Edited by Pierpaolo Limone & Michele Baldassarre

ICT in Higher Education and Lifelong Learning

Proceedings
November 14th-15th, 2013
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Introduction

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The present proceeding collects thirty-one papers exposed during the scientific meeting SIREM 2013 "ICT in Higher Education" held on November 14th and 15th, 2013 in Bari, Italy.
There are another ten full papers presented at the conference that were collected within the Volume VI, no. 1, June 2014 of REM - Research on Education and Media Journal.
The conference engaged in an interesting interdisciplinary debate about the role of technology in higher education and lifelong learning, presenting an accurate analysis on new strategies for instructional design, innovative teaching approaches methods, and effective assessment systems.
The conference also enabled SIREM scholars to collect the state of the art of the Italian scientific research and the best teaching experiences on the following topics:
- Technologies in higher education
- Digital skills and lifelong learning
- Technological innovation and vocational training
- Digital literacy and adult education
- Technologies for lifelong learning
- Innovative methods and techniques for e-learning
- Models and assessment tools of e-learning
- Mobile learning environments (M-learning) for adult education
- Social learning and lifelong learning.

The conference has been a very important scientific event to establish a dialogue among scholars from several Italian universities. During the conference, they met to examine and discuss emerging issues in the educational field, presenting different but complementary points of view and studies, aiming to map an evolving scene.
This proceeding is divided into three main sections, representing three categories in which contributions were organized during the conference:
- *Full Paper*: contributions referred to results of an original research work.
- *Short Communication*: information about research projects not fully completed.
- *Experience*: innovative educational experiences.

All contributions collected here represent an important record of the interesting ongoing research courses and live cultural debate around educational technology and media education in the national scientific context. In addition, many of the researches presented here demonstrate how collaboration and openness to international environments can bring significant benefits in terms of intercultural development, in order to weave paths with unprecedented and innovative thinking.

Diana Laurillard, a scholar from the Institute of Education in London, participated in the conference with her keynote presentation "*Teaching as a design Science: investigating the integration of technology with pedagogy*" and with this contribution opened the space for international research and reflection about innovative strategies in learning design.

The annual conference organized by SIREM represents a fruitful discussion about new frontiers on media research in the national and international scene with a significant openness to innovative lines and research horizons.

Web Generation 2.0.
Teens and communication in the age of Facebook

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Abstract
Youth and the Internet: a theme of consideration and debate difficult to avoid in a global-ized and worldwide society. How do guys use these means? Are they real social devices in a virtual dimension than later become reality or personal estrangement and skilled meeting with the other? Is there the possibility of a positive interaction between these two kinds of experiences? Which are the differences between the construction of the reality learned online and that one in the real life? What is the relation between communication and identity? In teenagers that go through a year abroad with Intercultura program or for-eign students that spend a year in our schools, how much negative is the adjustment to a new culture and new friends if they are still in contact with their native country? What do teenagers do of these possibilities of reorganize their social relationships in new and changeable space-temporal contests? Can the net be an educational device for cosmopoli-tanism? These are some of the questions this research has tried to give an answer.

Keywords
Web, Media Education, Identity, Citizens, Cosmopolitism

1. Introduction

Youth and the Internet: a theme of consideration and debate difficult to avoid in a globalized and worldwide society. According to critique and scientific literature and a wide series of quantitative and qualitative researches lead in Europe (Bachmair, 2007), a big consideration seem to have those researched orientations that analyze digital *online* environments starting from daily practice (Adoni, 2001) that youth put to use for learning, communicating among peer group building their own identity or exercising their citizenship rights, "building" an intercultural attitude, for feeling world citizens. In fact, *new media* (Bolter, 1999) promote the development of a specific intelligence that Gardner indicated as "relationship-wise intelli-gence" that is the origin of intercultural thought. This kind of intelligence, in fact, opens to something more meaningful that endurance or treatment; it brings a flexible and agile thought, far from every kind of stiffening, able to operate inside a multidimensional, dynamics and progressive culture; in other words to a culture that recognizes differences as its own birth place. Today the *web* net is one of the most important places for innovation (Barnes, 2006), fly-wheel of a fast social change that seems to be unsetting or difficult to adults' eyes. All this needs complementary researches and surveys: quantitative approach able to measure on a wide sample the actual range of the events and a qualitative one able to show subjective as-pect of the experience of "being *online*" (Turkle, 1995). This social change has affected the ways teenagers use media to keep in contact and communicate among them and the whole world (Cassel, 2011).

