almost everything according to their own wishes (Daugherty, Eastin and Bright, 2008). Social Networking Sites (SNS) are a big part of this emerging online environment often called Web 2.0 (O'Reilly, 2005).

This chapter focuses on previous research, important terms and theories that are used in this specific research. First of all the term Web 2.0 is discussed. Secondly the Social Shaping theory is explained. Thirdly the Uses and Gratifications approach is explained and applied to this research. Based on several theorists the decision is made about how and which motives are measured within this research. Fourthly the history of Social Networking sites is discussed and after that the focus goes to the three sites that are examined in this research. Finally a short conclusion is given.

2.2 Web 2.0

The term Web 2.0 is introduced by Tim O'Reilly (2005). Web 2.0 focuses on user added value on the Internet. O'Reilly (2006) describes Web 2.0 as:

> "*Web 2.0 is the business revolution in the computer industry caused by the move to the Internet as platform, and an attempt to understand the rules for success on that new platform. Chief among those rules is this: Build applications that harness network effects to get better the more people use them*".

With the development of Web 2.0 the level and quality of participation increases for users. Moreover the sites are easy to use and decentralized. Websites based on these Web 2.0 principles are for instance social networking sites (Flew 2008).

Flichy (2006) does not use the term Web 2.0 but defines the Internet as a tool that mixes the features of both communication and information. Internet is therefore an interactive tool for communication and a new platform with multiple sources for all

sorts of information (Flichy, 2006). Web 2.0 sites are sites that acknowledge that they need to provide their users with environments that facilitate user participation and interaction (Flew, 2008). Web 2.0 is often related to the terms interactivity and participation (O'Reilly, 2005, Flew, 2008, Li, 2008). Both definitions of web 2.0 by O' Reilly (2005) and the definition of the Internet by Flichy (2006) match with this research and will be used throughout this thesis. The three social networks, Facebook, MySpace and Twitter, discussed in this research are three examples of Web 2.0 applications. They focus in on the user, and the usage of the site, because the users are able to create content and therefore determine the success of these websites. According to Jenkins (2006) it is not necessary for every single user to contribute. It is more important to state that they can contribute whenever they want, to encourage this and to state that their contribution is of great value and will be appreciated (Jenkins, 2006). Web 2.0 is therefore not driven by technology. It is driven by its users and their usage of Web 2.0 applications. The emergence of the Internet has led to a situation that many people are able to create and produce media instead of just a few (OECD, 2007). Moreover these social networks are successful examples of creating and sharing content on a many-to-many basis (Flew, 2008). When researching Web 2.0, theory on the social shaping of technology must be taken in to account. This theory will explain the relation between the technological possibilities and the usage.

2.3 Social Shaping theory (SST)

With the emergence of the Internet more and more techniques and content are available online. Jenkins (2004) observed that new media techniques, -shapes, -content and –audiences merge. As a result of convergence, the relations between technologies, industries, markets, genres and public are changing (Jenkins, 2004). Everything is connected. One might say that the convergence that emerged from User Created Content is blurring the distinction between the users and producers (Cover, 2006). They are often one and the same person or user. Convergence is very much applicable to SNS because these 'new Internet platforms' led to the convergence of former separate activities such as "*emailing, instant messaging, website building, sharing photo's and music and video uploading*" (Livingstone, 2008; 394). Social convergence allows information to be spread more efficiently (Boyd, 2008a). Livingstone (2008) states that using media in this perspective means both creating and receiving content: "*Creating and networking online content is becoming*

an integral means of managing one's identity, lifestyle and social relations"
(Livingstone, 2008; 394).

The technical possibilities on the Internet are impressive and the
developments are rapid. The subsequent changes in human behavior are often
interpreted as being caused by technology (Lievrouw, 2006). Lievrouw (2006) argued
that this technological determinism position is wrong because it neglects social
factors, it is also very important what users do with these technologies and these
possibilities.

According to the social shaping theory (SST) it is not only the technology that
causes changes but also the input generated by the users (Lievrouw, 2006). Social
shaping theory proposes that technological determinism is not a good explanation for
the emergence of technique (Lievrouw. 2006). It focuses on technologies created
through a combination of social forces and processes (McMillan, 2006 Flichy, 2006).
According to Williams and Edge (1996) the concept of choices is central within the
social shaping theory. Lievrouw (2006) elaborates on this claiming *"social shaping
theory emphasizes the importance of human choices, action in technological
change…"* (Lievrouw, 2006: 248). Boczkowski (1999) sees Internet applications as a
combination of technological features and user practices. Hereby he means the
interplay between technology and human action and therefore he agrees with
Lievrouw (2006).

What the users do with the technology determines the final outcome. There
are some critics that may argue, *"that technologies are not neutral, but are fostered
by groups to preserve or alter social relationships, they are politics pursed by other
means"* (Williams and Edge 1996, use Winner, 1977, 1980, Hard, 1993 and Latour,
1988). Williams and Edge (1996) see this critique as the acknowledgement that SST
is influenced by a desire to democratize technological decision-making. Furthermore
as described by Lievrouw (2006) the aim of SST *"is to formulate policies to guide
technology development so that its benefits are human-centered, usable, equitable
appropriate and responsive to every day culture and practice"* (Lievrouw, 2006, 249,
Williams and Edge, 1996). The social shaping theory is applicable within this
research because it focuses on the social factors interplay with the available
technologies as an explanation of the adoption of (new) technologies. This is how
social networking sites became popular. These sites gained popularity because of
the massive use by youngsters. According to Lenhart et al. (2007) 93% of the teens
uses Internet and 55% has a profile on a Social Networking Site such as Facebook
or MySpace in 2007. Furthermore as Raacke & Bonds-Raakce (2008) describe
"social networking sites are virtual places that cater to a specific population in which

14

people of similar interests gather to communicate, share, and discuss ideas" (Raacke & Bonds-Raakce, 2008: 169). The focus on the social aspect on these sites is clear. In the case of social networking sites, the social factors of the social shaping theory are the users of these sites. These users apply the available technologies, media, and collaborate to the success of these sites. Why do people use certain media? According to Rubin (1984) people often use media because of rituals. The use of media such as TV and Internet is incorporated into their daily habits. But this is not the only reason people turn to social networks, they want to fulfill certain social and physical needs or gratifications (Joinson, 2007, Ruggiero, 2000, Debtatin, Lovejoy, Horn and Hughes, 2009, Jansz, Avis & Vosmeer, 2010).

2.4 Uses & Gratifications (U&G)

The uses and gratifications approach is another part of the theoretical framework of this research (Ruggiero, 2000). This approach determines motives of people by focusing on what they do with the media (Ruggiero, 2000, Stafford, Stafford & Skade, 2004). According to Stafford et al. (2004) some theorists believe that this approach, the uses and gratifications is well suited for Internet studies. In this paragraph the uses and gratifications approach is discussed in general. Furthermore it's applied specifically on this research. The motives that are measured within this research are explained. And finally a quick preview of the research method and how this research is conducted.

The uses and gratifications approach is designed as a result of a great amount of research about the gratifications users obtain while using media (Ruggiero, 2000). Researchers were interested which media satisfied the needs of the users (Weiser, 2001, Ruggiero, 2000, Raacke and Bonds-Raacke, 2008). The early uses and gratification studies were done to categorize the users opinions (Ruggiero, 2000). Joinson (2008) describes the uses and gratifications approach as; "'*uses and gratifications' refer to the motivations of specific uses, and the satisfaction people gain from such use"* (Joinson, 2008; 2). Ruggiero (2000) claims that the deregulation of the media and the convergence of the mass media and digital technology change the number of times and ways people are exposed to the media (Ruggiero, 2000). New media gives their users more choice and possibilities to enjoy and use media (Ruggiero, 2000). While using new media people are actively combining several motives to fulfil their gratifications. This also happens when they are using social networking sites. Ruggiero (2000) discusses some theorists that have criticized this approach, because this approach relies on the activeness of the

users (Ruggiero, 2000). Adams (2000) mentions that theorists have claimed that people use the media in an inactive role. In this thesis, focussing on social networking sites, driven by the interactive Internet one can speak of active users (Ruggiero, 2000, Stafford, Stafford & Schkade, 2004). An interactive medium such as the computer, or the Internet will not develop in absence of their users (Jenkins, 2006). The uses and gratifications approach is therefore a good way to analyse the motivations and satisfactions of different people in Australia and the Netherlands (Ruggiero, 2000, Jansz & Martens, 2005, Joinson, 2008, Shao, 2009).

2.4.1 Motives measured in this research

The uses and gratifications theory in this thesis is used to investigate the motives involved in content creation on social networking sites and the motives for using social networking sites without content creation, or not using social networking sites at all. The research focuses on international social networking sites and different users in the Netherlands and Australia. Based on several theorists the motives that are measured in this research are selected. First of all research is done at motives for general Internet usage (Larose, Mastro, Eastin, 2001, Charney & Greenberg, 2001, Papacharassi & Rubin, 2001). Secondly research is done at the motives for specific Internet usage focused on social networking sites (Nyland, Marvez, Beck, 2007, Raacke and Bonds-Raacke, 2008, Debatin et al., 2009, Dunne, Lawlor, Rowley, 2010, Shao, 2009). Debatin et al. (2009) suggest that people use Facebook to fulfill their needs, as is proposed by the uses and gratifications theory. Debatin et al. (2009) claim in their article based on other different researches that there are three dimensions of needs that can be fulfilled by the use of Facebook: *"(1) The need for diversion and entertainment, (2) the need for (para-social) relationships, and (3) the need for identity construction"* (Debatin et al., 2009: 89, Nyland et al., 2007, Raacke and Bonds-Raacke, 2008, Shao, 2009, Dunne et al., 2010). One could say that Facebook or social networking sites in general offer a gratification of all three dimensions and can therefore be seen as key motivations for use of these sites (Joinson, 2007; Debatin et al. 2009; Ruggiero, 2009). In this study these three motivations are measured with an online survey (see Chapter 4). The next paragraphs will discuss the social networking sites researched in this thesis in more detail.

2.5 History of social networking sites

One of the first social networks was Friendster, established in 2002 as a dating site, but only some of the users (in the US) participated in the dating features of the site (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). All the other users were mainly searching for friends (from the past). In 2003 some bands from San Francisco used Friendster to promote their gigs and connect to their fans (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Friendster did not allow these forms of publicity and started deleting profiles (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). MySpace was launched in the second half of 2003 (MySpace, 2010). They were happy to welcome bands.

Halfway 2005 most of the teenagers around the world got grip of social networking (Boyd, 2008). MySpace was especially popular in the US, while Friendster became popular among youngsters in Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia. Sites like Orkut and Hi5 were mostly visited by adults from Brazil and India (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Facebook was launched for high school students in September 2004 (Facebook, 2010). All over the world new social networks were launched. Examples were: '*Tagworld, Bebo, Piczo, Faceparty and Mixi … in places like UK, NZ, Australia and Japan'* (Boyd, 2008; 4). Some social networks tried to become a global success, but often the success is determined within a culture or even within a country (Boyd, 2008).

