THE USE OF THE INTERNET IN MEDIA EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT
The Internet has become the main information and data provider since its appearance at the end of the 20th century. Currently, all over the world, universities, as the main generators and consumers of information, stand at the top of the privileged organizations that have access to the Internet. Hence, being a tertiary student means not only having easy, quick, and cheap, even in most places free, access, but also being bombarded with information. This led to a considerable body of research into the attitudes and habits of using the Internet by the university students in the world as well as Turkey and North Cyprus.

The present study sets out to explore the attitudes of students, studying at the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, Eastern Mediterranean University, towards the use of the Internet as a source/tool for obtaining information for their course work, communication and otherwise. Data have been collected through a questionnaire designed in two parts: the first part seeks to collect information about the participants' genders, ages, departments, the year of studies, and their practice related to the use of the Internet and the second part related to their attitudes towards the use of various aspects of the Internet. The results indicate that students hold a positive attitude towards the use of the Internet both for academic and communication purposes. The Internet is considered as the best and fastest information provider and is necessary for tertiary students. Both the lecturers and students should have web-sites. They are, however, undecided about the trustworthiness of the information they find on the web or printing everything they find on it before reading. Furthermore, they are undecided about the fact that the Internet makes them feel lonely. The students also stated that they are undecided about online shopping, online banking, playing games on the Internet rather than doing any other hobby.
Keywords: Internet, tertiary media education, students' attitudes

INTRODUCTION
The Internet, a huge collection of computers connected to each other with networks within a single enormous net throughout the world, constitutes the largest electronic network (Warf and Grimes 1997). Nowadays, not only PCs or laptops but also netbooks, palms, personal digital assistants, mobile phones, even MP4 players and game consoles can connect to it in order to reach a digital medium of communication. The 'Internet' is used to refer to two things: "a technical infrastructure of computers and other digital devices permanently connected through high-speed telecommunication networks, and the forms of content, communication, and information sharing that occurs through these networks" (Flew, 2002:12).

In relation to the second meaning, the Internet provides easy access to information and communication. What is more, it lowers not only the cost but also the time needed for reaching the information. On the other hand, selecting the 'right' or 'good quality' information has become an issue. It also enables people to interact with each other (Kitchin 1998). On the Internet, like everything else, there is a wealth of information about the Internet. A Google search conducted in August 2009 indicated that there were approximately 1 610 000 000 entries about the Internet; about 332 000 000 about the history of the Internet; and in relation to the Internet and education, there were 310 000 000 sources. In addition to this bombardment of information, easy and cheap/free access to it demand different skills from 'read and digest' type of reading required in traditional education. On the Internet, there are also numerous articles on the use of the Internet in higher education. These articles have been written parallel to the developments in information technologies. The present study sets out to present a brief history of the Internet, the role of the Internet in tertiary education, particularly in media education, review of research related to the use of the internet in Higher education in the world, Turkey and North Cyprus. The results of a survey conducted with the students studying at the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies at the Eastern Mediterranean University.

A brief history of the INTERNET
The Internet was initially originated during the cold war, in the second part of the 20th century, for a network of 4 computers designed for military purposes by the US Department of Defense. This system was called Advanced Research Projects Agency Network (ARPANET). It was designed as a precaution against the nuclear attack

threats of the Soviet Union. These four computers communicated in separate computer networks (Gümüş 2004). Later, Local Area Networks (LANs) were developed and started to function by Transmission Control Protocol (TCP)/ and Internet Protocol (IP). The LANs were connected to Wide Area Networks (WANs) (ibid). It was in the 1990's that with the WWW (World Wide Web), the Internet gained its actual meaning (Flew 2002). Indeed, Jordan (1999:42) summarizes the developments in the early 1990's as: "Web pioneered in the 1990's, launched on the Internet around 1992 and had become widely adopted by 1994". This is due to the Hypertext Transfer Protocol (http), which led to the formation of the web-pages in its actual sense. The significant features of the Web can be summarized as: multimedia capability; hypertext principles; search engines; hypertext transfer protocol (Fleur 2002). Recently peer to peer (P2P) file sharing facility has been added to it.

