

The digital native manifesto

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By Robert Dürhager
and Timo Heuer

We are the assimilators of digital culture; the lives we lead are digitized. This is our manifesto. It is intended for all those who want to communicate or collaborate with us.

We are the 'Generation Internet'

We are the evolution of the television generation whose collective fate of passivity even now still marks culture and society.

Because the lives of viewers take place behind closed doors, they develop their own individuality in opposition to the herd.

Yet whilst the television generation still hides behind pseudonyms in its excursions into the interactive Internet and never drops the role of the passive visitor, consuming content merely in a new way, we are the ones who truly live out interactivity as pro-active users.

This makes us individuals in the differentiation of our networks, ubiquitously and pervasively online, as peers in constant touch with our networks.

The exchange of culture in the net is our mission; an open society is our goal.

The Net impacts the world

We digital natives understand virtuality as part of reality. Even if virtuality is not a physical phenomenon, it still has a major influence on thought and feeling.

Consider the Internet as a mental space to see that its

impact is true reality. For us being online is not a flight from reality but participation in the virtually extended real world of the 21st century.

Networks make better problem-solvers

We work in networks and collaborate in dynamic and open network teams.

Collective intelligence plays a big role in our working lives. Crowdsourcing is a concept that doesn't just shape our way of working but our whole way of thinking, too.

The huge range of communication instruments now on hand – from micro-blogs to Wikis – means that we can collaborate with others at any time on any kind of topic.

A job that used to take hours can now take only a few minutes with a micro-posting. We do not measure the difficulty of a problem in terms of how much knowledge any one individual has but rather by his/her ability to communicate in networks.

Depending on the degree of individual networking, we can almost always find a solution to every problem.

Even so, crowdsourcing can only function when the work is accessible to all. This is why we digital natives call for digital openness and digital modernization of the world of work.



Too many ideas have withered before seeing the light of day. They never had a chance to change the world or at least garner sympathy for the venture.

Flexibilization, mobilization and globalization of work

Traditional nine-to-five jobs are a leftover from the industrial age. It is now high time to free work from the constraints of rigid labor models.

As network individuals, our global contacts are in different time zones so that traditional working hours are counterproductive for us. And we also want to bring more flexibility into the way we do our work.

Different tasks can be combined to make for quicker and more efficient performance while the synergy thus created can enrich content with new ideas.

In a similar vein, we are not bound to any particular workplace and prefer to use the spot that seems most convenient at the moment – a café, an office or a home office.

The Internet gives us easy access to all the relevant data and instruments no matter where we are.

Flexible, open domain modes of work, flat hierarchies, participation, trust, motivating challenges and results-oriented proper payment are the qualities of work we subscribe to.

Work can only be a private affair

Along with proper remuneration, our value system also recognizes the importance of personal

development and personal motivation.

Such a schema makes it difficult to differentiate between private life and the world of work.

For us it's a fact of life that many matters and concerns fall into both categories and thus must always be measured against personal benchmarks and general moral values.

This means we rate a workplace in terms of the opportunities for personal growth it offers us and the motivating qualities of the working environment.

What we value in companies is not just such transparency and openness, but the social interaction they afford us with other employees and the work environment.

Our commitment to the public domain

Because we know that our strength lies in public collaboration, we freely share our intellectual capital and thus create resources of knowledge freely available to all.

Competitive modes of thought are strange to us even though we do engage in competition, striving for better ideas and public acknowledgment of what we have achieved.

We recognize the potential of free knowledge and call for free access to all research findings and learning material supported by taxpayers money.

We equally call for all institutions of education to be given the financial and material support that enables

them to use all the media competencies needed to pass on such information to future generations.

For us it is of the very essence that free knowledge resources are financed, nurtured and made freely available to everybody.

As digital natives we support all initiatives that seek to make information and tools freely available and reuseable. We view new media in general as an opportunity for a better world.

Their ability (in the sense of the Latin *virtus* for strength or virtue) to disseminate and process information enables people to communicate and interact with one another in a huge variety of unprecedented ways.

This means that even now our digital culture is calling geographic, cultural and thus also political boundaries radically into question, offering a genuine opportunity to create a participative and democratic cosmopolitan world.

We digital natives are citizens of the world and one of the first global generations. The first step toward a participative democratic global politics would be unlimited transparency of political business and



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decision-making coupled with the development of online participation in all its multifarious variety.

The Net has its own culture

We understand the Internet as a socio-cultural space. We inform its content with our real identities and enrich its sociability with our own social relationships.

In the framework of legality – and sometimes in constructive dialogue with the same – it is we who are the executive, our morals the judiciary and our code the legislature.

It is our vigilance that elects a fourth estate. In the global diversified reality

of our networks, what we consider as relevant is above all that which is socially relevant.

Our multi-dimensional networks offer us the means to exchange experience and make collective evaluations.

Given our social relationships, proposals and data from one of these networks are particularly important.

As digital natives we are fully aware that our culture is dependent on technological progress.

And this is precisely why we make early use of technical innovations – both to sound out the possibilities they embody for developing our culture, and to use our feedback to counter and

correct bad courses of development.

The Net belongs to the future

Like every medium, the Internet also has its weak points.

Yet interactivity and networking make for greater transparency which is why the Internet is superior to other mass media.

The opportunity it provides for poly-directional communication also enables the creation of a much more highly differentiated picture of reality which makes the Internet itself the ideal medium for a postmodern world.

Rightly so, the Net is establishing itself as the leading medium and its open culture is more suited than any other to serve as the benchmark for the just society of the future. **SP**



In 2007, Robert Dürhager began a blog on Internet philosophy on the multi-author project he founded [www.philosophieblog.de]. As a blogger and speaker at media

conferences, he develops and publicizes philosophical theories on 'E-democracy Social Activism', 'Open Everything' and networked identity. In 2008 he was elected to the Working Committee of the Social Media Working Collective which aims to establish standards for surveying and researching social software and co-founded the Socialbar; a series of open events which connects civil society initiatives in various cities and gives them a deeper understanding of the potential of Web 2.0.



Timo Heuer discovered his passion for media at a very early age when he published and sold his own "newspaper" to neighbors and friends. From August

2008 to July 2009 he was an intern at the T3N print magazine in Hanover, Germany. Timo Heuer is a member of the Think Tank 30, the young think tank of the Club of Rome. He is also a blogger (www.timoheuer.com) and a typical early adopter.

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