2.5.1 Facebook

Facebook, an American social networking site was founded in 2004 (Lampe, Ellison & Steinfield, 2006) and is now one of the biggest sites in the world (Wikipedia, 2010, Alexa.com, 2010). According to Facebook.com (2010) they have more than 350 million active users. Almost half of their active users logs in to Facebook every day. More than 35 million status updates are posted each day. More than 2.5 billion photos are uploaded every month. Over 3.5 billion pieces of content are shared every week (Facebook, 2010).

An average Facebook user has about 130 friends on their profile, sends 8 friend requests per month and spends at least 55 minutes a day on Facebook. Moreover an average user writes about 25 comments on content each month (Facebook, 2010).

Using the 'create an advertisement' tool on facebook.com one is able to target the advertisement on one, two or more countries. By filling in the Netherlands, Facebook tells me that 2.79.78.00 (17% of population) users are active on Facebook

at January 25th and will be able to see the add I may publish. In Australia there are 8.25.95.60 (37% of population) active users (Facebook, 2010).

2.5.2 MySpace

MySpace was founded in 2003 in America. In January 2008 MySpace had 110 million active users. Therefore it can be said that music is a language that travels well among youngsters (Boyd & Ellison, 2007, Boyd 2008). When bands began to gather on MySpace a lot of mid twenty and thirty year old fans signed up, hoping to gain special values or entrance to special gigs (Boyd, 2008). MySpace grew extensively. This can be addressed to the fact that in the US most of the venues where bands held their gigs only welcomed audiences of twenty-one years and up (Boyd & Ellison, 2007, Boyd, 2008). Therefore the younger fans had to find another way to enjoy the music and culture around their favorite band. Through MySpace most of the bands build a relationship with their public and fans felt closer and connected to the band (MySpace, 2010). Furthermore MySpace has proven to be a good medium for bands that want to gather a broader audience (Boyd, 2008, MySpace, 2010).

The site became known because of the connection it had with music, but more and more members invited friends less engaged with music (Boyd, 2008). The youngsters on the site liked the possibilities to create an online social network. Youngsters focus hereby on people they know from daily face-to-face life and celebrities (Boyd, 2008).

When MySpace redesigned their home page in 2008 the number of users declined increasingly, and Facebook took over the lead position of world biggest social networking site (Owyang, 2008). According to an article on Nu.nl 260.000 Dutch users where on MySpace in October 2008 (van Dijk, 2008). Twotops (2009) claims that in may 2009 2.1 million Australian users were active on Myspace.

2.5.3 Twitter

Twitter can be seen as a social network and a microblogging site, founded in 2007. Tweeps (twitter users) can read and sent text-based messages up to 140 characters. The messages sent are displayed on the profile page of the author and sometimes send to their followers (people who are subscribed on the messages of the author). There are some external services that provide the users with URL shortening and

hosting services to give users the opportunity to send pictures along with their messages. (Wikipedia, 2010a, Krishnamurthy, Gill & Arlitt, 2008)

Twitter came to existence during a brainstorm session at the company Odeo (Wikipedia, 2010a). They developed an SMS service that enables users to communicate with their friends. In the first half of 2007 Twitter became an independent company. (Wikipedia, 2010a)

In January 2010 Sysomos reported their research about Twitter users around the globe. In this study they explored 13 million active, unique Twitter accounts. In Australia there are 2,39% of the total of Twitter Users. Those are 310700 unique users in Australia. In the Netherlands there are 1,32% of the total Twitter users. These are 171600 unique users in the Netherlands (Sysomos, 2010).

2.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I argued that, the SST approach is used because of its focus on the social factors of social networking sites and their interaction between the available technologies as an explanation of the adoption of (new) technologies. Furthermore the uses and gratifications approach is used as a theoretical explanation for the motives of people to spend time on social networking sites. The focus of social networking sites shifted from (first) dating to a multi functional online platform where people are able to manage their social contacts, online image and be entertained. Social networks are also developing and changing as users add content and use them.

The next chapter explains which motives are measured within this research. And how these motives are connected to social networking sites (Debatin et al., 2009). Finally a short outline is given about the sites that are used for this research. In the next chapter the theoretical concepts that influence social networking sites are discussed.

3. Theory: the concepts in this research

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter the theoretical concepts that are of influence in the use social networking sites are discussed. These concepts are explained as used in this research. First of all the ideas of convergence, participation and interactivity are discussed. Furthermore communication, creativity, actual practices and entertainment and diversion are discussed. Finally a short conclusion is given.

3.2 Concepts

These concepts mentioned in the previous paragraphs are discussed because many theorists discuss these in very different ways and settings. To make sure we acknowledge the same definitions and meanings about these ideas this chapter is embedded in this thesis.

3.2.1 Convergence

With the emergence of the Internet more and more techniques and content are available online. Convergence is the merging and changing of relationships between media techniques, -shapes, -content and –audiences (Jenkins, 2004). Convergence described by Jenkins (2004) also happens within social media and the emergence of the Internet. Convergence is not only a technological shift (Jenkins, 2004). The relations between technologies, industries, markets, genres and public are changing nowadays. According to Cooke (2006) it is the technological convergence that has made new media possible, as convergence is not the finish line; it is an ongoing process (Jenkins, 2004). A good example of convergence is User Created Content, because the user is able to be a producer. These two roles merged together and cannot be seen as an individual role anymore (Jenkins, 2004, Cover, 2006). On social networking sites the users have multiple possibilities for content creation. This form of user interactivity can be seen as convergence because the audience and the media technologies are gathering (Jenkins, 2004). In the next paragraph the idea of participation and how it is applied in this research is discussed.

3.2.2 Participation

The Internet gives participation a boost (Bergman, Loumakis & Weber, 2003, Jenkins, 2006). On the Internet the possibilities of participation are endless, and the users are able to communicate fast and all around the globe. The participation possibilities on the Internet highlight the responsibilities of users, because they are in charge of the production of content on the Internet (Rice & Haythornthwaite, 2006). But the possibilities to participate are different for every user.

According to Rice and Haythornthwaite (2006) there are some problems with participation. Some people might not have access to the Internet or a computer. Witsche (2007) claims that the Internet might not be available for everyone, in technological or financial ways. There is some technological knowledge needed before someone is able to participate in the virtual world (Witsche, 2007: 24). Furthermore some third world countries do not have their ICT's developed so they cannot participate in the virtual world (Flew, 2008). Due to these differences not all groups are able to participate equally on the Internet and able to use it for information purposes. However this unequal level of participation is irrelevant for this research. In 2003 the Netherlands almost 90% of the Dutch households with kids between twelve and seventeen had a connected to the Internet (De Haan 2004 in; De Haan, van 't Hof and van Est, 2006). Research done by the Australian Bureau Statistics (2008) shows that in 2006 86% of the families with children have Internet access.

Research done by Livingstone and Haddon (2009) shows that 93% of the children between 6-17 years and 97% of the parents of these kids have access to the Internet. Duimel and de Haan (2007) show that Dutch youngsters create content. 33% has been editing pictures online and 8% has their own weblog (Duimel and de Haan, 2007). Bergman et al. (2003) found in their research a correlation between online and offline participation. Online participation is easy, all users are able to give their own opinion it is easy to access networks or build your own network (Bergman et al 2003). As participation and interactivity are often mixed up or discussed as the same thing, the following paragraph will discuss interactivity

3.2.3 Interactivity

Interactivity can be seen as a key item to compare 'old' mass media and 'new' networked media (Burnett and Marshall, 2003, Spurgeon, 2007). According to Flew (2008: 28) "interactivity is generally seen as a central feature of new media". Cover (2006) states that interactivity gives the users the possibility to co-create within the media text. The user participation has implications for the media text it has changed

(Cover, 2006). Interactivity can be seen as two-way communication according to McMillan (2006) where time and place do not have a big impact anymore. She distinguishes three forms of interactivity: *user-to-user, user-to-document and user-to-system* interactivity. Social interaction, so interactivity between users, can be seen as *user-to-user interactivity* (McMillan, 2006). New media, also social networking sites, bridge geographical distances. For instance on Facebook, commenting on each other's status updates or writing a comment on each other's walls can be done without people being in the same place. People around the globe can easily communicate with each other (McMillan, 2006).

User-to-document interactivity is the interactivity between users, documents and the creators of these documents. This interactivity rises in how users actively use media products or interpret these products. Appling this to SNS, it means that without their users, Facebook, Twitter and MySpace would not exist. When users create their own content this is also called *user-to-document-interaction* (McMillan, 2006). According to Chan (2006) this kind of interaction can be a way for users to satisfy their 'social interaction needs'.

User-to-system interactivity is interaction between the user and the computer. This is often a user that uses new media applications. Users can sometimes change something within the system so the system is able to fulfill their wishes. For instance open source software (McMillan, 2006).

Spurgeon (2007) offers a clear distinction between interactivity and participation. "*Where interactivity is a property of non-human actors, participation is a characteristic of human actors. Interactivity describes the technological possibilities of communication in closed systems, while participation denotes the will to communicate in cultural and social contexts*" (Spurgeon, 2007:7). Spurgeon (2007) suggests that the constraints among interactivity are caused by technology (Jenkins, 2006)

Cover (2006) argues that interactivity often is connected to a media technology, for instance the three forms of interactivity that are introduced by McMillan (2006). Cover (2006) states that interactivity is much broader than only technology. Interactivity can be seen as an ongoing process. The new media 'pushes' the users to interact at the same time the user is 'pulled' to interact because of their own will to participate (Cover, 2006). As mentioned before, interactivity changes the media text, and users can receive feedback on these changes (Cover, 2006). For instance friends often comment status updates on social networking sites or pictures are tagged or de-tagged. The user is a big part of this research and therefore this critical view on the previous descriptions of interactivity is important.

While interacting with the media text, people can be creative, therefore the idea of creativity is discussed in the following paragraph (Cover, 2006).

3.2.4 Communication

Social Networking Sites can be seen as a form of computer-mediated-communication (CMC) (Wood and Smith, 2001). Wood and Smith (2001: 4) define computer-mediated-communication as 'the study of how human behaviors are maintained or altered by exchange of information through machines'. With computer-mediated-communication they mean messages that are send and received through technology. This is the way communication works on Social Networking Sites. The users send messages, pictures and videos to each other by using different technologies. These technologies are; the Internet, computer and mobile phones (Wood and Smith, 2001).