WWW facilitated things like storing multimedia data as hypertext documents, on-line graphics, sound, moving pictures and the text (Cairncross 2005). What is more, through the WWW, people easily have access to enormous amount of information. The "search engines" such as Google, Yahoo, and Alta Vista provide access to data and information easily and quickly. Furthermore, one material can pave the way to the other related materials.

The Internet also added variety and facilitated personal communication through e-mail, chat programs and friendship websites. The forms of communication hold in the Internet medium are summarized as:

- One-to-one asynchronous communication (such as e-mail),
- Many-to-many asynchronous communication (Usenet, electronic bulletin boards),
- One-to-one, one-to-few, one-to-many synchronous communication (multi-user dungeons, chat rooms),
- One-to-one, one-to-many, many-to-one asynchronous communication (according to the need of the receivers, like web-sites) (Morris & Ogan 1996).

The Internet, higher education, and media education
In the 1960's, McLuhan drew our attention to the fact that, the media would convert the world into 'a global village'. This dream was realized, to a large extent, in the 1990's with the Internet. In the 'global village'; people have access to information without the boundaries of time or place. Indeed, the emergence of the Internet and its establishment has initiated discussions in higher education. Baer (1998:1) points out that:

> Now the Internet is being proposed as the preferred technology to improve instruction, increase access, and raise productivity in higher education. College and university instructors now routinely post their syllabi and course readings to the World Wide Web. A few use lectures and other instructional materials available on the Web in their own courses. A growing number of schools offer at least some extension or degree-credit courses over the Internet.

In "Trends in Educational Technology", as the second trend, Ely states: "The Internet has become a major source of information for students and teachers. In higher education, the use of the Internet to deliver instruction has been steadily growing" (Ely 2002:9). Quoting Gilberts, Ely mentions that: "this calls for a major shift toward 'learner-center' education". Ely (2002:11) sees some problems like the hesitation of the professors to change, reluctance of the professors to keep up with the technology, unwillingness of the institutions to provide sufficient personnel and financial assistance to cope with technology. Despite all these, the Internet has become the major source of information in higher education. Indeed, a research by the Pew Internet & American Life Project points out that the college students not only start using the internet very early but they also use it extensively (Jones, 2002). The study argues that the college students are more frequently online, check their e-mails, download music files and use instant messages in addition to using the internet for fun (surfing the Internet). Moreover, the study suggests that the Internet has contributed to the education of the tertiary students. The Internet has been used for communicating with their professors, conducting research and preparing projects with their peers and getting academic-oriented e-mails. Furthermore, it is reported that the Internet has altered the social life of the college students on campus. Jones (2002) further reports that college students use the Internet for social communication, entertainment, being in touch with friends and family.

Based on these developments and potential promises, the Internet has been considered to initiate a 'paradigm shift' in education (Goetz 2004:2). Similarly, Barr and Tagg (1995:12-14) suggest that:

> "A paradigm shift is taking hold in American higher education. In its briefest form, the paradigm that has governed our colleges is this: A college is an institution that exists to provide instruction. Subtly but profoundly we are shifting to a new paradigm: A college is an institution that exists to produce learning. This shift changes everything. In the Instruction Paradigm, the mission of the college is to provide

instruction, to teach. The method and the product are one and the same. The means is the end. In learning paradigm, the mission of the college is to produce learning. The method and the product are separate. The end governs the means."

In addition to Internet's role as information provider in conventional on-campus higher education; it has also been used as a tool for distance education. Based on the innovations, it has even been suspected that the Internet would replace the universities. Hundt (1999), for example, quotes a colleague who lists the function of the universities as four: firstly, as the owner of the libraries; secondly, as the place where academicians meet; thirdly, as the institutions that give degrees and fourthly as the places for contemplation. However, the Internet, currently, can fulfill all of these functions, and thus, can replace the universities. Miller (2001) further suggests that America's college class of 2001 indicates that almost 100 percent of the college students are connected to the internet. The college students "may well be more literate, creative, and socially skilled because of their early familiarity with the internet, including trying out various aspects of their developing identity online" (Rice, 2001: 124).

