FACEBOOK AS A NEW LAYER OF THE INTERNET

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Paul Levinson lists Facebook, along with the blogosphere, Wikipedia, YouTube, MySpace, Digg and Twitter, as a new "new medium." There is no doubt that that is true, but only part of a whole truth. From a technical point of view the Internet consists of few layers, starting from the layer of physical medium as cables and routers, ending with the application layer that lets us chat, read emails or view internet sites. Global popularity of Facebook, giving an easy way not only to share content, but also to integrate external sites with it, brought about nowadays a new layer of the global network — a meta-application layer. After Microsoft, Apple, and Google, the company makes a following element in the chain of commercial agents that gradually formed the way we use computer mediated communication today. This "facebookisation" of the Internet has several cultural ramifications, some of which I would like to examine in my paper.

One of them could be a claim that it finally put into practice the idea of Web 2.0 and spread it into masses. Even though such technical possibilities existed already for a long time, it has never been so easy to create someone's own site (in a form of a fan-page) or just embed a discussion forum provided by Facebook at an external site. Facebook provided easy tools to create a secondary social net over primary net of WWW. In Henry Jenkins' terms one could utter that the threshold of participation has finally gotten low enough. Therefore, almost all currently created internet sites make part of truly interactive network of Web 2.0, allowing for fully bilateral communication.

One of the consequences of the latter happened to be something we could call an "eruption of privacy," an avalanche of passport-like photos accompanied by names and surnames and other personal data, a genuine great book of faces, a census. This fact alone has a lot of exciting effects; I'd deeper get into two of them.

The first one could express sententiously: if you are not public, you are not reliable.

The second one, paradoxically enough, is that the principle "Make it all public!", imposed by a big companies, gives a powerful arm to fight with big companies. Since everything and everyone must be on Facebook, that from its essence yields two-sided, symmetrical communication channels, every user can speak with a big company and the company spokesman has no choice but to answer it in a proper way.

The paper proposes and discusses a thesis that Facebook, an Internet social network, apparently a tool to maintain contact with friends and to look for new friends, became much more than yet another web service. It deeply changed the way we use global network today. It became a new genuine layer of the Internet, an overlay on World Wide Web, an entrance to the Web, and a repository of elements to make websites of. The term facebookization will be introduced to designate a general trend of embedding Facebook content into external sites, of using Facebook approach in creating web applications, of functioning in virtual spaces in a context of one's social environment under one's real name.

The Layer Structure of the Network

To explicate this statement we must start at the beginning with the question: what is the Internet? For the needs of this paper we can stick to a very simple, even simplistic definition that Internet is a network of computers, letting every two of them connect in order to exchange data. This definition is not as bad as it seems at first sight. It describes such numerous ways of usage of global network, like FTP service, allowing to access files on a remote disk, electronic mail, VoIP technologies like Skype or Google Talk, WWW sites, and lot of other applications. Such a variety of global network services is possible, because it consists of several layers [Requirements for Internet Hosts, 1989]. These are:
1. Link Layer
2. Internet Layer
3. Transport Layer
4. Application Layer

Link Layer is a material base (such as cables and routers), which makes sending and receiving information possible. Internet Layer, for instance IP, is a set of standards which allows identifying precisely and unequivocally a particular node of the network such as a single computer. Transport Layer, like TCP, provides protocol allowing for sending and receiving information through network, divided into packets. On the top of all of the abovementioned layers of protocols and standards there is an application layer, like FTP, IRC, IMAP, SMTP, HTTP that lets users to profit from popular internet services like remote file accessing, chat, mail, WWW sites, and many others.