While academics and politicians talk about the best strategies to "maximize conveniences and reduce risks", day after day, teenagers face with this changing scenery eagerly: they are always go into media, they have absorbed them physically (in their pockets or their ears), essential part of their spaces, public or private. Understanding the actual realty in the practice of the Internet is the new real challenge. But "the new floating world", said by Gergen, seems to allow the attempt to realize a self-reflection own project appealing to the Internet as a new space in which they can explore easy relationships and ways of expressiveness. In the late modernity not only adolescent conditions are changing, but also communicative frameworks and the backgrounds in which identity develops and matures (Livingston, 2001). This last one is always more often defined through changeable life style signals that youth acquire by media practice, rather than traditional indicators, as age, gender, race and place of birth (Meyrowitz, 1995). From this point of view the access to new communication technologies doesn't produce necessarily wider social entourage or geographically vaster (Buckingham, 2006). There are only few empirical comparisons regard to rhetoric of "global village". Anyway the net allows to increase the field of their own daily relationships and to stabilize those ones otherwise it would be difficult to keep, like friends that live abroad, distant relatives, acquaintances moved and friends that guys have left for a while (Drotner, 2005). The difficulty of adults' world is often to decode unreachable communications and strategies that teenagers test to build their *online* identity always more complicated (Buckingham, 2005). Irrespective of the circumstance that they may be in Rio de Janeiro, Shanghai, Boston, Oslo or Cape Town*, digital natives* are essential part of a global youth movement joined by the way they relate to information, new technologies and among them (Merchant, 2006).

2. Meanings, purposes and methodology

How do guys use these means? Are they real social devices in a virtual dimension than later become reality or personal estrangement and skilled meeting with the other? Is there the possibility of a positive interaction between these two kinds of experiences? Which are the differences between the construction of the reality learned *online* and that one in the real life? What is the relation between communication and identity? In teenagers that go through a year abroad with Intercultura program or foreign students that spend a year in our schools, how much negative is the adjustment to a new culture and new friends if they are still in contact with their native country? What do teenagers do of these possibilities of reorganize their social relationships in new and changeable space-temporal contests? Can the net be an educational device for cosmopolitanism? These are some of the questions this research has tried to give an answer. The pedagogical system was built by Experimental Pedagogy, Intercultural Education and Intercultural and *Media Literacy Education.* The choice of the sample (1149 people) happened on the base of stratified model in which the population was divided into layers as uniform as possible inside and from each of them a random sampling was extracted (through a probability sampling method) (Trinchero, 2004). After, we proceed to change information we got from questionnaires in a rectangular number mold, called "data mold", setting down systematically the answers in the questionnaires. The questionnaire built to collect data has questions on basic social characteristics (genre, age etc.), questions on attitude (feeling) and behaviors. In the questionnaire a series of questions were developed with systematically free answers and with partial free semantic answers. For collecting attitude we have used *Likert range* (Alessandrini, 1988). For the quantitative survey data we have used *SPSS software* (*Statistical Package for Social Sciences*). We have used interviews or an additional sur-

vey level using *C-MAP TOOLS* software(developed by *Institute for Human and Machine Cognition* of Cornell University of West Florida, based on the studies of Joseph Novak) that has allowed a summary of concepts into conceptual maps.