Antheunis, Valkenburg and Peter (2009) claim that computer-mediated-communication has different characteristics that stimulate interpersonal charm and the shaping of relations (also para-social). According to Antheunis, Valkenburg and Peter (2009) there are two forms of computer-mediated-communication, text-only and visual computer-mediated-communication. Text-only CMC strengthens the interpersonal power of attraction (Antheunis, Valkenburg and Peter 2009). Furthermore it strengthens the quality of the information and interpersonal attractiveness that is shared trough CMC increases (Antheunis, Valkenburg and Peter 2009). According to Baym (2006) there are different forms of Computer-mediated-Communication, *asynchronous* and *synchronous.* Synchronous CMC is communicating on multi-user channels with for instance chat or instant messaging (Baym, 2006). With these services the user is able to participate in multiple conversations at once. Synchronous CMC is applicable on SNS. For instance on Twitter people can have multiple conversations at once while using the @ sign. Moreover on Social Networking Sites multiple people are able to read the tweets, comments and status updates.

When writing about communication in this thesis the focus is on communication between two (or more) persons on social networking sites. The main aim with this communication is the exchange of information and building a (para-) social relationship. Communication does not necessarily fulfill the users' needs for entertainment. In this research it is important to acknowledge that social networking sites represent CMC. Because people will communicate with each other on social

23

networking sites and therefore rely on different technologies (Wood & Smith, 2001). Therefore one could say that social networking sites are communication media.

3.2.5 Creativity

Web 2.0 allows their users to produce and distribute creativity; they are able to share their creative work with a wide community of different people (Flew, 2008). According to Leadbeater (2007) the 21-century will be based on mass creativity. He and Benkler (2006) agree on the idea that modern capitalism is based on systems of social production. These systems will modify historical lines of demarcation between commercial production, public sector provision and the non-profit sector. Leadbeater and Miller (2004) introduce the term Pro-Ams. With this term Pro-Ams they define a "*group amateurs that are innovative and committed, working/producing to professional standards*" (Leadbeater and Miller, 2004:9). But what is Creativity? It arises from the "*free, wakeful play of the imagination*" (Negus & Pickering, 2004:7). When sticking to this definition, creativity has the following characteristics according to Flew (2008):

> *it views creative people as 'special' people; it closely links creativity to the arts and not to the business, science or technology; the creative process is understood as being essentially spontaneous; and it has the implicit assumption that creativity cannot be formally taught, since it is a 'gift' that some have and others don't (Flew, 2008:117).*

Robinson (2001:11) defines creativity as '*imaginative processes with outcomes that are original and of value'.* Besides the five characteristics of Flew (2008), creativity needs to contain value in the end. These benefits will only arise when a big group of Internet users will share their creative productions and collaborates on previous work.

When people are creative online, they often create new content. Also known as User Created Content. The rise of web 2.0 invites the user to produce a lot of content in an easy way. Therefore the Internet user can be seen as a pro-user. The users are both producer and user, sometimes simultaneously (Flew, 2008). The next paragraph will describe User Created Content in more detail.

3.2.6 UCC

The OECD (2007:4) defines User Created Content [1] (UCC) as "*content made publicly available over the Internet, which reflects a certain amount of creative effort and which is created outside of professional routines and practices*". This definition is applicable on blogs, video sites and to some extend to social networking sites. Daugherty, Eastin and Bright (2008:16) define User Created Content (UCC) as "*media content created or produced by the general public rather than paid professionals and primarily distributed on the Internet*". According to Flew (2008:36) "*user-created content refers specifically to the ways in which users as both remediators and direct producers of new media content engage in new forms of large-scale participation in digital media spaces*". Social networking sites often use applications that focus on user participation, interactivity and networking. When members of these networks use these applications they can increase their participation level.

Since the existence of the Internet some forms of UCC have been present. The first forms were the html personal web pages. Since the rise of Web 2.0 more possibilities arose and it became much easier to produce or alter your own or any other content available online. Furthermore the role of the user is changed on the Internet they switch constantly between the role of a creator, producing UCC, and the role of spectator, viewing the content of others (Livingstone, 2004). Livingstone (2004) claims that according to these different roles between users "*that mediated communication is no longer simply or even mainly mass communication ('from one to many') but rather the media now facilitate communication among peers (both 'one to one' and 'many to many')* (Livingstone, 2004:3)". The role of the audience, in this research they are called users, is also changed; they can co-produce within the media texts stored on the Internet. According to Bober, Helsper and Livingstone (2005) youngsters use SNS mainly to communicate. Furthermore one might think that these networks enhance their participation levels. The content created on web 2.0 or social networking sites involves creativity otherwise it is hard to create content. Earlier researches have shown gender differences in the motives for content creation and Internet usage (OECD, 2007, Boyd, 2008). It is necessary to discuss these differences. This will be done in the next paragraph.

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[1] User Created Content and User Generated Content are two definitions for the same user action, the production of content. Throughout this research the term User Created Content is used.

3.2.7 Actual practices of use

The research in this thesis will also focus on gender differences. Earlier research showed that the motives for Internet usage and the motives for production are gender sensitive (Weiser, 2000, Jenkins 2006, OECD, 2007, Boyd 2008)

Weiser (2000) has found that the main drive behind the usage of the Internet is gender sensitive. A research conducted with 1190 respondents in the United States of America showed that females use the Internet mainly for interpersonal communications (Weiser, 2000). These are services such as email and chat (and maybe nowadays social searching/social networking). Men used the Internet mostly for entertainment en leisure purposes (Weiser, 2000).

Research by Valkenburg and Peter (2007) showed that there is no gender difference among Dutch adolescents while communicating online. A group of 794 respondents was gathered and they filled in a questionnaire. In this particular research on social networking sites one might expect to find some gender differences as the research of Valkenburg and Peter (2007) was focused on instant messenger services (IM) such as MSN messenger.

While focusing on content production Boyd (2008) has found that "*race and social class play a little role in terms of access beyond the aforementioned disenfranchised population*" (Boyd, 2008; 3). Race has no influence on their ability to join but influences what the users do when they are online. According to Boyd (2008) social networking sites have a bigger participatory divide then access divide. Furthermore gender has also influence on the participation on social networking sites. Boyd (2008) claims that young boys are more active and participate on a higher level than young girls (46% VS 44%). On the other side it is logical for older girls to be active than for older boys (70% VS 57%). The older boys can use social networking sites to flirt and meet new people. Whereas older girls use social networking sites to communicate with people they already know (Boyd, 2008). The research of Boyd (2008) shows clear gender differences in the use of social networking sites.

Van Zoonen (2002) researched how gender influenced Internet communication. In the last couple of years women have become more and more active on the Internet. Furthermore Jenkins et al. (2006) have shown that nevertheless the accessibility using the Internet is still influenced by gender. While gender is not part of the research question, some attention is addressed to the gender differences as previous research shows that there might be some differences based on gender.

3.2.8 Entertainment & Diversion

According to Vorderer (2001) entertainment experiences are often described as pleasant and joyful. The experiences emerge from people's desire to have a good time (Vorderer, 2001). The process of being entertained may be different for different users. In the end people may have the same 'pleasant', 'joyful' experience and therefore a good time. Vorderer (2001) and Klimmt et al. (2004) describe the experience of entertainment as an experience that may come to existence while consuming media products. (Vorderer, 2001, Klimmt et al., 2004). Entertainment is described as one of the gratifications that are fulfilled by media use (Weiser, 2000, Dunne et al. 2010, Dyer, 2002). As this research focuses on social networking sites that might fulfill users' need for entertainment this is applicable for this research.

Entertainment can be seen as something that can be retrieved trough the senses and is therefore not touchable. Within this research entertainment is seen a personal experience that might be different for different people. Nevertheless one can say that the entertainment experience is often described as pleasant and joyful, this is some kind of the same for everyone (Klimmt et al., 2004; Vorderer, 2001).

There are different motivations for media users to try and consume entertainment. One of the first motivations is that entertainment gives the users a form of pleasure and helps them to cope with everyday life. (Klimmt et al., 2004, Vorderer, 2001, Dyer, 2002). In these social networking sites might be used to putt off the serious things that need to be done and these serious things are temporarily forgotten while consuming entertainment (Dyer, 2002, Klimmt et al., 2004, Vorderer, 2001). Bosshart claims (in Vorderer, 2001) that some users consume entertainment to fulfill their gratifications or needs. This research utilizes the conceptualization of entertainment as given in previous research and therefore this motive is called Diversion and Entertainment (Debatin et al, 2009, Charney & Greenberg, 2001, LaRose, Mastro, & Eastin 2001). It enables the user to experience entertainment and to be distracted from everyday life (Vorderer 2001, LaRose et al., 2001).

Diversion and entertainment as described above contains all items that are important for this thesis. From this description and other literature mentioned in the theoretical framework, gratifications tested in this research are set. The gratification entertainment and diversion is researched in the online survey in order to find out to what extend it is fulfilled by the use of social networking sites. Social networking sites are also used for communication instead as a form of entertainment. Because communication is included in this research the next paragraph will include a description of communication as it is used in this research.

3.3 Conclusion

In this chapter ideas that influenced social networking sites were discussed. All ideas discussed are somehow connected with this research. It is important to state a clear definition about what is meant with these ideas. Convergence can be seen as the merging of different media -techniques, -audiences, -shapes and -content (Jenkins, 2006). Participation and interactivity are often mixed up. But participations is one's possibility to contribute and interactivity is how one has contributed (McMillan, 2006). Furthermore the ideas of creativity and User Created Content are discussed. Participating and being interactive with the media text may ask for some creativity (Flew, 2008). This may result in new user created content (OECD, 2007). And finally, earlier researches have shown that gender differences arise while researching motives for content production of Internet usage (Boyd, 2008, OECD, 2007).

4. Method

This research is done to investigate the users' motives for content production for the three social networking sites, Facebook, MySpace and Twitter. This chapter contains more information on the methods used in this research. Firstly, the research question is repeated. Secondly, the chosen research methods are discussed; content analysis, interviews with users and online user surveys. Information about the participants, data collection and research period is also given. Finally an explanation is given about the results and how these will be analyzed.

4.1 Introduction

This thesis is written to get a better insight in the user motives to create and not to create content on social networking sites and the differences between the Netherlands and Australia. The following research question is developed and will be answered in this thesis: "*In which way do the user motives of Dutch and Australian youngsters in creating and not creating content differ on the international social networking sites Facebook, MySpace and Twitter?*"

In order to answer this question three forms of research will be conducted. First of all six explorative face-to-face interviews with users and non-users of the three social networking sites are conducted. These interviews are used as a guideline for the development of the survey questions. Secondly the Constant Comparative Method, based on the grounded theory of Glaser and Strauss, is conducted. This procedure is used as content analysis. Finally an online survey is conducted among users and non-users of the three sites in the Netherlands and Australia.