From a common point of view the latter standard, namely World Wide Web, is often perceived as the Internet as such. However, it is,

as we can say, just another layer, built over the application layer, using HTTP protocol. There is no doubt it revolutionized the use of the global network, taking it out of big companies and universities to the hands of people. WWW, along with graphical browsers like Mosaic, gave a possibility of browsing Internet resources in graphic mode, whereas formerly this was possible only in the so called text mode, when pictures could be accessed only with help of a special software. With WWW both text and images can be accessed directly, according to WYSIWYG principle (What You See Is What You Get), which means that what you see on the screen will be seen in a printed copy, a final product of information processing. This became possible thanks to formulation of HTML along with HTTP specification by Tim Barners-Lee, which gave a way to code in a plain text all the multimedia content, everything we can see at browser windows. In consequence, global network has spread to masses, as the threshold of participation (Jenkins, 2006) got low enough. It is much easier, it demands less technical experience to use graphic interface of WWW than software handling FTP, Telnet, or IRC protocols. It was WWW that led to the creation of Web 1.0 in the mid-nineties.

From Unilateral to Bilateral Communication

Contrarily to such media as radio and television, Internet from its very beginnings offered symmetrical, bilateral communication: one was able to both send and receive emails and actively participate in chat conversation. Nonetheless, even for using email one needs an electronic mailbox and a place on a server, what was a huge barrier in the early stage computer mediated communication development. The first companies offering free mailboxes appeared in the late nineties. The technology of WWW was much easier to deal with. For receiving content in the form of a HTML site one needs only a personal computer with an Internet connection. Still, in this case even higher barriers exist as far as creating someone's own message is concerned. One must be provided with not only an access to a WWW server, but also with a sufficient knowledge of HTML and HTTP specifications. Such technological conditions determined the content of WWW in this epoch. Web 1.0 consisted mostly of sites of some institutions, the "early adopters" of Internet technology, and of a growing number of personal home pages, created mostly by faculty of university departments of math and natural sciences, the first computer users. However, after the invention of WWW and creating the first browsers allowing the display of online con-

tent in graphical form, Internet technology mushroomed and knocked to houses of thousands of users. In Poland since 1996 one needed only a personal computer with a cheap internal modem to connect to the global Internet network with a phone line at the cost of a local call. Still, as it was remarked already, for a great bulk of this first WWW generation Internet was strictly a unilateral way of communication. There were a lot of exceptions like email, IRC, MUDs, and other services that existed earlier than WWW and in the time when WWW came, i.e. in the early nineties, and these had already been in use for decades. But after the invention of WWW it gained a status of "the whole Internet," what can be partly justified. Most of "old" Internet services, like IRC, discussion groups got marginalized, whereas these flourishing emails, mailing lists etc. have been integrated in structure of WWW.

The first generation of WWW users was able to access a content already published online, but creating and publish one's own content was limited to professional computer science professionals, who used computer technology at work, or hobbyists, who sacrificed their time to learn how to write a computer code. Thus, WWW technology was, in its early stages, far from being bilateral and provided mostly a one-way communication. Everyone could watch the content of an internet site, but only few could change it. Anyway, almost from the beginning there existed some elements that allowed some readers' intervention, like guest books or commentaries. Thanks to that, every person could publish his or her message publicly, but it was still very far from creating someone's own complex and comprehensive message like a WWW site. So, taking part in a public online conversation became easy and accessible for everyone (with an Internet connection), but proposing an autonomic message like a WWW site was still somehow elitist, in the sense that it necessitated quite a big amount of time to get deeper into technology.

This stage of development of the global network one can identify with Web 1.0. It strikingly resembles medieval and antique manuscript culture. At that time there was a group of professional writers (slaves, priests, monks) who almost monopolized this activity, even though a much broader group of educated people was able to read written documents. But even this broader group of readers was limited to the *Res publica literaria* of the educated class. The situation changed after the invention of the printing press. Written communication flourished, became popular in every social strata, even the poorest and less educated people were using writing documents in the form of a calendar. One can

say that this was the moment when mass culture was born. Still, this medium of communication did not provide any ways to send a message in return; there existed strict borders between writers and readers. The only single way to send a return message was a commentary on the margin of a manuscript or a printed book. Of course, the audience to receive this kind of message was rather limited.