However, there are reactions against the dominant role of the Internet in education. Baer (1998:18) argues that "learning from the Internet will complement rather than supplant on-campus traditional higher education ... the Internet may not transform higher education, at least for the foreseeable future, but it will enrich the educational choices generally available to all categories of learners". Similarly, Daniel (2000) argues that:

> "The Internet is such a remarkable technological advance that we must devote our best intellects to ensuring that it promotes, rather than undermines, the millennial ideal of the university. If we do our job well the internet could indeed become the most revolutionary innovation in education since the invention of printing with movable type".

In addition to facilitating the provision of information, new communication technologies and the Internet also altered the style of communication. In other words, the type of mass communication from one-to-many changed to many-to-many. By removing the boundaries of time and place, the Internet has also lifted the boundaries that stood in the way of reaching the information. This also altered the traditional meaning attached to the 'media' as the provider of one-way information from the writer/ designer/ producer to the audience. "Good quality" or 'reliable' sources created 'gatekeepers' for 'quality sources'. On the other hand, the facilities of the new information technologies have influenced the media not only economically and politically, but also, both locally and globally. In other words, as the boundaries of communication disappear, the cost of the media companies' fall, and, as a result rich media patrons start to monopolize the media institutions. This promotes the Internet as being the only medium to which everyone can contribute. Media students not only have information and skills of using the Internet but also the background information about the media and the construction of the media texts, and, therefore, should be well equipped about the information included in the messages and be able to discard the unwanted/junk information.

On the one hand, some writers emphasize the significance of the Internet as the provider of the fast, cheap and easy access to the information; on the other hand, reliability of the information found on the Internet has been challenged. Some writers even claim that the Internet has become 'a dustbin of information' (Çelik and Karaaslan 2005). Therefore, the tertiary students are in the need of been trained in order to develop their ability to select the necessary and appropriate information from the Internet.

Research into the Use of Internet by Tertiary Students in the World, Turkey and North Cyprus
At the beginning of the new millennium, higher education literature is bombarded with articles related to the use of the Internet by university students all over the world, in Turkey and North Cyprus. Some of these studies are given below in chronological order.

Perry et. al. (1998) research into the possible differences among attitudes of the university students in the South-Eastern USA towards the Internet according to the age. They report that all university students, at any age, use the Internet regularly. Crews and Feinberg (2002) report the results of research conducted in the USA on university students who live in the urban, rural and suburban areas. Their findings indicate that difference in means show a medium effect size between the times of week urban students access the Internet when compared to rural students. Similar results are observed for the difference in means between the perceptions of the students with regard to the item that the social service applications are crucial in rural areas. It is suggested that the rural areas are somehow left behind in relation to the "information superhighway".

Selwyn, Marriott and Marriott (2000) report a study "Net Gains or Net Pains? Business Students' Use of the Internet". The study is conducted with 77 students from two different universities in the UK. They look at the factors that make students use the Internet in the university. Four aspects that are identified are as follows: 1) the ways the students are introduced to the Internet; 2) operational problems faced when using the Internet as a source of information; 3) the ways they treat the information they find on the Internet; and 4) social aspect of learning on the Internet. A study on the Internet use of the second year undergraduate students conducted in Malaysia by Hong, Ridzuan, Kuek (2003) shows that students have positive attitude towards the Internet as a learning tool, they have adequate fundamental knowledge of the Internet, and consider their learning environment as supportive for learning.

A research on the "Internet Awareness and Use in the University of Ghana" conducted by Badu and Markwei (2005) conclude that all academic staff and postgraduate students at the University of Ghana are aware of the Internet resources, particularly the email and WWW. What is more, these are the most used sources. However, the frequency of use is very low. The participants note that they use discussion groups and use net both for social and research purposes. Yet, library stands as the main source of information for research.