4.2 Interviews

Explorative qualitative (online) interviews are conducted with users and non-users of the three social networking sites. Wester, Rencksdorf & Scheepers (2006) state that interviews are a good method when researchers want to find out how people use media and which differences occur between the users. This is extremely relevant for this research as different social networking sites are compared in two different countries. This method is often used as main target describing and exploration of for instance proceeding patterns or perspectives. Through these interviews more details can be obtained so the user motives to use and to not use these sites become clearer. This knowledge is used to set up the third research method, online surveys. As the comparison between Australia and the Netherlands with the focus on social

networking sites is not common, therefore explorative interviews are useful. For this research it is important to be sure all three social networking sites are popular in both countries. First of all these interviews reveal how the participants can be reached and asked to participate in this research. Secondly these interviews are a good guideline while setting up the questions for the online survey.

The participants in these interviews were selected by age, usage or non-usage of social networking sites and gender. A total of six explorative interviews are conducted with two (male and female) Australian users and four (two male and two female) Dutch users. The participants responded on an email sent to all my contacts in the Netherlands and Australia. The results of the interviews are analyzed with the CCM of Boeije (2002). This is an inductive method where all interviews are compared with each other on several key points that are listed in appendix A (Boeije, 2002). For the analysis of these interviews the first two steps of the CCM are used (Boeije, 2002). Step 1; Labelling of the interviews, creating categories (Boeije, 2002). The important notices found in the interviews were labeled with 'social', 'identity' and 'entertainment' so they could be connected to the motives researched in the online survey, the labels used in the site analysis and found in the theory. Secondly step 2; comparison between interviews (Boeije, 2002). The important notions found in the interviews were the main motives for these respondents to use or not use social networking sites. In this way the interviews were an explorative method to gather some extra information before setting up the online survey.

4.3 Analyzing the websites

The three websites, Facebook, MySpace and Twitter are analyzed through the Constant Comparative Method (CCM) and the step-by-step approach suggested by Boeije (2002). The CCM is a qualitative research method based on the grounded theory by Glaser and Strauss (Boeije, 2002, Ten Have, 2010). The main principle in this method is comparing different data on the same 'level' with each other. Sites are compared with each other and features of one website is compared with a feature from another website. (Boeije, 2002). Boeije (2002) designed a clear overview of the different steps that form guideline how to use this method. Based on the step-by-step analysis procedure as proposed by Boeije (2002) the three websites are compared. Step 1; Labeling of the site, creating categories. The characteristic of this first step of the research is the process of open coding. Every feature of the websites Facebook, MySpace and Twitter is separately studied to determine what purpose it has and what the user is able to do with it (Boeije, 2002). Eventually all features are

labeled for comparison later on in this analysis (Boeije, 2002). The labels used are; 'social', 'identity' and 'entertainment' so they could be matched to the motives researched in the online survey and found in the theory. The aim of this first step is to create categories as an attempt to interpret the sites (Boeije, 2002). Based on the guideline of Boeije (2002) the question; 'what characteristics do the different parts with the same label have in common' is asked to simplify the labeling. All three sites have a feature that connects people with each other, weather it is called 'followers' on Twitter or 'friends' on Facebook and MySpace. The characteristics of this feature are the same. This analysis results in a systematic summary of the features on each website and a list of labels that are used.

Secondly step 2; comparison between sites. As all three sites are social networking sites they belong to the same 'genre'. According to Boeije (2002) research items that belong to the same 'group' can be compared to each other. The parts of the sites that are labeled with the same code will be compared. Furthermore the comparison can be tied to theoretical ideas such as the uses and gratifications approach presented in the theoretical framework (Ruggiero, 2000). The aim of this step is to discover combinations of labels and codes. Based on the guideline of Boeije (2002) the question; 'what are the similarities and differences between the sites Facebook, MySpace and Twitter?' is asked. This question simplifies the comparison process.

The comparisons are based on four criteria, *"(1) the data or material involved and the overall analysis activities; (2) the aim; (3) the questions asked and (4) the results"* (Boeije, 2002; 395). All steps proposed by Boeije (2002) and criteria's are visualized in the overview in appendix A. In this comparison method the steps of Boeije (2002) are adjusted to be applicable to this research. According to Boeije (2002) the number of steps correlates to the kind of material that is researched.

4.4 Online Survey
The knowledge on user motives obtained through the explorative interviews is used to compose the survey questions. As last research method an online questionnaire is administered. According to Baarda, de Goede & Kalmijn (2007) a questionnaire is a good way to collect opinions, feelings and attitudes. This research is based on the uses and gratifications theory and therefore it is important to distinguish the different motives for using or not using social networking sites in Australia and the Netherlands (Ruggiero, 2000). A questionnaire is a list with questions; most of the questions have standard answers. It is a systematic way to record answers and it makes it possible to process the information statistically (Baarda et al., 2007). This

research is about the user attitude and online behavior with respect to online content production. Wester et al. (2006) elaborate that a survey or questionnaire is a good method to research the correlation between characteristics, attitudes and behaviors. Furthermore they state that questionnaires are suitable for behavior that is not observable (Wester et al., 2006). While the participants visit the social networking sites at home their behavior is not perceivable, therefore it is important to gather this information with a survey. These questionnaires were distributed online. Moreover while researching two geographical distant groups Internet offers the possibility to cover this distance and conduct the survey among Dutch and Australian respondents at the same time (Wright, 2006). This saves time and helps the researcher to reach more respondents than would be possible through for instance paper or face-to-face interviews (Wright, 2006). Therefore a good and clear constructed questionnaire is needed, because the respondents have no chance for further explanation of their answer (Wester et al., 2006).

A possible disadvantage of online surveys is that the sample is self-selected (Wright, 20096). The survey was send to a large group and the email asked them to forward the URL to their friends, also known as snowballing. The receivers were able to decide if they wanted to participate. A second possible disadvantage is that an online survey may cause uncertainty about who actually answered the questions (Ritter, Lorig, Laurent, Matthews, 2004, Wright, 2006). This can be resolved by face-to-face interviews or focus groups (Wester et al 2006). This was not possible as the research population were located far apart from each other. Finally looking at all the advantages and disadvantages, the advantages of an online survey outweighed the disadvantages (Ritter et al., 2004, Wright, 2006). An example of the online survey can be found in appendix C.

The Likert Scale mentioned by Wester et al. (2006) is used in this survey to get a better insight in the user motives of the respondents. A five point Likert scale is used, the respondents are able to define their agreement or disagreement based on several statements (1; strongly disagree, 2; disagree, 3; neither agree nor disagree, 4; agree, 5; strongly agree) as Likert scales are useful to measure peoples agreement on statements and increase reliability (Gliem and Gliem, 2003)

The online survey starts with a couple of social demographic questions. These questions were about age, gender, nationality and place of living. These questions will provide the research with valuable information about the nationality of the respondent. Based on nationality the respondents were split in two groups.

The second part of the survey contained a routing, the first question determined the route the respondent would follow in the survey. The respondent gets

the question whether he or she has an account on either Facebook, MySpace or Twitter. If they answer yes they get a set of eleven and secondly seventeen scaled statements for each social network, the Likert items. On a scale of five points the respondents could express their agreement or disagreement. These statements are aimed on the different motivations the respondent had for using and creating content on the three social networking sites. If the respondents did not have an account on these sites they got a selection of ten scaled statements that aim on the motives they have for not using these sites. All sections are finished with an open ended question asking for any other reasons for using or for not using these sites. If the respondent has no account on the site there is a final question if they would create a profile on these sites in the future. The motives and gratifications measured in this survey are based on the literature discussed in the theoretical framework. The statements presented in the survey are based on literature and previously conducted surveys by other researchers. The survey was pre-tested on five respondents (not used in analysis). Among the testers were three respondents with an account on all sites and two respondents without an account on all three sites. After the test some statements were adjusted. The next paragraphs will shortly present the different motivations and how the data is analyzed using SPSS.

4.4.1 Diversion and Entertainment

This motivation contains items, concerning 'passing time', 'excitement' and 'relaxation' (Papacharissi and Rubin, 2000; Parker & Plank, 2001; Vorderer, 2001; Klimmt et al, 2004; Debatin et al. 2009). These statements have a focus on the experience of entertainment (Vorderer, 2001) and possibility to put off things that should be done (Debatin,et al, 2009). Because of the closely related items this motivation and related scale in the survey is labeled as 'Diversion & Entertainment' (Debatin et al, 2009).

4.4.2 No account; 'Diversion & Entertainment'

The respondents that gave their opinions on the statements belonging to this motivation did not have an account on either Facebook, MySpace or Twitter. All items are focused on the motivation the respondents had for not using social networking sites. The respondents were able to present their opinion towards the statements on a five point Likert scale (1; strongly disagree, 2; disagree, 3; neither agree nor disagree, 4; agree, 5; strongly agree). The items represented the reasons why the respondents do not experience a gratification of their needs in 'Diversion & Entertainment' when they use one of these sites. All statements are reasons or

things that could stand in their way while using social networking sites and therefore they are not as motivated as the respondents that have an account. These statements prevent the respondents of their entertainment experience.

4.4.3 'Need for (para-) social relationships'

The statements for this motivation consider the social elements of 'keeping in touch' with another person through these sites. (Joinson, 2008). The statements focus on maintaining current friendships and re-connecting with old friends or finding new friends. Furthermore the statements relate to this gratification and the social aspect as a combination of the focus on existing friendships and building up new friendships. The statements and motivations are labeled more general to fit in all these elements as; need for (para-) social relationships' (Debatin et al, 2009).

4.4.4 No account; 'Need for (para-) social relationships'

The respondents that reported not having an account on the three social networking sites gave their opinion on the statements listed for this motivation. They expressed their opinion towards two different statements connected to the motivation, need for (para-) social relationships'. The statements were possible reasons that could de-motivate the respondent to use social networking sites.

4.4.5 'Identity construction/Self expression'

The statements for this motivation focus on user activities that help them create an online identity. Activities such as status updates, uploading photos (pictures) and creating groups (Joinson, 2008) enable users to build up their online identity and think about how they express themselves online (Boyd, 2008). For instance if they are focused on building professional relationships they will represent themselves often differently as if they were searching for a new friend or being updated with the latest gossips (Joinson, 2008).

4.4.6 No account; 'Identity construction/Self expression'

The statements measured for this motivation are possible reasons for respondents not to use these social networking sites. The respondents expressed their opinion on three different statements for this specific motivation. These reasons demotivate them to use social networking sites. The following paragraphs will discuss the SPSS analysis used in this research.

4.4.7 SPSS Analysis

After collecting the data the statements were subjected to a scale analysis. Each motive was represented by several statements presented in the survey. These were measured as scores on the 7-point Likert scales. On the other side the respondents' motivations to consciously not use social networking sites were collected. Cronbach's Alpha was used to test whether there are any inconsistencies within the statements belonging to one scale. Cronbach's Alpha gives an indication of the reliability of the scale. By using Cronbach's Alpha the scale is checked on reliability. To make sure the analysis is valid the Corrected Item-Total Correlation should be $>$ 0.5 and the reliability is measured by Cronbach's Alpha and should be $>$ 0.65. The scale analysis is conducted per motivation. If the statements formed a reliable scale a new variable was created in SPSS. This variable represented the motive measured on that scale. This variable was used to analyze the differences between the sites and the countries. The following paragraph will discuss the target group for the online survey.