This situation was quite analogous to the Internet in the nineties. There existed a thick line between senders and receivers of a HTML message. A reader could at best have left his or her commentary, like his or her middle age predecessor. Nevertheless, there was a difference: every commentary left by an Internet user in the nineties of the 20th century could be visible almost at no cost by every other person on the Earth. The audience was potentially unlimited.

In this way a gradual and continuous transition from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 was taking place (O'Reilly, 2005; Cormode & Krishnamurthy, 2008). It was gradual and continuous because programmers tried to simplify the process of creating a site of one's own, and, therefore, to ease the sending of a message from the very start of WWW technology. Among others it is for this purpose of Internet that social networks appeared. One of them was Geocities. Founded in 1994, it allowed every registered user to put on his or her own site for free in one of a "neighborhoods" (29 Neighborhoods, 1996). At the moment of shooting down Geocities there were 38 millions of individual pages (Shechmeister, 2009).

Geocities users saw almost no limits to the form and content of their sites. Paradoxically enough, this fact contributed to the elitism of the service. On the one hand, creating a site was still relatively difficult (necessary knowledge of HTML), on the other hand, basically not every one had an idea what she or he could publish online, even though it was free and easy. Other social services came out, some of them proposing a stricter format of sites to be created. Hence, the idea of a profile came out. It was the direct descendant of one of the most popular Internet genres of the nineties – the personal web pages. This very feature, quite paradoxically, made this type of social service accessible for the broader public. Not everyone has a hobby he or she could present on a website, but everyone has a unique personality he or she can present online, using photos and text descriptions.

And this is the place where Facebook comes to light. It offers a possibility of creating a personal website (a profile), equipped with all necessary functionalities, such as: photo albums, list of friends, per-

sonal data. All these features existed already. For example, the list of friends comes from one of typical part of a personal homepage: "Links." It was a place where URLs of similar sites made by friends were grouped. A typical practice was the "exchanging of links," mutual linking, in nowadays social networks this functions in the form of adding someone to "Friends." So, none of these functionalities were invented by Facebook. The invention of Facebook was making it as easy to create as possible. Again, Jenkins's threshold of participation was lowered [Jenkins, 2006].

The transition form Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 can also be described with Paul Levinson's term "new new media" [Levinson, 2009]. Under this term he gathers such kinds of media as blogs, Facebook, Youtube, Digg, Twitter, MySpace, SecondLife, and Wikipedia. All these internet services have in common their social dimension, on all of them users can create an account and add personal information. Also, all of these media implement in practice the idea of the user-generated content, i. e., their proprietors and creators provide only a technological platform and leave it empty, encouraging users to fill it with their own content. At first the idea did not seem very impressive, but strangely enough in such a way a lot of useful and huge databases were given birth. For instance, Wikipedia already became the biggest encyclopedia published ever[1]. Thanks to Facebook a database with hundreds of millions of records of personal data was brought about. The company not only did not pay a cent for all of it, but even earned billions of dollars on its creation. These examples show the power of crowdsourcing and wisdom of crowds [Surowiecki, 2004] that, appropriately managed, are able to achieve goals extremely difficult or even impossible for one single, even the biggest company. Welcome to the world of participatory culture!

One of the key notions of Jenkins's theory of participatory culture is the threshold of participation, which can be high, if a technology in question, because of its complicity, requires special training before it can be used, or low, when one does not need special capabilities to deal with it. At first the threshold of full, active participation in WWW was quite high, it has been getting lower, though, during the following years, and with the oncoming of Levinson's new new media it got low enough as to let a global participatory culture emerge. One could say that the last step in lowering the threshold of participation was Facebook, since

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[1] The bare text of English Wikipedia (excluding pictures) would take 2000 volumes of Britannica size up (state for 2014, May 14).

this was the service that reached so many users as no any other services before. And only after Facebook's online revolution every person, every internet user is able, in a quick and simple way, to create his or her own website with all necessary features. Bilateral WWW communication became a fact.

