

Chapter 13

Bridging Gap With QR Codes: Digital Literacy Among Youth in Istanbul

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ABSTRACT

This chapter explores the basic themes and expansion of the idea of digital literacy around academia. Furthermore, a case is presented on how digital literacy is linked with the digital divide in developing economies and how QR codes can synergize the process of digital growth of societies and how QR codes are addressed around the world.

INTRODUCTION

Context and Issues

Human beings are not born with innate sense of what constitutes beauty, health or the love for art; we learn and adapt the cultural standards through the process of socialization (Hodges 1990; Lears 1998). Family, friends, school and mass media plays a vital role for developing the socialization role in our young generations (Comstock et al. 1978; Simpson 1998). Research shows that young users spend plenty of time on social media for versatile reasons (Boyd 2007; Dajani, 2012; Livingstone 2009; Turkle 2012). Therefore, media plays a vital role in developing the attitudes and behaviors through process of socialization in a society (Couldry, 2005; DeFleur, 1989). Inclination towards using certain digital products and preferring some over others could also be triggered by the media consumed such as social media, new media technologies. Behavior and attitudes are also determined through socialization agents such as parents, peers and schools. Behavior and attitudes towards certain preferences are also depending

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upon the income and education level of the people. For some using the digital devices is the symbol of class and symbol of class culture especially among youth and for others its necessity of life, youth cannot live without it.

An IDC's research report, with data from Android and iPhone users ages 18 to 44 during March 2013, reveals some eye-opening mobile social media facts. 49 percent of the entire U.S. population uses a Smartphone. "A whopping 90 percent of them use their Smartphone first thing in the morning". The Los Angeles Times, study showed that 55 percent of users use their Smartphones while driving, 33 percent use them on a date, and 9 percent... during sex. The press release said, "It should be no surprise that 12 percent believe their Smartphone gets in the way of their relationships." This percentage rises to 25, when only looking at ages 18 to 34.

The growing importance of digital devices and the interactive smartphone and tablets affects our youth; psychological effects, health effects, and unknowingly the effects of digital divide which further could be translated into digital literacy. This topic has pulled the global attention and such issues are frequently discussed and have attracted academics, philanthropists, psychologists and alike. Unfortunately, the major focus remained revolving around the ways in which these digital devices contribute as an agent for social and economic development and also as an indicator how behavioral changes are taking place among the youth while interacting with such digital devices. There are also new challenges being faced by strategists and marketers (McKinsey, 2007; Urban, 2003) for attracting and influencing the youth for using the digital devices for maximum profits and marketing and selling goods. There is little clarity on the digital literacy attached to users of different generations but also among the 'have and have not' of society. There is also a little clarity of the media used with respect to the digital divide such as; tablets or smartphones or other digital gadgets contribute to what level gaps because all have a different type of necessity. However past research indicates generally that digital literacies help eliminating the digital gap which varies with the age, social status, education and uses and gratifications.

Digital Literacy

Kellner and Share (2005, pp-369) define the media literacy as "gaining skills and knowledge to read, interpret, and produce certain types of texts and artifacts and to gain intellectual tools and capacities to fully participate in one's culture and society". Lim and Theng, (2011) also Oguzhan and Haydar (2011) explains that the media literacy or the critical media literacy does not only involve the analysis and evaluation of the tools which produces the media messages but also the media literacy includes the participation and imparting of information. Karaduman (2013) defines the media literacy as "the ability of questioning, commenting and evaluating the media messages could only be possible through media education centered on critical thoughts" the author quotes Uysal (2007, p-47) defining the media literacy as;

Media literacy is defined as pedagogy which ensures the analysis of media codes and traditions, criticizing media's values and ideologies, construal of messages generated by media texts, assessing and selecting media contents, becoming aware of the effects of the media and a reasonable use of media.

Many have tried to define media literacy according to their own perspectives, according to some it's the education about print media and according to some it's about dissemination of information through

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