4.4.8 Participants

Several researches (Prensky 2001, Duimel & de Haan, 2007, Boyd, 2008, Lenhart 2009, Livingstone & Haddon, 2009) show that youngsters are the most active on the Internet. They are active users of social networking sites.

When looking at the early adopters of web 2.0 services Tancer (2009) points out that for instance on Youtube in the spring of 2007 the biggest group of uploaders is 45-55-year old (Tancer, 2009). This conflicts with the theory of for instance Prensky (2001). According to Lenhart (2009) 75% of the adults between 18-24 have an account on social networking sites and 57% of the adults between 23-34 have an account. The youth adults and adolescents are the biggest user group and therefore interesting to research. This group is mixed of both male and female users living in Australia and the Netherlands. Within this research the term youngsters indicates this group. Lenhart (2009) found out that youngsters between 16-30 years old gave a high respondence and are extremely active on social networking sites. These youngsters are mainly high school and university students, this scene is known for their activeness on social networking sites (Boyd, 2008, Lenhart, 2007). Within this research the focus lies on the group digital natives and therefore the user group between 16-30 years.

5. Results

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter the results of this research are presented. The aim is to find out if there are different user motives for using and creating content online on Facebook, MySpace and Twitter between the three sites, Netherlands and Australia. The results of the Constance Comparative Method and online survey are presented in this chapter.

5.2 Results of the content analysis

The first part of this research is the content analysis. For this analysis the CMM and the step-by-step approach suggested by Boeije (2002) is used. The results for the two steps are presented in the next paragraphs.

5.2.1 Step 1; Comparison within a site.

The three sites are analyzed with respect to their features when logged in as a user. These features/site characteristics are labeled with three different labels: Entertainment, Identity and Social. These labels are based on the gratifications and motivations that are presented in the theory chapter and are also used in the statistical research. These motivations are; 'Entertainment & Diversion', 'need for (para-) social relationships' and 'identity construction/self expression' (Nyland, et al.,, 2007; Raacke and Bonds-Raacke, 2008; Debatin et al., 2009; Shao, 2009; Dunne, et al., 2010). After labeling all separate features on the site, the items within one site that are labeled the same are compared with each other, in order to find differences or similarities. The labels used are connected to the motivations researched in the online survey.

5.2.1.1 Social

For Facebook twelve features are labeled social: friend requests, messages, notifications, news feed, friends, links, comments, search, birthdays, people you may know, get connected and Facebook chat. These items are connected to each other and therefore labeled the same because all features have something to do with the social aspect of the network (Joinson, 2007). For instance the feature 'people you may know'. This attracts the attention to the other users of the network. Other friends, one can connect with them and therefore it is labeled as social. This is the same with the birthday notifications and the chat feature of Facebook. They all help the user to get connected and become 'social'. The messages on Facebook are sent

privately, but enable the user to have direct contact with one of their friends. And finally links are social because they enable the user to share their favorite websites with their friends. The other items for this label are: friend requests, notifications, news feed, comments, search and get connected.

On Myspace eight features are labeled as social. Among these features are chat, search (for friends or groups) and comments. These features enable the user of MySpace to have a social experience on the site. The user feels connected with his or her friends on MySpace. The other items labeled with social are friends, people you may know, stream/news feed, announcements and messages.

On Twitter eleven features are labeled social. For instance the '@' function. With this function people can react directly on each others' tweets or direct public messages to each other. Another example is the 'news feeds' were the user receives all general tweets from other users. If there are constantly new tweets appearing one can feel surrounded by friends'. Other items for Twitter that are labeled with social are: Direct Messages, ReTweets, trending topics, worldwide, following/followers and '#' function (grouping tweets subject based). An overview of the labels and items is listed in appendix 2. In the next step the items with the same labels are compared with each other, in order to find similarities or differences between the items.

5.2.1.2 Identity

The label for Identity is frequently used when analyzing the three sites. For Facebook six items are labeled with identity. These items are: profile picture, photos, status updates, groups, links and notes. With these features Facebook users can create their online identity. They can pick their best picture as a profile picture to show their friends who they are. With notes they can 'blog' on certain items of their interests. Furthermore the photos on a Facebook profile tell a lot about the user.

On MySpace the profile picture is also labeled with identity alongside with six other items, videos, pictures, page themes, groups, blogs and status updates. If an artist uses MySpace for promotion the video's and status updates on his or her profile might be about gigs or new songs. Furthermore the theme of a MySpace profile contributes also to the users identity. Identity is also used to label some Twitter features. Among these four items are status updates/tweets, profile pic (and bio), favorites and lists. These features help the user to form its online identity. If the user uses Twitter for professional relations he or she will tweet about serious ideas or article's found on the Internet.

5.2.1.3 Entertainment

The label Entertainment is used twice while labeling for Facebook. The features labeled as entertainment are games and events. These features let the users experience entertainment right on the spot or later on during the event. On MySpace also two features are labeled as entertainment. These are my applications and events. The applications that users can add to their profile are entertaining. And the events let the user experience entertainment during for instance a music concert or a party. Twitter has no features labeled as entertainment.

5.2.2 Step 2; Comparison between sites

As all three sites are social networking sites they belong to the same 'genre' they can be compared to each other (Boeije, 2002). The parts of the sites that are labeled with the same code will be compared. Furthermore the comparison can be tied to the theoretical ideas such as the uses and gratifications approach presented in the theoretical framework. The aim of this step is to discover combinations and differences and similarities between items with the same labels.

5.2.2.1 Social

The label *'social'* is used for all the features that enable the user to maintain social relationships on these sites. These features are for instance news feed or birthday notifications. All features that help the user to maintain or obtain new social relationships are labeled with social. All sites have in common that they have some kind of function for status updates.

Several items are labeled with '*social'*. Firstly all three sites mention in a kind of similar way on the user's homepage the number of friend one has. At Twitter these are called followers. Facebook and MySpace offer a chat, an instant messaging service. All three sites have a 'newsfeed' on the user's homepage (the page that appears after logging in), here are the latest activities of their friends on that particular social network shown. On MySpace this is called 'stream'. There are no differences between the three sites considering the news feed. Furthermore all three sites have incorporated a kind of similar (private) message function. On Twitter this feature is called direct messages. Another similarity between all three sites is the item 'people you may know or 'who to follow'. This item suggests new friends to the user, these suggested friends may have (multiple) shared connections with the user. All three sites have incorporated a search option. With this option the users are able to search for other friends or subjects they might be interested in. Regarding the

search item there are no differences between the three sites. The final item all three sites have in common is the possibility to comment on friends' status updates. On Twitter this is done with the '@' function. Sending a tweet starting with '@' and directly followed by the persons username enables the user to send a tweet directly to another user. These Tweets are, just as the comments on Facebook and MySpace public. Therefore they can be read by anyone with access to your or your friends' profile. Those are messages send from user to user that cannot be read by anyone else on the social network. On Facebook and MySpace the users are able to check whether his or her friends are online and send instant messages to each other. Twitter does not incorporate such a service. Similar to each other the three sites have an announcement item. This item gives the user a warning if there are new tweets, comments or friend requests. Twitter only warns for new tweets, new followers are announced by email. As Facebook and MySpace besides comments and messages also warn for new friend requests on their home page. Therefore they are more social than Twitter. Facebook has a visible birthday reminder on the users homepage whereas Twitter and MySpace do not have this feature incorporated. Twitter and Facebook have a quite similar function of links on their basis page. On Twitter these are called favorites. Tweeps are able to bookmark their favorite Tweeps. As Facebook has a 'normal' link item, were the user can add links to external sites. Twitter is therefore more social as its link item is focused on other Twitter users.

To summarize, all sites have a lot of items in common and the items they have in common do not differ that much. The different items they have may increase their fulfillment of the social gratification or increase the motivation of the user to use a certain site. For instance Facebook has an extended notification item to update the users whenever they are online about all the activity of their friends. For instance the birthday reminder service on this site may give the best fulfillment compared to the other two sites. MySpace may give the second best fulfillment of this gratification.

The user motivation for Twitter is not completely socially motivated. While Twitter has social features to a certain extent but not as many as Facebook. Twitter only shows tweets on its news feed and not all other activities of a user's friend. Furthermore it has no direct announcements for new followers and birthday reminders

While using social networking sites users create an online identity, they create a profile and put on their best holiday photo or business photo. The features on the three sites that have this motivation in common are labeled with identity. Furthermore users update their status to let their friends know how much knowledge they have of certain business area's or join groups as 'I like dance music' to show who they are or want to be. Most social networking sites give users the ability to post blogs to claim attention from their friends on their thoughts or ideas.

For all three sites several items were labeled with identity. First of all the similarities are analyzed. All three sites provide the user with a possibility to upload a profile picture. Facebook offers the most options regarding the profile picture, besides the standard tagging (Twitter hasn't got a tag function) and the ability to add a description. Facebook gives the user the opportunity to crop the picture. The second item that is labeled with identity is the option to upload photos. For Twitter users tweeting pictures is only possible when they have a separate account with sites like twitpic or yfrog. The user is able to connect its Twitter account to these services and upload (mobile) pictures. This is not incorporated in the basic profile; that is what is analyzed in this comparative research. Facebook and MySpace both have photo pages connected to the profiles were the user is able to create albums and add comments to the pictures. MySpace offers besides simple albums the possibility to make other online picture items such as a photo cube and calendar. When looking at uploading pictures to ones profile MySpace offers the most options to modify and rearrange pictures.

Furthermore video's can be tweeted but with use of external websites or shortening url's. Therefore Twitter is, for this item, not compared with Facebook and MySpace. Groups are an item that is available on all three sites. On Twitter groups are called 'lists'. On Facebook and MySpace this feature is called groups. Users are able to create their own group or become member of pre-existing groups. The three sites are equal on this item. When comparing the item status updates, one can conclude that all three sites provide the users with a prominent way to update their status and send tweets. As Facebook and MySpace have incorporate features that enable the users to include photos, videos and symbols/emoticons. Twitter only incorporates the ability to sent links (also possible on Facebook and MySpace). The ability to add a certain theme to ones profile is possible on Twitter and MySpace. Facebook does not incorporate this standard. With an external application it is possible to create a background for a Facebook profile. Twitter and MySpace both cover a couple of standard themes and give the users the possibility to create their

own theme or background. Facebook and MySpace both offer a possibility to blog. As Twitter is a microblogging site, the status updates are in this research also considered as blogs. The last item that is labeled with identity is the item links. All three sites provide their users with a possibility to post links. Only on Twitter these links to other profiles are called favorites and all other links to general websites are posted in the tweets.