Peng et. al. (2006) conduct a study on the tertiary students' perception of the Internet. They confirm that university students have positive attitude towards the Internet and adequate Internet self-efficacy. They further suggest that these students see the Internet as a functional tool/technology. In their study, they report that male students rate higher in their positive attitude towards the Internet that their female peers. What is more, those students who consider the Internet as a leisure tool demonstrate more positive attitudes and communicative self-efficacy than students who use the Internet as a functional tool. In regard to the Internet perceptions, male students consider the Internet as a toy, females, on the other hand, consider it as a tool.

Bon (2007) reports the results of a study in Africa. She explores whether the Internet in university education in Africa has an impact on social and economic development and recommends that African countries need good and inexpensive Internet services in order to become "information societies" universities should collaborate in order to enhance the information and communication technologies for society.

Luan et. al. (2008) look at the gender differences in the use and attitudes of the university students in Malaysia. In the study, male and female student teachers' reaction to the Internet is sought. They find that there is no gender disparity in Internet usage. Their results contradict with other researchers. They maintain that regardless of gender, student teachers have positive attitudes toward the Internet.

Ogan, Ozakca, Groshek (2008) conduct a study in Indiana University in the USA about embedding the Internet in the lives of tertiary students. The findings suggest that the university students use the Internet more than 4 hours a day. All the students regard a positive impact of the Internet on their lives. For the news and information, 64% of the students prefer to consult Internet sources rather that offline sources. For political discussions, however, most of the respondents prefer offline discussion to those conducted online.

In addition to Badu & Markwei (2005) and Bon (2007), Rena (2008) reports the results of a study conducted in Africa. It is suggested that in order to become "information societies", African countries are in need of cheap Internet. Universities should be conscious about their significance in the development of their societies.

Selwyn, N. (2008) conduct a study on the differences of the undergraduate students' use of the Internet. 1222 students in higher education in the UK participated in the study. Findings suggest that students' academic use is more strongly associated with the lines of gender and subject specialism rather than any other individual characteristics or differences in technology access. What is more, the findings suggest that the Internet is used for communicative purposes such as e-mail, chat room, blogging more than reaching information for educational purposes.

Gras (2009) reports the results of research that was conducted in Spain on 5169 students. It is concluded that ICT altered all aspects of social life but university students and digital illiteracy is almost nonexistent. Internet is mostly used as a source of information, then as an entertainment provider.

Young (2009) conducts a research with 752 Australian university students use of the Internet for communication, recreation, information, production, and transaction activities on the Internet. It was found that the Internet is used mainly for communication and information-seeking purposes. Production technologies, on the other hand, are used less.

In a similar vein, in the Turkish context, research articles related to the Internet and tertiary education proliferated recently. Dursun, (2004) makes a study in Malatya, Turkey on the aims of the tertiary students for using the Internet. 311 students responded point out that the majority of the university students learn how to use the computer and the Internet on their own (52.4%) rather than learning it in schools. He suggests that there should be an increase in the milieu in which students can use the computer and the Internet. Students use the Internet mostly for communicating via e-mail, obtaining online news and following the media. The Internet is least used for gaining money from the Internet. In relation to education, the Internet is mostly used for research and doing home work and least for distance education.

Rüzgar (2005) carries out a survey in Marmara University in Istanbul among 744 students. He points out that 52 % of tertiary students use the Internet for 6-20 hours per week. Most of the students indicate that the primary reasons for using the Internet is to make use of the Internet services.

In another study, Toprakçı (2007) investigates the profiles of the university students in Turkey concerning the study purposes. He concludes that the most frequently used activities are: e-mail (59.2%), study (49.1%), news (41.7%), chat (32.2%), games (29.2%), sports (26.9%), shopping (16.9%), travelling (14%), finance (10.6%), pornography (9.7%), and betting–gambling (8.7%).

Ceyhan & Ceyhan (2007) reports a research they conduct on the problematic Internet usage behaviors of the Turkish university students. They find that male students' problematic Internet behavior is significantly higher than the female students. What is more, academically less successful students have significantly higher problematic Internet behavior than the successful ones. Furthermore, they observe that as the students' average Internet usage time per week increased, problematic Internet usage increased simultaneously. Problematic Internet usage also differs according to the students' reason for using it.