A New Layer of Facebook

Thanks to its global popularity Facebook grew into something more than one of the most visited websites on the Internet. A layer structure of Internet was presented above that consisted of Link, Internet, Transport, and Application Layer. Marcin Jagodziński, a Polish poet, internet activist, and entrepreneur stated on his blog entitled "Netto" that nowadays a new layer is appearing. He wrote this in 2011, when Facebook issued social plugins that could be embedded at external sites, such as the "Like it," or the "Share" button. In such a way every external site can be connected to Facebook, or, rather, Facebook can be connected to every other site. Such as in the 90s most of Internet resources were accessible through WWW, in our times most of Internet transfer comes from FB, so it is in the best interest of any company to be connected to it.

Jagodziński differentiates three types of content in regard to their proximity to FB. Internal FB pages created by users, such as profiles, and fan-pages belong to the first class of services, they are closest to the FB website. The second class of services is FB applications, created by external companies that exist on the border of two worlds. External pages connected to FB with social plugins, embedding their content on their sites make the third class. All of these types of entities contribute to the FB Network bringing a new layer of the Internet about.

But this is not the whole story. The next step was Facebook Connect, an application that lets a FB user to login to external services with his or her FB account. In such a way one can use his or her FB account as a universal identity in the Internet. If this tendency keeps going, logging to FB becomes a common way to start browsing Internet resources, as till then opening a browser window was. First we will need to login to our FB account and only then we will be able to access all the other online contents.

In such a way FB became a "neutral" medium. It is not anymore one of the "fashionable" internet social networks. It is, at the moment, the most effective way of producing an internet site both for private

and for professional needs. Also, having an FB account becomes a necessary condition to full-fledged browsing of Internet as such. One of the potential dangers of the fact that FB can now be treated as a layer of the whole Internet, as Jagodziński remarks, is that, contrarily to previous, lower-level layers, which were open standards, elaborated by the community, FB is a private property. Consequently, the idea of Internet as a common good for the first time in the history of this media is not valid anymore.

This evolution of FB, from a "fashionable" social network to a layer of Internet could be symbolized by a break in the public relation strategy of the graffiti artist, Banksy. For a long time in the "Questions" division of his website banksy.co.uk the artist was assuring his fans: "I'm not on facebook or twitter." However, the situation changed. Since January 2014 the website of the artist is functioning in a limited way, showing a blank page or just a static picture, whereas the artist moved all his network activity to Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, and Tumblr. Given the anti-capitalist and anti-consumerist messages Banksy transmits through his works, one must imply that the above-mentioned web services became for him as ideologically neutral as the Internet by itself is.

Many Faces of Facebookization

The phenomenon described above one can name "facebookization." This neologism is used in two ways. First of all, in transitive form, thus expecting an object (e.g. the facebookization of yahoo, twitter, and so on.). In this case it means something similar to, let us say, vulcanization, or balkanization. It is the name of an activity exercised on a particular object leading to a deep, fundamental modification of its characteristic or structure. Secondly, one can meet a form "facebookization" with no object, therefore designating a phenomenon existing independently of any other entity.[2]

Janet Fouts, a social media couch, writes about the facebookization of Twitter. She means by it a possibility of including some Facebook content into the Twitter site, and, conversely, Twitter content into Facebook website, with the help of some special softwares. She is quite skeptic as far as this idea is concerned, motivating her doubts by differ-

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[2] It is worth noting that the term was coined to describe a phenomenon pretty analogous to McDonaldization [Ritzer, 2004]. However, getting deeper into this remark exceeds the frames of this paper.

ent ways of using both services: Twitter for professional and Facebook for private goals. Consequently, she expresses concerns about the lack of control on the range the information she put online is accessible, what is caused by the simplicity of re-publishing a content. For instance, one can post something on Facebook just for friends, but if it will be retweeted, it may be publicly visible (Fouts, n.d.).

