

WHAT ...?

Social media = a term used to describe the type of media that is based on conversation and interaction between people online.

Social network site = an online community of internet users.

Facebook = a social network that connects people with friends and others who live, study and work around them.

'Like' and 'Unlike' = 'Like' is a way to give positive feedback or connect with things you care about on Facebook. You can 'like' content that your friends post or pages that you want to connect with on Facebook. By clicking on 'Unlike' you give negative feedback or disconnect with things you don't care about.

Twitter = a social networking and microblogging service that enables its users to send and read short messages known as tweets.

LinkedIn = a business-oriented social networking site;

MSN messenger = a program to (video)chat, send instant messages and files online.

ABOUT DIGIVAARDIG & DIGIBEWUST AND HER DIGITAL YOUTH COUNCIL

Digivaardig & Digibewust (Digitally skilled & Digitally aware), the public information service on the Internet in the Netherlands appointed by the European Commission, is a joint venture of the government (Ministry of Economic Affairs), trade and industry (Microsoft, UPC, KPN, NVB, SIDN, NVPI and others), which aims at increasing the knowledge of and trust in the opportunities of digital media with the Dutch users. The Digital Youth Council was founded in 2006 in order to allow young people to have more influence on how they wish to be informed about safe surfing. They regularly advise our Secretary of State for Economic Affairs on various subjects.

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DI@I vaardig &
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CALL TO THE WORLD:
Don't underestimate the digital
knowledge of youngsters,
acknowledge and use
it instead!



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INTRODUCTION

The Dutch Digital Youth Council, consisting of youngsters who advise amongst others the Dutch ministry of Economic Affairs about a safer digital environment for youths, is aware that the rapid digitization of our world is a subject of discussion; how we are behaving in this environment and how we should start to behave in it. A group that seemingly has no problems in doing so are the adolescents. Since this is the future generation, the Digital Youth Council attaches great value to their opinion. The members of the Council wish to shed light on the impact that the digitization of our world has on our societies; they also try to convince people that we can learn a lot from the digital generation. We should not underestimate the digital knowledge of youngsters, we should acknowledge it and use it instead! Therefore the Digital Youth Council calls on the world to involve more young people in policymaking, product development, business cases etc. The Council offers governments and industry all over the world practical tools to consult young people. How can businesses and governments involve youngsters? With this document the Digital Youth Council will help you find a way to do so.

KEEP IN MIND!

- Your tone of voice, stay clear of using 'popular' language if it doesn't suit your communication strategy. Don't approach youngsters in a childish way, but don't use too much jargon either;
- Youngsters prefer to be well-informed; ensure to be clear and complete in your communication;
- If you like to attract and retain their attention, make sure your message is and stays appealing to them. Once they lose interest, it's hard to win them back;
- The perception youngsters may have of an organization or government institution; try to draw a gripping image for them;
- What's in their interest?; For instance think of something in reward for their involvement;
- The trouble they have to take; make things easily accessible, so for instance; don't ask them to fill in personal information;
- The subjects these youngsters are interested in, such as education, sports and leisure activities, computer games and ICT-applications.

CHANCES AND OPPORTUNITIES

For the business community and the government adolescents are an essential target group, who can make a valuable contribution to production and management processes. It would be a waste of knowledge not to make use of their opinion, experience and skills. This digital generation is the future and can help you to reach your business goals. But how do you involve young people in our activities and how can you reach them?

START WITH A FOCUS GROUP

The Digital Youth Council advises to start with a representative focus group. Actually get in touch with this group (about 10-15 people) via social networking sites or call on them in the media, concentrate on them by face-to-face meetings and try to reach more youngsters by talking to them. Word-of-mouth communication is a very effective means among youngsters.

By making use of social media, this group of 10-15 youngsters can help you reach thousands of other youngsters.

ONLINE YOUTH FORUM

The internet is an easy and quick way to make contact with a large number of youngsters. Here many youngsters can be found, it is where they go to keep informed, where they express their identity and keep in touch with their friends.

Effective means to make use of social media are Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and MSN Messenger.

Besides these, each country makes use of their 'own' social network site. In Finland IRC-Galleria is very popular, Japan makes use of Mixi and Australian youngsters can't live without Orkut. Youngsters use these sites to communicate with friends, to exchange photos and to play online games. Social network sites are the quickest way to reach many youngsters and to ask for their opinion or contribution.

There are several ways to express your ideas via social media. The Digital Youth Council advises organizations to use social networks like Facebook to reach as many youngsters as possible.

They make the following suggestions:

- Distribute short surveys among youngsters;
- Start online discussion forums and put forward a few propositions;
- Follow the discussion the youngsters have;
- Ask them to evaluate the subjects under discussion, to 'like' or 'unlike' the subjects;.

According to the Digital Youth Council a well-known blogger on a social network site could also make a positive contribution.

Such a person could serve as a 'binding' force and also draw their attention to particular information.

Via the social network sites youngsters may look up this person, follow and/or approach him/her.

OTHER SUGGESTIONS

made by the Council to help organizations involve youngsters are:

- Start a (weekly) 'question hour' for youngsters via social media, during which youngsters can interview an organization, a politician or a government official or have a discussion with them;
- Open an online 'comment box' or live chat in which youngsters can leave their reactions to particular subjects or propositions and where they can exchange experiences;
- Offer short work placements or traineeships to youngsters to allow them an inside view of an organization or government institution;
- Organize guest lectures at schools for secondary and higher education to inform youngsters and enter into a discussion with them about topical developments. This may yield innovative ideas!