Aydın (2007) conducts a research with the EFL students in Balıkesir University in Turkey. He points out that those students who have their own computers have more positive attitudes towards the Internet as a universal library. He lists considering the Internet as a universal library, the fastest way to teach knowledge, a tool that creates close relationships among societies, a tool used for an effective training, a tool for research, an information provider, a tool for exchanging cultures and a facilitator of positive attitudes towards life. What is more, university students disagree that the Internet does not provide unnecessary or non-useful information. They do not consider it as a threat for societies or consider it as a source of cultural dilemma. On the other hand, they think that the Internet separates them from real life, creates addiction, and makes people feel lonely. Likewise, they think that the Internet does not establish settled friendships or endless freedom for people or socialization. Also, they do not agree that shopping is a safe activity on the Internet.

Tekinarslan (2009) investigates Turkish university students' perceptions of the WWW as a learning tool. He points out that among the Turkish undergraduate students, research is the most common activity (86.3%) followed by e-mail (76.3%) while shopping (18.3%) is the least popular activity. The results show similarities with the findings of the study conducted in Malaysia by Sam et. al. (2005) and Luan et. al. (2005).

In a study conducted at the Eastern Mediterranean University in North Cyprus, İşman and Dabaj (2004) suggest that both the undergraduate and graduate students had positive attitude towards the Internet. Most importantly, students consider the Internet as a universal library (76.6%); as a tool that provides easy life (69.9%); the fastest way to reach knowledge (67.6%); a digital place that creates close relationships among societies (51.4%). They suggest that foreign language used on the Internet is not an obstacle for using the Internet; the Internet is a digital medium that links societies; and it provides easy life. İşman, Dabaj and Gümüş (2006) conduct a research about the Internet addiction at the Eastern Mediterranean University, North Cyprus with graduate students and PhD candidates. Their results show that despite the fact that North Cyprus is a developing country, these students use the Internet heavily for getting information.

The present study sets out to explore the Internet use and the attitudes of the tertiary media students studying at the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, at the Eastern Mediterranean University located in North Cyprus towards the use of the Internet not only as a source of information but also as a tool of obtaining information for the academic projects. In this context, the Internet has been used as a supplement to the traditional, on-campus education. Some lecturers post their lecture notes on the Web. Posting course descriptions on the Web was advised to the lecturers in the 2005-2006 academic year's Spring Semester. However, for the course work, students are encouraged to use the sources found on the Internet in addition to the printed material.

METHOD

For the present study, quantitative methodology was used. The study was conducted at the Eastern Mediterranean University's (EMU), Faculty of Communication and Media Studies (FCMS). Data was collected through a questionnaire consisting of two parts: in the first part, information about the students (like their field of study, age etc.) and the way they use of the Internet was sought. In the second part, the attitudes of the students towards the Internet and the information obtained from it were explored. For this part, questions were written according to the five-point Likert Scale. In this study, values attached to the choices are as follows: 1=Strongly Agree, 2= Agree, 3=Undecided, 4=Disagree, 5= Strongly Disagree. The scale division Balcı (2004) recommends has been used as follows: (1-1.79) Strongly Agree; (1.80- 2.59) Agree; (2.60- 3.39) Undecided; (3.40- 4.19) Disagree; (4.20- 5.0) Strongly Disagree.

The sample for the study was drawn from the junior and senior students of the three Departments of the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, which are; the Public Relations and Advertising, the Radio Television and Film and the Journalism. Initially, the researchers carried out semi-structured interviews. Data obtained from these interviews were used in constructing the questionnaire, which was the main data collection instrument of the study. Approximately 10% of the student population of the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies participated in the study. 100 students were selected randomly from the junior and senior students and were asked to fill the questionnaire forms. The research participants were selected from the junior and senior students on purpose to ensure that they had reasonable experience as the students studying media. For analyzing the data, SPSS program and descriptive statistics were used. The alpha coefficient of reliability level for the instrument was 0.8469 indicating that the instrument is reliable.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Out of the 100 students, 62 (62%) were males and 38 (38%) were females. One student did not mention his/her gender. 3% of the participants were in the age gap 17-19, 45% were between the ages of 20-22, 42% were 23-25 years old, 10% above the age of 25. According to the departments they are studying, 65 of them were from the Public Relations and Advertising, 28 were from the Radio Television and Film and 7 of them were from the Journalism Department. These numbers approximately reflect the ratio of the students studying in these departments.