3. Stages and instruments of the research

This job was led individually, but it was coordinated by author through national regular meetings and was organized in the following stages:

1. Pinpointing two sample areas (North-South) on the base of the w*eb* penetration indicators (Audiweb, 2010; Istat, 2009). For the South (where the use of Internet is around 38%) Apulia presents a low web penetration indicator, for the North (where the use of Internet is around 48%) Piedmont presents a high web penetration indicator. Noticing that 8.1 are the points that represent the distance between North and South of Italy regard to the Internet access.
2. Identifying five schools per area (five years vocational school and a high school) four for the two metropolitan cities selected per area and two insert in a not metropolitan city (with a population between 10.000 and 50.000 inhabitants).
3. Describing the project through a letter of presentation and meetings with headmasters and teachers of the third and fourth grade to illustrate the research method and sharing contest useful data to set up the job.
4. Identifying a contact teacher for each school, who has followed the different stages of the research.
5. Collecting teaching planning data (checking projects regard study and practice of multimedia and information technology, achieving an Internet school web site with spaces for *blog* e *community*) in the schools through acquisition of POF.
6. Identifying five sample classes for each school.
7. Administering an *online* questionnaire to sample students to supervise how they use information tools and the Internet net, if they represent a real social devices in a virtual dimension than later become reality or personal estrangement and skilled meeting with the others. Our aim was to observe if there is a positive interaction between these two experiences, the difference between the reality learnt *online* and that one practiced in the real life, the relation between communication and identity, and if the net can be a device for educating to cosmopolitanism.
8. Administering a questionnaire to a sample of 60 *returnees* (that have lived a year abroad with Intercultural program, not later than three years ago) to understand the difference between the reality learnt *online* and that one practiced in the real life, the relation between communication and identity, and it will be useful to examine if how much negative is the adjustment to a new culture and new friends if they are still in contact with their native country and if the reality practiced in the foreign country in which they had lived is different from that one "developed" through the *web* before their leaving.
9. Identifying, thanks to literature teacher (openness vs closure), six Italian students to involve into *focus groups* (*FG*) in each school during scholastic time; leading and analyzing *focus group* lasting about 1h 30 each by one or two members of the researching group.
10. Selecting some students who have taken part to *focus groups* for ethnographic interviews during scholastic time (three for each school); the draft of the semi – structured

interview is elaborated by each group considering data emerged from questionnaires and *FG*; each interview – lasting 50/60 minutes – was recorded and later transcribed.

11. Ethnographic interviews to 60 *returnees*, the draft of the semi – structured interview is elaborated by each group considering data emerged from questionnaires and *FG*; each interview – lasting 50/60 minutes – was recorded and later transcribed.

12. Giving back the survey results to classes or groups or students that took part to the research in the second half of the school year 2011/2012.

The research was realized on a sample of students in Piedmont and Apulia attending the third and fourth grade in the current school year, in some high schools and vocational schools in Alexandria, Ivrea, Turin, Bari, Lecce and Martina Franca. The choice to identity for each sample town a high school and a vocational school answered to the need to intercept youth with different cognitive and learning interests, to evaluate the effect of *digital media* in their daily life.