An anonymous blogger analyzing the phenomenon of facebookization of Yahoo, points out, on the one hand, the redesigning of the Yahoo layout so as to incorporate Facebook content, and, on the other hand, Yahoo copying the idea of letting third part companies and independent developers to create applications to integrate into the Yahoo platform (Facebookization of Yahoo, 2009). The very idea of such a model of web services that incorporates external applications into its site comes, according to the blogger, with Facebook and is perceived as a Facebook solution, hence, as an element of facebookization.

Meanings of the term in question enumerated so far can be classified as technical, since they concern functionalities of internet services. A quite different sense is attributed to the term "facebookization" by the anonymous author of "The Majalla: The Leading Arab Magazine," who quoted Mark Zuckerberg explaining the term as "A shift from the wisdom of crowds, to the wisdom of friends" (Mark Zuckerberg, 2011). He recalls here the notion of James Surowiecki (Surowiecki, 2004), who indicates that the crowd can think and act in a manner more intelligent than every person constituting it. It is worth mentioning that the idea of wisdom of crowds, or smart mobs (Rheingold, 2003) contradicts the long sociological tradition of the harsh critic of intellectual capabilities of masses, a tradition started by Gustave Le Bon and his *La psychologie des foules*. According to Le Bon, the crowd is run by irrational instincts and emotions, thus it is less rational than the individuals it is made of. Surowiecki and Rheingold base their investigations on a notion of collective intelligence, which emerges when a collective of subjects act in an appropriately organized way, so as to manifest intelligent behavior, sometimes more intelligent and rational than the wisest person from the collective. An example of wisdom of crowds can be Wikipedia that proves its utility every day for millions of users, even though it provides content created by an unqualified, unpaid crowd of amateurs.

What Zuckerberg points at with the notion of "wisdom of friends" is, in the words of the author of "The Majalla," a "contextualization of the Internet." This term has several important ramifications. Some of them will be discussed below. If one can easily see what was "liked"

by other people, it can help him or her in his or her own estimation of qualities of the object in question. Robert Cialdini names this "Social Prof Principle" [Cialdini, 2001]. Certainly, this principle will work much stronger if peoples' behaviors we are keeping an eye on happen to be of people we know, which we call our friends. We presume we can trust our friends [even if they are only virtual friends] more then any random, unknown person. Yet, another Cialdini's principle comes into play, what he names "Liking." We tend to believe and trust much easily people who are like us, who are similar to ourselves, than persons, who are effectively or even apparently different from us. One can presume that in most of the cases we subconsciously assume that our friends are like us [even if it is not true].

There is no ground to doubt that using a circle of friends as an extended mind one could solve some problems faster and more effectively then alone or even profiting from "wisdom of crowds" materialized, for instance, in a form of a public, anonymous forum. It would be really useful and interesting to try determining what kind of problems could there be. Nevertheless, at the present moment the easy way of communication with big groups of friends leads to intensive spamming with content worthless for anyone other than the author, concerning his or her private life, telling her or his own story of her or his own life. As Time's journalist, Richard Stengel remarked in his justification as to why Mark Zuckerberg was chosen the Time Person of the Year 2010: "All social media involve a mixture of narcissism and voyeurism" [Stengel, 2010].

One class of problem Zuckerberg's "wisdom of friends" can assuredly help to solve is the consumer's problem: What kind of holiday to choose, which party, concert, lecture, exposition to go, what to eat and where? All these questions concentrate on one big question, namely: What style of life to choose? The numbers of "Like it!" propose a one-dimensional scale allowing to compare every two units of style of life, let it be holidays, a dinner, a singer, a hotel, a restaurant, an electronic gadget, a movie, a song. But in this case, it is quite difficult to see in the "wisdom of friends" anything more than a force of conformism and a need to acquire visible signs of group identification.