The senior year students were 53% and the students in the freshman, sophomore and junior year were 47% of the sample. The majority of the sample was from Turkey (58%), followed by students from North Cyprus (38%), and the rest (4%) were from the various countries of the world. These numbers also reflect the ratio of the country of origin of these students.

Following the demographic information, the participants were asked whether they used the Internet or not. 98% of the participants replied this question in the affirmative. 49% of the research participants stated that they mostly used the Internet at home, 28% at the net cafes and 21% at the university. This suggests that the students at the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies have access to and use the Internet to a large extent.

The students were also asked for how long they had been using the Internet. The majority of the participants had been using the Internet for more than 5 years. 35% between 3-5 years. 13% for 1-2 years and the rest had been using it less than a year (6%). These findings suggest that the younger generation have been exposed to the Internet at a very early age.

In relation to the main reason for using the Internet, 41% stated that they used the Internet for conducting research for school-related projects; 23% for sending and receiving e-mails; 10% for chatting and 10% for playing games. Using the Internet to obtain the news was not very common as the main reason for using the net among the media students. Furthermore, whether the students got the daily news from the Internet was also explored. 31% of the students preferred to check the news every day from the Internet, 24% once a week, 21% twice a week 9% once a month. 14% of the respondents indicated that they had never used the Internet to obtain the news. This suggests that the students studying at the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies do not consider the Internet as the main source of daily news.

Among the tertiary students studying at the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, the most common Internet package was the Superonline (48%); followed by the Net House. The students were also asked how many of their lecturers kept their course notes on the Internet. 53% said that only a few of their instructors kept their notes on the Web. The next question sought to clarify whether the students were willing to see the course materials of their teachers on the Internet. 72 % of the participants replied this question in the affirmative.

Hence, it could be concluded that the respondents strongly agreed on the usefulness of having the lecture notes on the Internet.

The most popular search engine among the students is 'Google' (79%); followed by 'Yahoo' (15%); 'Altavista' (3%) and 'Arabul' (3%) are the least popular search engines. The students were asked the duration of time they spent on the Internet every day. The majority of the respondents (44%), spent 1or 2 hours; 26% spent 3 or 4 hours; 13% spent 5 hours or more; but the rest (17%) spent less than one hour on the Internet every day. What the students did after reaching the information they wanted was another question asked. The majority (57%) claimed that they 'copy and paste' the information they found; followed by 'read and select' (36%) and 'cite' the information they had found' (6%).

When the students were asked how often they went to the net cafes, the majority (28%) stated that they visited the net cafes once a month; 17% every day, 15% twice a week; 9% once a month. 14% of the respondents indicated that they had never gone to the net cafes. The students were also asked how much time they spent on the net cafes. 37% stated to have spent 1-2 hours; 20% 3-4 hours, 4% more than 5 hours. 26% stated that they spent less than one hour every day.

The research participants were asked questions about the role of the Internet as information provider. Table 1 summarizes the averages of questions about the Internet as an information provider.

Table 1: Internet as an information provider

Statements	Mean	Attitude
1. I use the Internet as the main information provider because it is easy to reach.	2.01	A
2. I prefer doing research for my projects on the Internet rather than going to the library.	2.16	A
3. The Internet works as a digital library.	1.83	A
4. The Internet is the fastest way of reaching information.	1.84	A
5. The Internet provides unnecessary information as well.	2.77	U
6. I not only use the Internet to receive information but also respond to the information provided.	2.26	A
7. Information obtained from the Internet is enough for me for doing my projects.	2.37	A
8. The Internet is the best information provider.	1.84	A
9. On the Internet, there is a lot of unnecessary information.	2.53	A
10. When I search for certain information on the Internet, I print everything before reading.	2.80	U
11. The information I get from the Internet is trustworthy.	2.87	U
12. Instead of getting the information that already exists, I subscribe to the necessary sites.	1.96	A
13. Rather than books, I prefer to get the information from the Internet.	2.11	A
14. At the university, students should be given projects based on the Internet.	2.34	A

Number of respondents (n= 100), A stands for 'agree'; U stands for 'undecided'.