To summarize most of the items compared between the three sites are equal. There are some exceptions. Facebook offers more options while uploading profile pictures and the best possibility to store links on the users profile. Whereas Twitter and MySpace are equal considered the possibilities to add themes and backgrounds. Facebook and MySpace are equal considered the status updates as they both provide the user with opportunities to add photos, videos, links etc. Twitter offers the best opportunity to blog. This is the original incentive of the site, it is common sense for Tweeps to tell their story in just 140 characters. In the end Facebook offers the best fulfillment of the gratification 'need for (para-) social relationships, secondly Twitter and finally MySpace.

5.2.2.3 Entertainment

The label entertainment is used for features such as games and events. Because these features most of all let the user experience entertainment. The games let the user experience entertainment right away. Events are often in the future such as parties, but in the end the user might be attending the events to have a good time and experience entertainment. This experience is the thing all features labeled with entertainment have in common.

The sites Facebook and MySpace together have four items labeled with entertainment. Twitter has no items that are labeled with entertainment. For Facebook and MySpace the items labeled with entertainment are: applications and events. On Facebook the applications can be games, quizzes or lifestyle applications (travel map etc.). On MySpace the applications are also games, quizzes and graphics to edit one's profile. For both sites the aim for the item applications is the same, increasing the entertainment experience of the users. Instead of a 'plain' profile users can add additional applications of their choice. For the item events Facebook and MySpace are also nearly the same. Both sites enable the users to create and invite friends to events. Once invited to an event the users are able to rsvp. MySpace has two additional features, the users are able to search for tickets for music concerts. Secondly the users are able to view all upcoming events on a

calendar as Facebook the events only rank-ordered them by date in some kind of list. Thus for the preparation and the entertainment feeling that users experience by searching for events and tickets MySpace has the most options.

To summarize the comparison made based on entertainment one can expect that Facebook and MySpace both fulfill the entertainment gratification to a certain extent. Twitter does not have got any items labeled with entertainment. Therefore the use of Twitter is the least fulfilling for the gratification Diversion and Entertainment.

5.3 Summary of the content analysis results

To summarize the results of the CCM all labeled items on the sites are compared with each other. For the label 'entertainment' Facebook is the strongest connected to the motivation 'Diversion and Entertainment. Users that are searching for these gratifications will, according to this analysis, browse on Facebook to fulfill their needs. Facebook offers more entertainment as they provide a bigger range of external applications. Moreover it offers the user the ability of creating their own applications. The second site is MySpace that also has a wide range of external applications. For Twitter no items are labeled with 'entertainment' according to this analysis it offers the least fulfillment of this gratification. Therefore the users will not be highly motivated to use Twitter if they need 'Diversion and Entertainment' (when they are in the possibility to use the other two sites). Comparing all items labeled with 'social' there are a lot of different features and user possibilities to compare. Facebook offers the biggest possible fulfillment for the gratification 'need for (para-) social relationships'. Twitter is the second best social networking site to fulfill this gratification followed by MySpace. Based on the feature comparison for the items labeled with identity Facebook is the best site to fulfill needs for 'identity construction/self expression'. Facebook users are motivated to create and maintain their online identity. This could be expected as Facebook has the most possibilities for editing the profile picture. Moreover Facebook and MySpace offer a lot of possibilities for users to update their status with additional such as links and photos. Myspace is the second best in fulfilling this gratification and followed by Twitter.

All three sites offer different possibilities for content creation and they all incorporate different features. Therefore it is not possible in this research to reveal the different motivations for content creation. Moreover every site fulfills different gratifications and has therefore different motivations for use.

5.4 Online survey

The second part of the research is an online survey. This survey was online between June 8th, 2010 and June 28th, 2010. During this period the URL of the survey is posted on several forums, sent to university email lists, tweeted, friends, family and forwarded to many others.

5.5 Participants

A total of (N) 467 people filled in the survey. When filtering out all respondents that were too young or too old (younger than 16 and older than 30). Respondents that missed a lot of questions or filled in the survey multiple times, 387 respondents formed the final population. Exactly 254 Dutch and 133 Australian people completed the survey. The ages of the respondents differed between 16 and 30 years with a mean age of 24 (SD = 4.1) years. Most people (63) who filled in the survey were 30 years of age, 16.3% of the total. 11.4% of the respondents were 24.12.7% of the respondents were 23. Only 12 persons that were 17 years filled in the survey, 3.1%. When focusing on gender, 28% of the respondents were male and 72% of the respondents were female. In the group of Dutch 72.4% of the respondents were female and in the Australian group 70% of the respondents were female and 39 male respondents.

5.5.1 Facebook

From all the respondents 325 (97%) people have a Facebook account. From the total 254 Dutch people, 79% (201) has a Facebook account. And of the 133 Australian respondents 93% (124) has a Facebook account. The average age of all the Facebook users in this research is 23.7 years old. 73% (237) is a female user and 27% (80) is a male user.

5.5.2. MySpace

A group of 41 (11%) users claims to own a MySpace account. Looking at the 254 Dutch respondents only 7% (15) has a MySpace account. The Australians respondents report a higher percentage of 20% (26) of the total group that owns a MySpace account. The average age of the MySpace users that participated in this research is 23 years. Female users represent the biggest group in this research 81% (33) of the total users and 19% (8) were male users.

A group of 98 (27%) respondents has a Twitter account. In the Dutch group of respondents 24% (56) has an account. And in the group of 133 Australians 33% has an account. The average age of the Twitter users is 23.7 years. Within this group 63.3% (62) is female and 36.7% (36) is male.

5.6 Scale analysis

The reliability analysis showed that Cronbach's alpha was sufficient for four scales (Need for (para-) social relationships .87, Identity construction and self expression .91, Entertainment & Diversion.78 and no account entertainment & Diversion .89). The scales for 'no account Need for (para-) social relationships and no account Identity construction and self expression had no sufficient Alpha and are therefore not used in subsequent analyses.

5.7 The newly created variables to measure motivations

Based on these reliability results (Cronbach Alpha's) four new variables are created and used for further analysis;

1. Entertainment and Diversion: the respondents used these sites because it gave them an entertainment experience and helps them to cope with everyday life
2. Need for (para-) social relationships; the respondents used these sites to have social interaction
3. Identity construction/Self expression; the respondents used these sites to create an online identity and express themselves online
   No account
4. Entertainment and Diversion: the respondents did not use these sites because for them it is not entertaining and for them it is not a distraction from everyday life

These variables represent the motivations during further statistical analysis. The Facebook, MySpace and Twitter groups were unequal in size. To see if the population variances between the sites are equal a Levene test is conducted. With this test is tested if there is homogeneity of variance between de groups. The results for all variables were significant, thus the variance of the data in the groups is different and not homogenous. As the research question is about the differences

between the sites a t-test needs to be conducted to see if these differences are significant. Because the data in the groups is not homogeneous it violates the assumptions of ANOVA. In this research ANOVA is not used but a non-parametric test; Kruskal Wallis is used. For all variables used in further analyses a non-parametric test is required as the Levene test showed that all results were significant.

Gratifications	Total	Women	Men	*p* (gender)	Dutch	Australian	*p* (nationality)
Diversion and Entertainment	2.94 (0.782)	2.38 (0.937)	2.37 (0.947)	0,121	3.01 (0.7510	3.15 (0.596)	0,076
Need for (para-) social relationship	3.23 (0.899)	2.31 (1.101)	2.56 (0.577)	0,155	3.28 (0.803)	3.69 (0.617)	0,000
Identity construction/Self Expression	2.08 (0.704)	1.74 (0.674)	2.39 (0.380)	0,94	1.96 (0.575)	2.09 (0.634)	0,088
No account Diversion and Entertainment	2.22 (0.763)	2.13 (0.747)	1.88 (0.823)	0,142	2.05 (0.678)	1.76 (0.507)	0,279

Table 5.1 *Mean and standard deviations for the motives*

5.8 Kruskal Wallis

This test is used to compare Facebook, MySpace and Twitter, to investigate whether the three sites scored significantly different on the motivations for using social networking sites. The Kruskal Wallis test assumes the null hypotheses. The test shows that there is a statistical significant ($p < .01$) difference between the ability of fulfilling the gratifications and all three sites. The different sites are ranked based on their mean rank. The site with the highest rank is according to the respondents more gratification fulfilling that those with a lower score.

For the motivation Diversion and entertainment Facebook ($\chi^2 = 30.010$, *df* = 2, $p < 0.001$) attained the first position in the rank order, Twitter second and MySpace third. This result suggests that the gratification Diversion and Entertainment, that is mentioned by other researcher as a motive for using the Internet and Social Networking sites is the biggest incentive to use Facebook compared to the two other sites. (Debatin et al, 2009, Weiser, 2000, Vorderer, 2001, Dunne et al, 2010). Followed by Twitter and then MySpace.

For the motivation 'need for (para-) social relationship' Facebook ($\chi^2 = 56,754$, *df* = 2, $p < 0.001$) held the first position. According to this result Facebook

fulfills the gratification 'need for (para-) social relationship'. Social connection and and maintaining social relationships are one of the main reasons for using social networking sites (Ellison et al., 2007, Debatin et al., 2009, Dunne et al., 2010). Facebook is followed by Twitter and MySpace. This was not expected as one might think that MySpace would be more social orientated than Twitter. However research showed that twitter users often tweet about technical questions and are not, or less tweeting with a social or entertainment focus (Morris, Teevan and Panovich, 2010).

Twitter is ranked first for the motivation 'identity construction/self expression' (χ^2 = 14,227, *df* = 2, *p* < 0.005) followed by Facebook and finally MySpace. As Twitter is often used for professional communication this result suggests that is an effective manner to build up a certain online identity (Joinson, 2007, LaRose et al. 2001, Boyd, 2008).

The final motivation non-users have to not use the social networking sites is Diversion and Entertainment. Twitter has the highest rank (χ^2 = 51,243, *df* = 2, *p* < 0.001) followed by MySpace and finally Facebook. The higher the mean rank the more positive the respondents' opinion was towards the statements presented to them in the survey. This result suggests that for the non-users the reason not to use Twitter is that they think it will not fulfill their Diversion and Entertainment needs. When they want to be entertained they will not turn to Twitter. As Facebook is ranked third, the respondents reason not to use Facebook is a weak linked to this gratification.

5.9 Nationality

The research question and literature assumes that nationality might be relevant to the fulfilment of the gratifications. In order to investigate the role of nationality in this study some independent T-tests are conducted. These T-tests are conducted while keeping the results of the Levene tests in mind. The results are presented in table 5.1.

