

## Teens getting creative with Web 2.0 tools

What's evolving, says researcher, is a multi-dimensional way of communicating

Montreal, Quebec – June 1, 2010 – A pilot study of teens and their use of Web 2.0 technologies confirms what most parents probably already know: Teens are really good at it.

But what surprised the researcher doing the study is how the teens she talked to were able to use technological tools in new and innovative ways to connect with each other – ways that the creators of the tools had probably never thought of.

And she suggests that what's evolving is a whole new multi-dimensional way of communicating.

Natalia Sinitskaya is a PhD candidate at York University's Faculty of Education in Toronto. She is exploring digital literacy with the idea of examining the potential of using Web 2.0 environments in education.

To further her research, she did a pilot study involving interviews with a handful of adolescents to sound out their uses and views about Web 2.0 technologies. She presents the results of that research in a paper to be delivered at the 2010 Congress for the Humanities and Social Sciences taking place at Montreal's Concordia University.

Sinitskaya says the teens she interviewed were not only adept at using the technology to connect with each other socially, they were using it in innovative ways. For example, she said one teen took to watching video diaries posted on the Web in places like YouTube. She would then make friends (technologically) with people she liked based on their video logs.

Sinitskaya says teens are also quite sophisticated when it comes to assessing the Web tools: Her respondents, for example, were able to offer thoughtful evaluations of the different features, style and uses of Facebook versus MySpace, and as a result would carefully weigh whether they might choose one platform over another.

"That goes counter to the popular expectation that teenagers don't know what they are doing," she says. As well, she says her respondents had all investigated privacy settings on their platforms and selected ones they thought appropriate.

Sinitskaya says she believes the ability to use Web 2.0 tools is a new form of literacy, and as adolescents learn to manipulate them, their communication will move away from plain writing to a new form of multi-dimensional communication.

"My research is showing that adolescents are creating that new communication," she says.

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**Ryan Saxby Hill**

Media Relations

Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences

[media@fedcan.ca](mailto:media@fedcan.ca)

613-894-7635 (mobile)

514-848-2424 ext. 5023 (media room)



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