The opinion poll of students on the use of internet activity in education

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Abstract. The article reveals various aspects of the use of Internet activity in the process of education in the system of higher education. The functional capabilities of electronic educational resources for students, the advantages of working in an electronic library are picked up for work. An empirical investigation is aimed to opinion poll of students about the use of Internet activity is described. The research results of the study made it possible to characterize public opinion about the use of Internet resources by students in educational activities rather as unfavorable.

Informatization of education is one of the most important modern trends in its reform in Russia and in other countries. The framework for the use of computers and information technology in the learning process is constantly expanding. At the government level of the Russian Federation it is dealing with the problems of mass use of computer technologies at all levels of education.

Another peculiarity of modern society is the tremendous speed of knowledge renewal; scientists call this phenomena “information explosion”. In this regard teachers, educational psychologists and other specialists in the field of education are required to constantly improve their skills, including using the Internet. For this, it is important that the future teacher possesses the appropriate working skills.

Many people are sure that the Internet for a modern student is not something new, mysterious or inaccessible. Most of young people have already mastered the most sought-after opportunities. For example, access to the sites with published student papers (reports, review papers, course papers, graduate papers); search for new films and clips; participation in online games; sharing information on social networks, etc. But more often this is what caused the problems of low cognitive activity of students, bias of assessments, conflicts between students and teachers, etc. These circumstances determine the relevance of our poll.

The purpose of our poll is to identify the conditions for the effective use of Internet activities in psychological and pedagogical education. We assume that one of the factors affecting the efficiency of using Internet activities is a public opinion prevailing in the student community. That is why it requires a separate study.

Analysis of work experience suggests that universities provide the informatization of education, mainly due to the development of electronic resources for each subject studied.

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The analysis of psychological and pedagogical literature has shown that electronic educational resources can cover the content of the entire educational process in a complex. Their structure can be represented by a combination of training, information technology and regulatory components [1].

The most common types of electronic educational resources for university students are electronic textbooks, testing systems, information-retrieval reference systems, and culture-universal activities.

In recent years, much attention has been paid to improving electronic educational resources. They are subject to quite high requirements in such parameters as: providing interactivity, taking advantage of multimedia and performance [2]. Researchers are also studying various aspects of distance education [3] and the use of information technologies in the educational process [4]. A large number of works devoted to the use of electronic educational resources in the studying of individual disciplines.

An analysis of the functional capabilities of electronic educational resources for students made it possible to single out the most significant of them: the use of teaching materials for the courses taught by teachers of other universities; communication with students of other universities studying in similar specialties; exchange of information with stakeholders on the topic of the study.

Internet provides considerable assistance to the students with independent work. This is not only a search for the necessary information, but also communication with other users, for example, in a group on a social network. Such interaction can be no less effective than group work in the classroom. It contributes to the development of students’ teamwork skills (communication, analytical, organizational skills), which in modern society is in demand in many professional activities [5].

A number of advantages are the work in electronic libraries:
- the opportunity to work at a time convenient for the student;
- access to any information sources (which are located in other cities);
- time saving due to optimization of work with texts (no need to pre-compile or photocopy the text).

Among the most ambitious Internet activities, educational platforms (for example, Coursera) should be noted, allowing anyone to access subject programs developed by leading teachers of the best universities.

However, for these opportunities to be fully utilized by students, skills are required to work with information resources of the Internet:
- ability to work with different search engines;
- ability to work with different interfaces;
- ability to analyze and organize a large amount of information.

As a rule, electronic educational resources are posted on the websites of universities or libraries; access to them is open to students. But, as experience shows, students often use very dubious Internet activities. In our opinion, this is due to the prevailing opinion about the possibilities of using Internet activities in education and, in general, about the quality of education.

One of the serious problems, according to I.A. Kolesnikova, consists in the fact that “the public access to almost any required educational information poses a serious risk of imitation of an educational product” [6, p. 20]. Indeed, not many students complete educational tasks on their own, therefore, the assessment set by the teacher for the quality of the assignment does not always correspond to the student’s real achievements.

Those measures that are being taken in universities to combat imitation of learning (checking student work for plagiarism, performing test work in the classroom, etc.) do not give sustainable results. In our opinion, this problem can only be solved by forming public opinion, which condemns such actions of students. We proceed from the fact that public
opinion, as a socio-psychological phenomenon, is characterized by public expression and a fairly wide distribution. The subject of public opinion is society as a whole or individual social groups (territorial, demographic, cultural, etc.). It is one of the significant regulators of the behavior of people belonging to these groups. In the framework of our poll, the opinion of students for whom the studied problem is relevant is of interest.