Analysing Facebook only the motivation 'need for (para-) social relationships' reports to be significantly different when looked at the role of nationality (*p* = 0.000) (Dutch M=3.3, Australian M= 3.7). For Australian users this is more often a motivation as it is for Dutch users. Therefore Australians might be more socially active on Facebook by more often updating their status or posting comments. This was expected as in 2008, 68% of the Australian population had an account on social networking sites and 61% of the Dutch population (Emarketer, 2009)

While analysing Twitter and the motive for non-users 'entertainment en diversion' it reported to be significantly different based on nationality (p =0.24) (Dutch M= 2.4, Australian M= 2.6). More Dutch users than Australian users see the limited entertainment and diversion value of a Twitter account as a reason not to use it. As the mean score for this gratification showed that they disagreed mostly with the statements.

When analysing MySpace none of the motivations reports to be significantly different based on nationality. Finally the overall significance is measured for all three sites together. For the group (all three sites together) the motive need for a (para-) social relationship is significant (p = .001) (Dutch M=3.28, *SD*=0.802 Australian M= 3.68, *SD*=0.617). The Australians answered a bit more positive towards this gratification. This means that the Australians overall gain more fulfilment on their needs for social relationships and contact than the Dutch users.

5.10 Gender Differences

As assumed in the theory gender might be relevant in relation to the motives of Internet use and use of social networking sites (Boyd 2008, Jenkins 2006, OECD, 2007, Weiser, 2000). To investigate the role of gender in this study some independent t-tests are conducted. These t-tests are conducted while keeping the results of the previous Levene tests in mind. The results are presented in table 5.1.

When analysing Facebook, none of the motives and differences between males and females proved to be significant. On the other hand for Twitter three motives seem significant based on gender differences. The motive ' Identity construction/self expression' (p = 0.023) (Male M= 2.7 female M=2.2) is significantly different. Based on this significant difference one could say that for male users the gratification 'identity construction/self expression is more often a motivation to use Twitter as it is for female users. Furthermore the motive for non users 'Diversion and Entertainment' and Twitter is significantly different based on gender (p =0.006) (male M=2.2 female=2.5). The gratification 'Diversion and Entertainment' is more often the motive for the male non-users not to have an account as it is for the female non-users. The opposite is mentioned in the research of Weiser (2002) that females use the Internet mainly for communication purposes, and therefore not for entertainment.

The T-tests for MySpace resulted in two significant motives. The motive 'identity construction/self expression' is significant, (p = 0.002) (male= 2.3, female=1.7) this means that if men have an account they have a bigger motivation based on identity construction/self expression as women. Male users would perform

more activities to form an online identity. The motivation for non-users 'diversion and entertainment' (p =0.009) (male=1.8 female= 2.1) is also significantly different for male and female users. Based on this information one could say that more men have as motivation not to use MySpace because they think it will not fulfil their needs in Entertainment en Diversion. This is in contrast with the conclusion of Weiser (2002). Who claims that men use the Internet mostly to for leisure purposes and females for communication purposes (Weiser, 2002). Finally conducting a t-test for all sites together as a group none of the motives are significantly different.

5.11 Open-ended questions

After all statements focussed on each social network the respondents were asked if they had any other motivation for using the social networking sites. If the respondents were non-users they were asked if they had any additional reasons for not using these social networking sites. For Facebook several respondents with a Facebook account answered that it was the best way to keep in contact with international friends and family. Most of them agreed with the item: 'why do you have Facebook? 'In order to communicate with others in a convenient way (family and friends)'. But added the international part as answer for the open-ended question.

For Twitter the respondents with an account answered that they had Twitter for celebrity watching. As Twitter has lot of verified celebrity accounts and some of them are very active. The respondents without an account answered that they assumed that other people did not care what they were doing.

The respondents for MySpace with and without an account stated the same thing. They claimed that they got MySpace when they were young and (recently) moved to Facebook. Rumours about the members leaving MySpace circulate on the Internet.

6. Conclusion & reflection

This research aims to contribute to the emerging tradition of uses and gratifications research on new media use. In this field a lot of research is conducted on general user motives for the Internet as well on user motives and social networking sites. Research showed that if people use this type of media, they are motivated and actively aimed at fulfilling their needs.

The research is limited to Dutch and Australian users and non-users. As social networking sites are extremely popular in these both western countries. The percentages of the population that have an Internet connection are similar. And the countries have never been compared in this way. The users researched were between the 16 and 30 years. This group is the most active group on the Internet. (Prensky, 2001, Boyd, 2008, Livingstone & Haddon, 2007). Moreover they form a good representation of the total user group of social networking sites. The used research methods are explorative interviews, a content analysis and online surveys.

The research results are discussed by answering the main research question. This chapter ends with the limitations of this research and the suggestions for further research.

6.1 Answer on the research question

Based on the theory and research results the answer on the research question of this master thesis can be formulated. The question that led to this research is;

'*In which way do the user motives of Dutch and Australian youngsters for creating and not creating content differ on the international social networking sites Facebook, MySpace and Twitter?*'

This research analyses the Dutch and Australian users of three international social networking sites. The emergence of Internet gives them the possibility to participate and create content online. As the three sites differ, the user motives for content creation may also differ. Based on the research results Facebook can be seen as a private network often used for personal and social relations. MySpace evolves more around (artist) identities. Thirdly Twitter proves to be a more professional network, were people build professional relationships. The three networks have different incentives and therefore the users have different motives for

usage and content creation.

This research explores the motives of the Dutch and Australian users of Facebook, MySpace and Twitter. Moreover this research shows if there are differences between the networks and nations. The analysis is based on the different ways the Dutch and Australian users are motivated to use social networking sites and create content. The analysis of the theory, focused on user motivations, has shown that the user motives for the Netherlands and Australia are the same. This can be explained by using the uses and gratification approach. This theory implies that people actively use the media to fulfil certain needs. The motives researched are: need for (para-) social relationships, need for identity construction and the need for entertainment and diversion. The results of this research imply that the level of agreement among the respondents of the two nations may differ. For the motive; 'need for (para-) social relationships' the results show a significant difference. Based on this research the Australians are more motivated to use social networking sites to fulfil their needs for social relationships. The results for the other motives showed no significant difference and could therefore be topics for further research.

Based on this results of this research one could state that the need for (para-) social relationships is a proven motive for Australian and Dutch users. It is their motive for using and creating content on the three social networking sites. The users have needs for social relationships and the social networks fulfil this need. To fulfil this need the Australians are more active in content creation and enlarge the number of comments and discussions on the networks. For the Australian users this need is fulfilled with more satisfaction as it is for the Dutch users. As the Dutch users tend to be less active and therefore might not believe in the satisfaction of their needs by using social networking sites. The need for an online identity is for both countries no reason to use social networking sites. The Dutch and Australians both use the social networking sites as a form of entertainment. The results of the motives 'identity construction' and 'entertainment' proved both not to be significant and can therefore be subject for future research.

6.2 Conclusion in relation to the theory

In the theoretical chapters several theories, concepts and results from previous research are discussed which showed that the research field is fast emerging and changing. Social networking sites started as dating sites are now changing into social

platforms. In the near future they will also provide multiple messaging services as texts, mms, email, chat and so on (Boyd, 2008).

According to Ellison and Boyd (2007) the popularity of social networking sites caused a change in the organization online. Websites were mostly based on interests as social networking sites are based on their users (Ellison & Boyd, 2007).

As seen on the social networking sites that are researched the online communication shifted from one-person communication to multiple-person-communication. And even to targeted group communication, people are able to react and comment on each other. These platforms enable the users to become producers (Jenkins, 2004). The users of Facebook., MySpace and Twitter are able to create content. (OECD, 2007, Livingstone, 2004). McMillan (2006) calls this user-to-document interactivity.

Previous uses and gratifications researches show that people use the media motivated to fulfil their needs (Rugierro, 2000). This is also confirmed with this research. The social networks discussed, are an example of the Internet as a platform on which users collaborate and therefore it's a good example of Web 2.0 (O'Reily, 2005, Charmey & Greenberg, 2001, Papacharassi & Rubin, 2001).

The user motivations to use social networking sites are; need for (para-) social relationships, need for identity construction and the need for entertainment and diversion (Debatin et al., 2009, Nyland et al., 2007, Raacke, 2008, Dunne et al, 2010, Shao, 2009). The need for (para-) social relationships is a need based on computer-mediated-communication (Wood and Smith, 2001). According to Valkenburg and Peter (2007) this manner of communication may stimulate the shaping of relations. Social contacts and interactions shift from offline to online environments (Boyd, 2008). The results of this research show that none of the sites is used to find new friends or relations online. This is confirmed by Pew research by Lenhart & Madden (2007), who state that 91% of the US teens use SNS so they can connect with friends. Boyd & Ellison (2007) claim also that social networking sites are most of the time used to communicate with people who are already part of someone's 'real life' social network'. It's mostly used for social interactions (Macgill & Smith, 2009).

People need to create their online identity, through profiles and content creation. As Vorderer (2001) claims entertainment is often experienced as pleasant and joyful. In this research we took in to account that people experience entertainment while using social networking sites (Vorderder, 2001, Klimmt et al., 2004). The conceptualization of entertainment in this research is a joyful experience and to get distracted of everyday life (Vorderer, 2001, LaRose et al., 2001).

As mentioned in the introduction of this research there are geographical differences between the Netherlands and Australia. The most basic differences are the different surface and population. The user group for all three social networking sites is bigger in Australia (Facebook, 2010, MySpace, 2010, Twitter, 2010). On the other side when looking at Internet connections the difference is not that big. 80% of all Australians have an Internet connection as 89% of all people in the Netherlands have an Internet connection (Wikipedia, 2010b). For further research it is recommended to take to mentioned differences in to account, as is explained in the next paragraph.

6.3 Limitations of the research and suggestions for further research

The sampling method for this research, snowballing, may have influence on the group respondents. As a foreigner in Australia my social contacts, mainly females were the first to be invited. Moreover most of the Australian respondents lived in Melbourne, due to the snowballing method the respondents were not equally divided over the country. Therefore the pattern of respondents may have been influenced. Furthermore a bigger group of respondents is recommended as not all respondents have an account on all sites and therefore the groups were unequal.

Based on this sample a careful conclusion can be drawn that contrasts the findings of Valkenburg and Peter (2007) as they propose no gender differences between people communicating online. The majority of females with an account in this research comply with the findings of van Zoonen (2002) who indicates that women become more active on the Internet. As the group of respondents might be influenced by the sampling method further research is necessarily

As the popularity of MySpace is declining, the media often report this. The opinion and the activity of the users might be influenced by these developments. In future research a question on the intensity of the use of social networking sites would give a more complete overview of latent and heavy users.

When looking back at the methods used. It is possible that the respondents gave social desirable answers in the survey. As the youngest of the target group, 16-30 years are sensible for 'what's cool' and 'what's not cool'. A social desirable answer might be to update your status any time you are online and disagree with the statement 'I use social networking sites in order to find friends I don't know offline' because this might be stupid. During an interview the researcher may be able to create a atmosphere of trust.