Table 1 indicates that the tertiary media students agree with the role of the Internet as the best and the fastest information provider since it is easier to reach information as a digital library. The results indicate that they prefer to get information from the Internet rather than books. They further agree that the Internet is enough as a source for doing projects and that university students should be given projects based on the Internet. They not only receive information but also respond to the information provided and they subscribe to the necessary sites. They are, however, undecided about the necessity or trustworthiness of the information accessed through the Internet. For dealing with the information they reach, they are undecided about printing everything they found before reading. Since they do not disagree with this statement it may suggest that they lack the necessary skills like skimming and scanning that can be used for eliminating the unnecessary information.

Students studying at the FCMS at EMU were also asked questions on the role of the Internet as a communication tool.

Table 2: Internet as a communication tool

Statements	Mean	Attitude
1. I prefer e-mail to establish contacts with my friends (students) and teachers.	2.18	A
2. Chatting programs such as MSN and ICQ are necessary for me.	1.90	A
3. The Internet makes me lonely.	3.00	U
4. Internet is the best mass communication device.	2.15	A

5. The Internet connection should be kept open for 24 hours a day.	2.32	A
6. I receive a lot of junk mail on my e-mail.	2.33	A
7. I read every e-mail I receive.	2.49	A
8. I delete the mails of the people I don't know.	2.53	A

Number of respondents (n 100)

Table 2 presents the averages of the responses given in relation to the use of the Internet as a communication device. Above all, they agree that the Internet is the best mass communication medium and they should have 24 hours access to it. They further agree that they use e-mail and chatting facilities presented by the Internet. They receive a lot of junk mail and they read every e-mail they receive. However, they delete the mails of the people they do not know. Since e-mail is a personal means of communication, they probably eliminate the mails that do not appeal to them. They are undecided whether the Internet makes them lonely. It seems that the students studying at the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies do not consider the Internet as something that makes them feel lonely, on the contrary, they socialize through the Internet.

The students were also asked questions about their attitudes towards the Internet as a student, facilities of the Faculty and the use of the Internet in general.

Table 3 Attitudes towards the Internet

Statements	Mean	Attitude
1. I prefer on-line shopping to traditional shopping.	2.87	U
2. I do banking on-line.	3.04	U
3. I prefer playing games on the Internet rather than doing any other hobby.	2.72	U
4. EMU computer laboratories provide fast and easy access to the Internet.	2.77	U
5. The Internet is important for the students studying at the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies	1.90	A
6. In time, the Internet creates addiction.	2.33	A
7. It is not safe to do shopping on the Internet.	2.73	U
8. It is good to download music from the Internet.	1.99	A
9. It is good to download films from the Internet.	2.10	A
10. Every student should have access to the Internet.	2.08	A
11. University students should have a web-site.	2.56	A
12. The Internet is the best entertainment provider.	2.18	A
13. The Internet must only be used in our free times.	2.34	A
14. Lecturers should have a web-site.	2.05	A
15. I do like and prefer online registration.	2.47	A

Number of respondents (n 100)

The results suggest that students show agreement with the facilities they use and are undecided about what they are not very familiar with (such as online shopping or banking). They are also undecided whether they prefer playing games on the Internet to any other hobby. Besides, they are undecided about the fast and easy access provided by the computer laboratories of the university. However, they agree that the Internet is significant for the media students. Also, they point out that both their lecturers and students themselves should have web-sites. The Internet is considered to be the best entertainment tool to which every student should have access. The Internet is considered to make addiction and should only be used at their leisure. It is used for downloading films, music, books, games, and programs. Moreover, the respondents indicated agreement with doing their registration online.