4. Results

First of all, d*igital generation* children confirm an unmistakable data: at home it is almost impossible not to have Internet access, Internet is mostly in each house, the access is nearly free without any restrictions and about half of the youth (41.2%) surf more than three hours per day, 58.1% less than two hours. Most of time surfing is pledged using *social networks*.
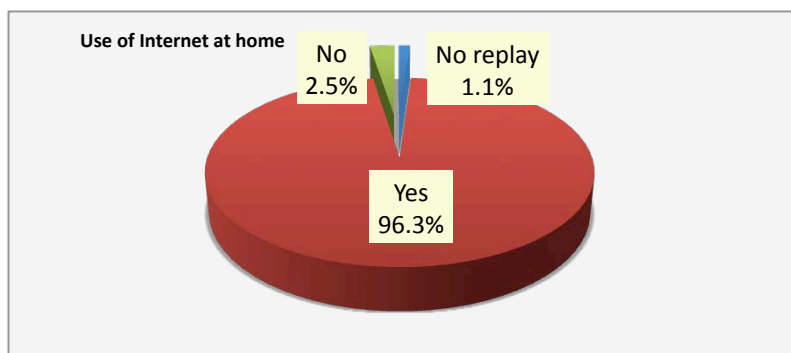
FIGURE 1. Use of internet at home.
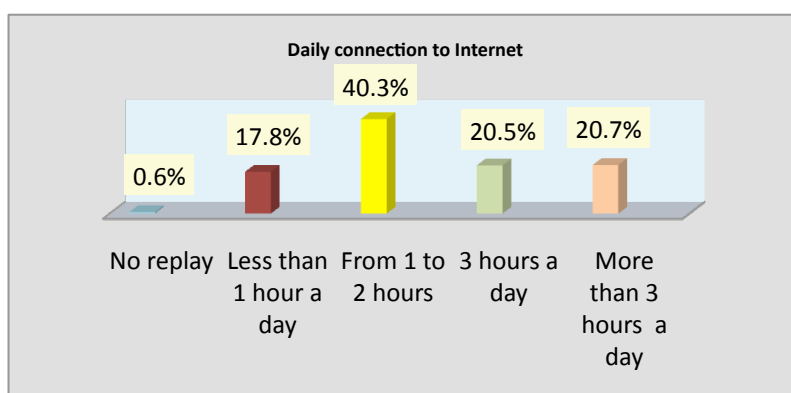
FIGURE 2. Daily connection to Internet.

Only 5.1% of students involved in the research is not enrolled them. Facebook is the most used *social network*. The main use of it is *chatting* with friends, less often is sharing *links* or reading what the others do.
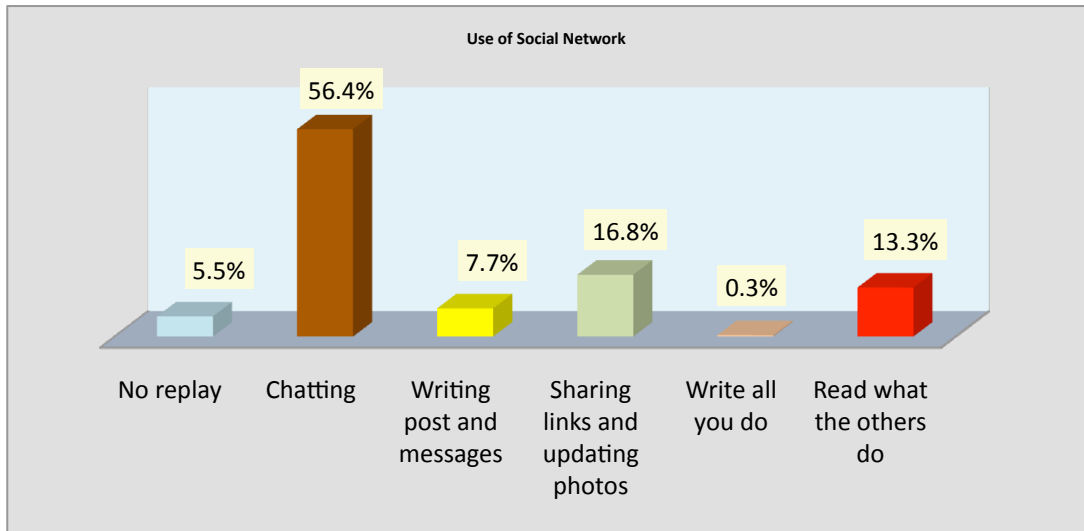
FIGURE 3. Use of Social Network.