In future research it would be interesting to obtain more information from non-users. Qualitative interviews or focus groups might be a necessary method to obtain this extra information. Their reasons might vary widely and it is easier to ask specific questions about their motivations. There is not much research conducted on the motivations for non-users. In this survey were they had to choose from pre-set answers that offer a basis for further research.

Furthermore would be an addition to the present knowledge to research how and if uses and gratifications develop over time for users and non-users. As age might be of influence in the gratifications someone wants to fulfil.

In future research it might be interesting to pay more attention to the demographics and geographics of the different countries. As this might influence the easiness of access and the users purposes of use. As Australia is big and has many rural areas where even a normal telephone network is luxury. Furthermore keeping up with social contacts on Facebook or family far away might be more common as in Holland. Were distances are short and people might meet more often in 'real life'.

7. Literature

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Websites:
www.facebook.com
www.myspace.com
www.twitter.com

8. Appendices

Appendix A; Constant comparative analysis. (Boeije, 2002)

Type of comparison and	Analysis activities	Aim	Questions	Results
1. Comparison within a single interview	Open coding; summarizing core of the interview; finding consensus on interpretation of fragments.	Develop categories understanding	What is the core message of the interview? How are different fragments related? Is the interview consistent? Are there contradictions? What do fragments with the same code have in common?	Summary of the interview; Provisional codes (code tree); Conceptual profile; Extended memos.
2. Comparison between interviews within the same group that is persons who share the same experience	Axial coding: formulating criteria for comparing interviews; hypothesizing about patterns and types.	Conceptualization of the subject produce a typology	Is A talking about the same as B? What do both interviews reveal about the category? What combinations of concepts occur? What interpretations exist for this? What are the similarities and differences between interviews A, B, C...?	Expansion of code words until all relevant themes are covered; Description of concepts; Criteria for comparing interviews; Clusters of interviews (typology).
3. Comparison of interviews from groups with different perspectives but involved with the subject under study	Triangulating data sources.	Complete the picture enrich the information	What criteria underlie this comparison? What does group 1 say about certain themes and what does group 2 have to say about the same themes? What themes appear in group 1 but not in group 2 and vice versa? Why do they see things similarly or differently? What nuances, details or new information does group 2 supply about group 1?	Verification of provisional knowledge of interviewees from group 1; Additional information; Memos.
4. Comparison in pairs of interviews with two partners belonging to a couple	Selecting themes from open coding that concern the relationship; summarizing the relationship; finding consensus on the interpretation.	Conceptualization of relationship issues understanding of the interaction between partners	What is the relationship like from both perspectives? Are there contradictions/agreements between them? What are the central issues and how are they resolved?	(Conceptual) profile of relationship; Extended memos; Inventory of central issues.
5. Comparing interviews with several couples	Finding criteria to compare couples; hypothesizing about patterns and types.	Find criteria for mutual comparison produce a typology	What are the typical differences between couples A and B? What is the possible reason for this? On which criteria can couples be compared? What patterns exist in the relationships of couples that experience this phenomenon?	Criteria for comparing couples; Clusters of relationships (typology).

Appendix B; Labels for the Constant Comparative Method

Facebook labels

Feature of the site	Label
Friend requests	Social
Messages	Social
Notifications	Social
Profile Picture	Identity
News feed	Social
Events	Entertainment
Friends	Social
Games	Entertainment
Photo's	Identity
Groups	Identity
Links	Social
Notes	Identity
Status Update	Identity
Comments	Social
Search	Social
Birthdays	Social
People you may know	Social
Get connected	Social
Chat	Social

MySpace labels

Feature of the site	Label
Messages	Social
Profile picture	Identity
Profile views	Identity
Photo's	Identity
Video's	Identity
Blog	Identity
Page theme's	Identity
Groups	Identity
Announcements	Social
My Applications	Entertainment
Status Update	Identity
Comments	Social
Stream/News Feed	Social
Search	Social
Music	Identity
People you may know	Social

Recommended Events	Entertainment
MySpaceIM/Chat	Social

Twitter Labels

Feature of the site	Label
What is happening/status update	Identity
Home/news feed	Social
Profile Picture + name	Identity
Who to follow	Social
@twitter-user	Social
Direct Message	Social
Search	Social
Announcements	Social
Page themes	Identity
Favorites	Identity
Retweets	Social
Lists	Identity
Trending World Wide	Social
Following	Social

Survey.

Thanks for participating in this survey. This research is about Facebook, MySpace and Twitter. If you are not a member or only a member on one or two of the sites your opinion is also very valuable to me! This research is done as part of my MA thesis for the Master Media and Journalism at the Erasmus University Rotterdam and Swinburne University, Melbourne. All answers are treated confidentially and are only used for this thesis. Afterwards the answers will be destroyed. Participating in this research is voluntarily. You are able to stop whenever you like.
The first few questions will be general. Then I'll ask some questions about Facebook, followed by Twitter and finally about MySpace. Thanks!
For those interested in the findings of this research, feel free to request results from me after august 30, 2010 via my e-mail MA-thesis@hotmail.com.
Sincerely,
Maartje Smeele
1. Are you male or female?
   O Male
   O Female

2. What is your age?
   …………………………

3. What is your nationality?
   …………………………..
4. Where do you live (e.g. Melbourne, Australia)
   ………………………………………………

5. Do you have a Facebook account?
YES..
When I'm online I ……………

		Never	Sometimes	Neither often nor never	Often (approx 3-4 times a week)	Very often (every day)
I update my status						
I comment on my friends status updates						
I upload photo's						
I RSVP on event's I'm invited to						
I write on my friends' wall						
I join groups of my interests						
I use the 'like' button						
I modify my personal information if something has changed recently						
I create groups of my interests						
I upload video's						
I participate in quizzes						

Why do you use Facebook?

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Because it is entertaining						

Because it relaxes me					
Because I need to talk to friends					
In order to put off something I should be doing					
In order to keep in contact with people/friends					
I want to get information on current affairs					
In order to communicate with others in a convenient way (family and friends)					
In order to find new friends (I don't know offline)					
In order to find out what's going on with my friends					
In order to share information about myself					
In order to inform my friends what is going on					
In order to develop professional relationships/networking					
Because I can view others' pictures					
Because it's easy to plan events					
In order to promote myself and my work as an professional					
To promote myself and my work as an artists					
To create and groups about my interests					

Are there other reasons or comments (that are not listed above) why you think it is important to have a Facebook account?

……………………………………………………………………………………

NO….

I do not have a Facebook account because

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I don't have friends on Facebook						
I care about my privacy						
I do not have enough knowledge of internet/Facebook						
My parents don't allow me to have an account						
I don't have a private internet connection						
I have enough other social networks						
Facebook is for young people						
Facebook is not available in my language						
I have nothing to share on Facebook (photo's/video's)						
I don't like Facebook						

Are there other reasons why you haven't got a Facebook account?

……………………………………………………………………………………..

Do you have a Twitter account?

YES…..

When I'm online I ………………

		Never	Sometimes	Neither often nor never	Often (approx 3-4 times a week)	Very often (every day)
I send Tweets						
I comment on my friends tweets by using the '@'						
I upload and tweet photo's						
I receive and send Direct Messages (DM's)						
I use the '#' in my Tweets, so they are searchable on a certain subject						
I join lists of my interests						
I ReTweet interesting Tweets						
I modify my personal information if something has changed recently						
I search new people I can follow						
I upload and tweet video's						

Why do you use Twitter?

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Because it is entertaining						
Because it relaxes me						
Because I can get in contact with people I vaguely know						
In order to put off something I should be doing						
In order to keep in contact with people/friends						
I want to get information on current affairs						
In order to communicate with others in a convenient way (family and friends)						
In order to share information about myself						
In order to find new friends (I don't know offline)						
In order to find out what's going on with my friends						
In order to inform my friends what is going on						
In order to develop professional relationships/networking						
Because I can view others' pictures and share my own pictures						
Because it's easy to plan events						
Because I can promote myself						

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
and my work as a professional						
To promote myself and my work as an Artist						
To tweet about my interests and search tweets with the # function						

Are there other reasons or comments (that are not listed above) why you think it is important to have a Twitter account?
……………………………………………………………………………………
NO
I do not have a Twitter account because……….

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I don't have friends on Twitter						
I care about my privacy						
I do not have enough knowledge of internet/Twitter						
My parents don't allow me to have an account						
I don't have a private internet connection						
I have enough other social networks						
Twitter is for older people						
Twitter is not available in my language						
I have nothing to share on Twitter (photo's/video's/news)						
I don't like Twitter						

Are there other reasons why you haven't got a Twitter account?
…………………………………………………………………………………..
Do you have a MySpace account?
YES

When I'm online at Myspace I……

		Never	Sometimes	Neither often nor never	Often (approx 3-4 times a week)	Very often (every day)
I update my status/mood						
I comment on my friends status updates						
I upload photo's						
I RSVP on event's I'm invited to						
I write on my friends' profile						
I join groups of my interests						
I modify my personal information if something has changed recently						
I upload video's						

Why do you use MySpace?

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

Because it is entertaining					
Because it relaxes me					
Because I can get in contact with people I vaguely know					
In order to put off something I should be doing					
In order to keep in contact with people/friends					
Because I want information on current affairs					
In order to communicate with others in a convenient way (family and friends)					
To find new friends (I don't know offline)					
In order to find out what's going on with my friends					
In order to inform my friends what is going on					
In order to share information about myself					
In order to develop professional relationships/networking					
Because I can view others' pictures and share my own pictures					
Because it's easy to plan events and send out invitations online					
Because I can promote myself and my work as a professional					
To promote myself and my work as an artists					
To create and groups about my interests					
Because I can put a lot of effort in my profile and show who I am					

Are there other reasons or comments (that are not listed above) why you think it is important to have a MySpace account?

……………………………………………………………………………………

NO

I do not have a MySpace profile because……..

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I don't have friends on MySpace						
I care about my privacy						
I do not have enough knowledge of internet/MySpace						
My parents don't allow me to have an account						
I don't have a private internet connection						
I have enough other social networks						
MySpace is only for musicians and people who like music						

MySpace is not available in my language						
I have nothing to share on MySpace (photo's/video's/music)						72
I don't like MySpace						

Are there other reasons why you haven't got a Myspace account?
……………………………………………………………………………….
Do you upload movies/photo's/video's or any other media online on other sites?
O Hyves
O YouTube
O Bebo
O Oasis
O Tagged
O Orkut
O Digg
O Clubs
O Dropbox
O Flickr
O Picasa
O Ning
O Windows live Spaces
O Other…………………………………

Thank you again for your assistance in this research. I understand your time is valuable and I appreciate you allowing me some of it. If you are interested in the results, please contact me by e-mail MA-thesis@hotmail.com.
Sincerely,
Maartje Smeele