Two significant issues seem to emerge from the data. Firstly, the Internet infrastructure should be updated. Since the technology develops fast in our day, it seems that the universities should be able to provide the best infrastructure to their students. Secondly, the tertiary students should be guided through not only till they reach the information, but also about what to do when they reach the information on skills like skimming, scanning, quoting and paraphrasing. They need to be able to discard the junk information and get on with what is reliable. Agreement with the statement that they subscribe to the related web-sites indicates that they are conscious about the junk they may encounter on the Internet when looking for information.

CONCLUSION
In conclusion, the data collected for the study suggest that the tertiary media students widely use the Internet both as a communication device and as an information provider. In general, they agree with the facilities of the

Internet they are familiar with. They are, however, undecided about the uses of the Internet that they are not so familiar with. In relation to communication, they are aware of the existence of the Internet as a mass media tool. They use the Internet both for e-mail and chat programs. They suggest that they eliminate also eliminate the junk mail.

The data suggest that, in addition to using the Internet as a source of information, Communication and Media students also use it as a tool of communication. As it has been noted above, tertiary students consider the Internet as the main information provider and sufficient source for their school projects. They prefer doing research for their projects on the Internet rather than visiting the library. They consider the Internet as the fastest way of reaching information. Research participants point out that they not only use the Internet to receive information but they also respond to the information they find on the Internet. Moreover, they agree that they should be given projects based on the Internet. They admit that on the Internet, there is a lot of unnecessary information but are undecided whether to consider the Internet as 'unnecessary information provider'. However, it is suggested that when they reach the information, rather than reading, understanding, quoting or eliminating the unwanted information the students simply print it. This may be a global problem. However, in this context, where the medium of instruction is English, a foreign language to the students; language barrier makes the issue even more complicated. The students, thus, need to be trained not only in skills (like skimming, scanning, eliminating unnecessary information) but also with the language.

When the students consider the Internet as a communication tool they point out that it is the best mass communication tool and they should have 24 hour access to it via computers. They prefer e-mail to establish contacts with their friends and family. Chatting programs such as MSN live messenger and ICQ are necessary for the respondents. The Communication and Media Faculty students claim that they receive a lot of junk mail. They point out that they delete the mails of the people they are not familiar with. They participants are undecided whether the Internet makes them lonely probably because they socialize through the Internet. This is their means for keeping in touch with their friends and family.

When the students attitudes towards the Internet are explored they seemed to show agreement with the activities they are familiar with and are undecided about the ones they are unfamiliar with such as on-line shopping, on-line banking, playing games on the Internet rather than doing any other activities. They agree that Internet creates addiction, it is a good source for downloading music and films. The Internet is considered to be the best entertainment provider. They agree that both the students and the lecturers should have web-pages.

In conclusion, the media students need to be made more conscious about handling the information they reach on the Internet and be trained about how to deal with the enormous amount of information they have access to through the new technologies. Indeed, McMillan & Morrison (2006) draw our attention to the fact that young people should be trained. In other words, "media literacy programs are needed to help young adults critically evaluate and sort through information available on the web. While young people should be encouraged to explore new views and expand their worlds, they should also be educated in how information is assembled and disseminated and how persuasive arguments are framed around information" (McMillan & Morrison, 2006). In the new millennium, an era in which new communication technologies and advancements have been continuously taking place, and new wants are formed as a result of these developments, a different approach to education is required. Indeed, it is suggested that: "Maximizing technology's effectiveness requires well-trained and supported faculty who can use the Internet as a major component of the teaching and learning process. Government policy needs to be certain that these institutions, and the students they serve, are not left behind the Internet explosion" (Merisotis, 2001:12).

Indeed, Uşun (2003) recommends that:

> We must not see the Internet as the key to solve the problems of Turkish education. The Internet is not a key or unique source, but it is only supportive, effective and interactive communication technology in distance education to move Turkey into the 21st century named "information age".

Since the education system in North Cyprus is very similar to Turkish education system, Uşun's recommendation well applies to the education system in North Cyprus.

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