Almost half of youth interviewed said to have more than 500 contacts, a few more than a quarter, on the other hand, have less than 200 contacts.
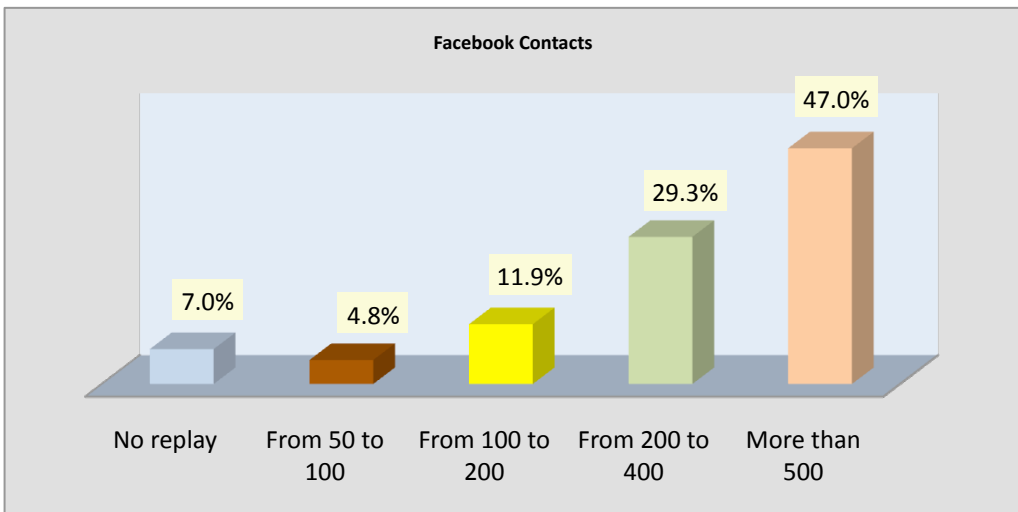
FIGURE 4. Facebook Contacts.

In this way it is clear how *social networks* allow to compose relationships more than it happens in the real life, but it doesn't say anything about the intensity of them. In fact, more than 50% of interviewed think that not more than a quarter of their contacts can be considered truly Friends, on the other hand not more than 10.1% are those that consider nearly more than half of their contacts real friend. "Our" youth have highlighted constantly in their answers a decisive preeminence in their personal relationships to *face to face* contact regard that virtual one on the net, In particular, only 11% prefer contacting people on the Internet, rather than by phone or directly and, above all − otherwise fallacy − most of youth don't love hiding, misrepresenting their own identity chatting on the net (Jenkins, 2006). The net is not a shelter and

it is not perceived as a corresponding world where everything is easier. The use of the Internet induces only few of them to isolate or avoid friends and relatives or, even, preferring the net rather than spending a night with friends (Moscovici, 2005). Therefore, from this research we have some comforting data about present *digital generation*. Youth are certainly able to use new multimedia technologies and spend most of their time (free or not) on the net, but they are well linked to the world of the real life that they don't consider subordinate to the *online* one. Youth believe and look for social direct emotional relationships and later, and only for increasing or perfecting them they use the net. *Online* relationships are surely less attractive, satisfactory than the real ones, and youth disguise themselves or are worried about what the other may think about them when they are on the net or using *social networks*, are less than we think. The limit for all this is that their interest moves in the narrow setting of their vital, local, territorial world, only little available (and formed) to wider openings, that we can say "extraterritorial", intercultural education can do a lot to increase it (Prensky, 2001).
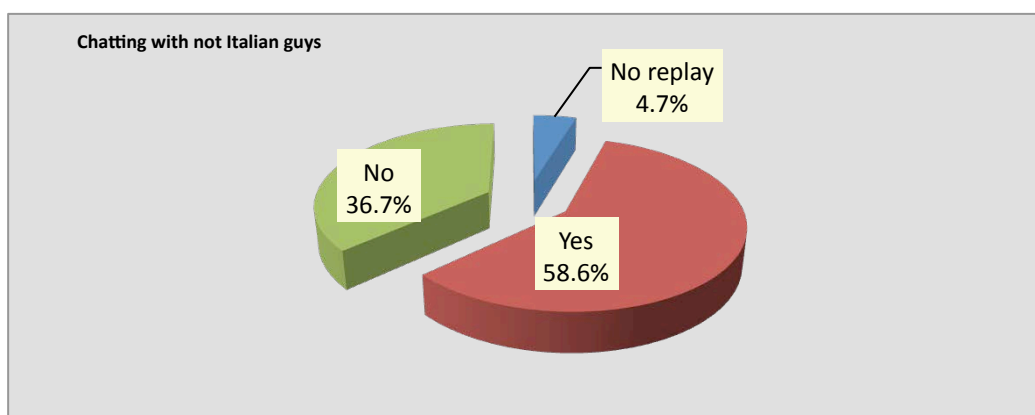