An analysis of psychological literature showed that “statements characterizing the content of public opinion comprise an assembly of elements that are generally rational and emotional in nature. The key element around which all the others are grouped is a social assessment of the object of utterances” [7, p. 233]. It is generally accepted that assessments expressed by public opinion can be either positive (approval) or negative (condemnation). However, there are situations when public opinion is balanced, i.e. positive and negative assessments balance each other.

One of the main functions of public opinion is to receive feedback, evaluate the performance of any institutions, organizations, etc. This function can be expressed in the form of tips or suggestions for solving acute problems. The problem is that public opinion is not always competent enough in certain issues. In our poll, serious attention was paid to the analysis of students' opinions on the most acute issues affecting not only cognitive, but moral aspects of using Internet activities in educational activities.

An empirical study aimed at studying students' opinions on the use of Internet activities was carried out at the Department of Psychology and Social Pedagogy of T.I. named after A.P. Chekhov (branch) RSUE (RINH). The survey involved 150 people studying in different courses of full-time and extramural departments. Of these, 40% are full-time students and 60% are extramural students. The age of respondents is from 18 to 40 years.

The testees were offered a specially designed questionnaire containing 9 questions relating to both the general problems of using Internet activities and individual socio-psychological aspects of the use of Internet activities by students.

We analyzed student responses across the entire selection. But when analyzing individual questions, the differences in the answers of full-time and extramural students were taken into account.

As a result of the analysis of the answers, it was found that 80% of the respondents either do not possess at all, or do not have enough Internet skills. As we expected, the indicators of full-time students were slightly higher: no one said that they did not know how to work with Internet activities at all, and about a third of the respondents indicated that they were satisfied with their competence. Such differences in the answers of full-time and extramural students can be explained by the difference in age. At an older age, it is certainly harder to learn new technologies. Not surprisingly, 12% of the responded extramural students marked that they did not know how to work on the Internet. However, they answered the remaining questions regarding the use of Internet activities [8, p. 25].

The analysis of the sites and search engines listed by students that they use has led to the conclusion that the students do not care which site they take information from. In favor of this is the fact that no student answered the question about the use of Internet activities in educational or professional activities that he never uses, or uses only when the teacher forces. Interestingly that in the answers to this question there is no difference between full-time and extramural students. 65% of respondents constantly use the Internet activities, the rest – when there are no other means (books).

One of the key questions for our study was the effect of the use of Internet activities on academic progress. None of the test subjects indicated a negative effect, although only 25% of the respondents noted a positive effect, the rest of the answers were distributed approximately equally between the options “does not affect” and “never thought about it”.

However, most students pay special attention to study and academic progress. Answering the question that they are most attracted to on the Internet, more than half
answered: a large amount of information is necessary for studying. In response to this question, we found quite large differences between full-time and extramural students. Student answers are presented in table 1.

These answers clearly demonstrate the real impact of the use of the Internet on the organization of interaction in the university. It is for students studying in the extramural department, such an opportunity plays a big role in educational activities. This influence is certainly positive.

Table 1. Answers to the question “What attracts you the most on the Internet?” Full-time and extramural students

| Possible answer                                      | The amount of full-time students answers (%) | The amount of extramural students answers (%) |
|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| a large amount of information necessary for studying at the university | 72%                                         | 60%                                         |
| the ability to communicate with other students and teachers | 64%                                         | 72%                                         |
| the ability to work in a large library               | 24%                                         | 12%                                         |
| the opportunities of professional development        | 24%                                         | 36%                                         |

An analysis of the answers to the last two questions allowed us to identify value judgments about the use of Internet activities by students in educational activities. So, most students (70%) see the advantages of using Internet activities in the fact that it is possible to find answers to any questions and work on any topic. The differences between the answers of full-time and extramural students are insignificant. This indicates that students do not see anything wrong with using someone else's work. Such an attitude leads to the justification of plagiarism and academic fraud in the implementation of academic research activity. In other words it creates a serious problem in educational activities and reduces the quality of professional training at the university. Interestingly that no student noted this answer to the question about the disadvantages of using Internet resources. However, none of the students agreed that there are no drawbacks to this. The answers were distributed approximately equally between the two remaining options: “lack or weakening of the teacher’s control of the students knowledge” and “use of poor quality materials”, which are very closely related.

As a result of the analysis, a disappointing conclusion can be made. Public opinion about the use of Internet activities by students in educational activities can be described more as unfavorable. Students do not see anything wrong with using someone else's intellectual work, most are calm, and some approve of plagiarism and fraud in the implementation of academic research work. All this testifies to the need for serious measures aimed not just at banning certain actions, but at changing public opinion in this matter.

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