Chapter LV
Internet Motives Questionnaire

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BACKGROUND

In the past decade, the growth of the Internet has been undeniable, affecting the way people communicate, interact, and gather information. According to a Nielsen survey conducted in 2002, more than 400 million people use the Internet, demonstrating the swiftness with which this network of computers has changed the way we live and will continue to live. Communication researchers have recognized the importance of studying the Internet as a communication medium (Newhagen & Rafaeli, 1996), but the study of motivations and behaviors associated with Internet use has been limited.

Much of the recent research looking at the motivations associated with Internet use has focused on the relationship between personality types and Internet use and usage. Researchers, for example, have found that those who are more satisfied with their outward, social life preferred to use the Internet for more instrumental purposes (i.e., information seeking) whereas those less satisfied with life, especially those who felt less valued in face-to-face interactions, used the Internet as a substitute for social interactions and to pass time (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000). Similar interactions were found when externally oriented people (who believe their environment controls them, feel powerless) used the Internet

for inclusion more than internally oriented people (Flaherty, Pearce, & Rubin, 1998). Several studies have demonstrated negative correlations between a leisure services factor (instant messaging and games) and neuroticism (Swickert, Hittner, Harris, & Herring, 2002), and neuroticism and "gathering product and brand information" and "learning, reference, and education" (Tuten & Bosnjak, 2001). Hamburger and Ben-Artzi's (2000) study found that those scoring high on extraversion tended to prefer leisure services (sex Web sites, random surfing), and that those scoring high on neuroticism had a negative association with information services (work-related information, studies-related information.

While these studies examined motivations for Internet use, each study used different motivations, which make comparisons difficult. Thus, Amiel and Sargent (2004) designed an Internet motives questionnaire to examine motivations for Internet use. The original version of the IMQ contains 45 questions compiled and adapted from previous studies (Bourdeau, Chebat, & Couturier, 2002; D'Ambra & Rice, 2001; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000; Weaver, 2003) that would measure a wide variety of motivations associated with interpersonal and mass media use. The IMQ-45 was reduced to a 12-item version so that it would be easier for researchers to use online.

RELIABILITY

Although the Internet motives questionnaire is a relatively new development, several exploratory studies have demonstrated acceptable levels of reliability (Cronbach's alpha) ranging from 0.64 to 0.80.

VALIDITY

The 45 IMQ questions were conceptually divided into four categories: interpersonal/communication utility, entertainment utility, information utility, and convenience. When a factor analysis was performed, it confirmed that there were four factors. However, the factor analysis was not as clean as it could have been, prompting us to reduce the length of the inventory. The factor analysis had three items loading (alpha's ranging from 0.58 to 0.79) on each of the four factors. Thus, the IMQ-12 was developed. Each of the following statements should be preceded by "I use the Internet . . .".

- **Factor 1-Entertainment:** Because it makes me feel less lonely, To participate in discussions; and To meet new people.
- **Factor 2-Convenience:** Because I can say things online I wouldn't normally say; Because my friends use it; and Because sometimes it's easier to talk online than to tell people
- **Factor 3-Interpersonal/Communication Utility:** To leave messages; Because people don't have to be there to receive a message; and When I need to have a short conversation.
- **Factor 4-Social Utility:** Because I can remain anonymous; Because I can avoid meeting/talking to people; and Because I do things online I wouldn't do in person.

RESULTS

In completing either the IMQ-45 or the IMQ-12, respondents are asked to report which items motivated them to use the Internet based on a nine-point Likert-type scale ranging from "strongly disagree" (1), to "neutral" (5), to "strongly agree" (9).

The first study to use the IMQ-45 examined the relationship between the psychobiological model of personality type (Eysenck & Eysenck 1985) and Internet use and usage motives. A sample of 210 undergraduate students were asked to report on their motives for using the Internet, and how often they engaged in a variety of Internet and Web-based activities. The findings demonstrate distinctive patterns of Internet use and usage motives for those of different personality types. Specifically, those scoring high in neuroticism reported using the Internet to feel a sense of "belonging" and to be informed. Extraverts rejected the communal aspects of the Internet, and made more instrumental and goal-oriented use of Internet services. Finally, those scoring high in psychoticism demonstrated an interest in more deviant, defiant, and sophisticated Internet applications (see Amiel & Sargent, 2004).

COMMENTARY

Taken together, this suggests that the Internet motives questionnaire appears to be a very promising research tool for researchers, whether in electronic form or in pencil-and-paper version.

COST

The IMQ-45 and IMQ-12 is free to those using it for academic research purposes.

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