FIGURE 5. Chatting with not Italian guys.

Social networks are an useful resource to increase multicultural relationships that otherwise couldn't arise. It is not a good proof that 58.6% (673 cases) keep contact with not Italian guys and 32.5% of these met *offline*. Instead, 37% (249 cases) are *online* relationships born from direct introduction happened during a trip. For the aims of our research it is important to reiterated that *social networks* seem to be used by our guys especially to activate and/or increase their intra territorial contacts, less those extra territorial ones (linguistic skill indicator affects these relations, of course). This is proved by the low number of not Italian guys that don't live in Italy knowing on the net. Furthermore, among those who keep *online* contacts with not Italians, less than half chat with them sharing their experiences, while about half have short communications. A weak indicator that appears from this research is that *social networks* don't encourage "our" youth to know other cultures. In fact, from the one side, our students say in 45% of cases to use *social networks* rarely to know social and cultural aspects related to different countries, on the other side, over two-thirds of them never do it. Excusing partially these behaviours there is for a low percentage − less than 20% − the belief that those means are unsuitable to know different cultures, diverse from their own one. Examining in depth the link between cosmopolitism and new information technologies, we can say that from proper answers obtained, *digital generation* youth are little interested in placing themselves in the world and that they are wrapped up in living their everyday local world. Therefore, the interest for the different other doesn't arise spontaneously, but only after keeping in contact, and later the *social networks* can be the means to facilitate introduction. So, we could see that almost 40% of students interviewed believe that the Internet helps to build a personal idea of

surrounding world, while the uncertain ones are approximately one-third. But, above all, almost two-thirds of our young people even if they acknowledge that thanks to the Internet geographic distances have been permanently demolished, they believe that this net "power" does not make feel them citizens of the world but citizens in the world. Instead, if we analyse the answers of those students that have spent a period of a year studying abroad with Intercultura Program (called *returnés*) we can observe that 65% of *returnees* have never thought to use *networks* to learn about the country in which they would have had the experience of the study abroad with Intercultura program. Even for the same experience abroad lived by *returnees* with Intercultura program, less than a fifth has considered at least in some way helpful what they had learned from the Internet to adapt to the new cultural reality. Prior knowledge wasn't very fruitful for the 32%; in fact, for over 50%, the prior idea they had about the culture of the host country has been rejected. As a proof of this fact, there is the belief, which is widely available, that the emotions felt during their staying abroad were unpredictable. Real experience abroad was, therefore, different from the one they had supposed. So, in the abroad experience the use of the net is not an essential tool to know the new cultural reality, nor to start and manage interpersonal relationships, where – on the other hand – the straightforward contact, face to face relations were unique (Fornasari, 2010). As for students from Apulia and Piedmont, even our *returnees* totally agree – almost unanimously – that with Internet geographical distances are demolished.
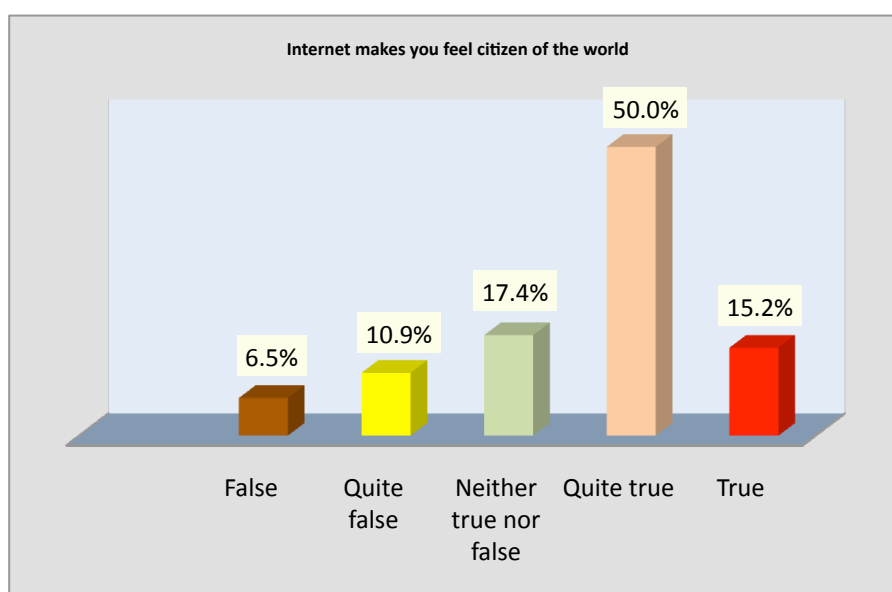
FIGURE 6. Internet makes you feel citizen of the world.

However in these last guys there is a greater belief both in the relation between the net and their cosmopolitan dimension and that one between Internet (*social networks above all*) and education to the world. In fact, over 65% believe that the Internet makes them feel citizens of the world, and above all, almost 60% think that the Internet and *social networks* are useful tools for intercultural education (Santelli, 2004).

5. Conclusions

We live unquestionably in a "globalized" era, where our luck was first that we could benefit

from the structures that have allowed us to travel a lot and to spend longer or shorter periods of staying abroad. We live in a society where the desirable paradigm seems to be represented, as supported by Bennet, by *self-determined citizenship*, a globalized society feature, structured on webbed connections, and on a consequent model of horizontal communication, without hierarchies, dynamic and enforced by the development of means that fosters collaboration, interaction and enduring participation between individuals, no longer considered as passive interlocutors, but equipped with a right of positive pro-active citizenship. So, the network is an amazing training of democracy, where practicing "active forms of democracy, in which each one is called to his task of citizen of the world". The well known German sociologist Ulrich Beck in his book *The cosmopolitan society* uses the word "cosmopolitan" in a revised and correct acceptation regard its ordinary meaning: in fact, we are not speaking anymore about a vague and ideal love for the whole humanity, quoting the author, of a gaze that is wondering about the meaning of the world, a sense of lack of borders. It is the network that allows us to be globalized and local in the same time, and being local is an empirical data that cannot be bring into question. This term was introduced by studies of sociologists as Roland Robertson and Zygmunt Bauman to indicate the phenomena originating from the impact of globalisation on local realities and vice versa (Bauman, 2001). During the transition from an international world to a *global and local* one in the same time, it was the new conception of the mobility to modify deeply all a sequence of conceptual standards that we used to know, among these the idea of citizenship, belonging and nationality (and therefore of the same idea of international relations) (Santerini, 1994). We should develop deep considerations about this transformation and the resulting new conceptualizations linked to the idea of border and territory. For those who deal with education and communication, the study of the network and the *social networks* and how these tools are used by teenagers, is one of the most relevant emergencies in the last years; with this research we have tried to answer to this challenge providing some answers and opening new scenarios of reflection.

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