High and Low Contexts

There is also something else hidden behind the words of the anonymous author of "The Majalla." The term "contextualization" may also lead us to a theory of Edward Hall, namely that of high and low context communication (Hall, 1976). Hall perceives two types of cultures, according to the dominant model of communication that can be either of high, or of low context. High context communication is typical of cultures whose members share a relatively lot of common background knowledge and, hence, have fairly good insight into their interlocutor's intentions. In such a communicational situation one does not need too many words to deliver a message. We can figure out a conversation between two old friends, in which they do not need to explain a lot to understand each other. Quite the contrary happens in the case of complete strangers, with no prior mutual knowledge of one about the other. They would be supposed to formulate their messages in an unequivocal, elaborated manner, so that there would be as few various interpretations of the statements as possible. The context is low, so all the necessary information should be contained in a particular message. The rule is simple: the higher common context, the more concise the message can be, and, conversely, the lower context, the more detailed message should be formulated under the threat of bilateral misunderstanding.

As one can easily perceive, these terms form a couple of relative expressions. One example of the communication act can be of higher context than another one (for instance, conversation between two French strangers vs. a conversation between a French and a German), but there can be still another one, of lower context than the latter (a conversation between a French and a Chinese) of higher context than the former (a conversation between two French old friends).

Prima facie computer mediated communication exemplifies low-context communication. It is of much lower context then any face-to-face conversation. A typical example of computer mediated communication (CMC), such as email or chat room, reduces the whole person to his/her body and all its possible ways of expression like speaking, mimic, gestures, and other forms of body language to the electronic text displayed on the screen, immaterial, ephemeral, devoid of individuality, being just a light. What lasts, is sheer language compressed to the form possibly abstract and general, to a chain of bare oppositions of phonemes.

In terms of Yves Winkin's anthropology of communication, face-to-face conversation embodies a model of an orchestra, whereas CMC represents a model of a telegraph [Winkin, 1996]. Winkin enumerates several features of the telegraph model, such as, necessary activity of coding and decoding, exchanging roles of sender and receiver. Telegraph-type communication is verbal, rational, voluntary, intentional, conscious, can be effective or disturbed. It is deprived of context. This model of the telegraph originates from the theory of information and was based on the ideas of Claude E. Shannon. The orchestral model of communication (inspired mostly by the writings of Ray Birdwhistell, but also of Edward Sapir and Edward T. Hall) underlines a fact that every act of communication is included into a higher-level general social communication, can be both verbal and nonverbal. It is not always intentional, but functions as an element of the continuous stream of communication, expresses dynamics of social life, cannot be, therefore, assessed from a point of view of effectiveness or correctness. Orchestral model introduces high context established by all the conditions a process of communication is going on.

Now, let us come back to the remark on the contextualization of the Network as one aspect of facebookization. Creating one's profile, universal for all network services and containing huge amount of personal data, thus incarnating an electronic, internet personality, increases the context of communication. It is still no as context-rich as traditional face-to-face discussion, but it provides a much higher context than a simple anonymous email or chat. Winkin's metaphor of orchestra describes the Facebook model of communication fairly well. Wall and timeline create a complex environment of nonlinear communication, a genuine stream of different semiotic objects, verbal, visual, and acoustic, posted with no special intention to communicate anything to any particular receiver, can be seen as pure expressions of someone's momentary state of mind and feelings.

Summarizing the current part of the analysis one can state that the Facebook layer of the Internet makes the level of context of network communication grow, with all advantages and disadvantages of this fact.

Next Step to the Global Village?

Figure out a person watching a street through a surveillance camera, therefore, seeing all pedestrians, cars etc. on a computer screen. So far, there is nothing exceptional in this picture, nowadays it is a common practice to analyze a city's monitoring records. But, suddenly, we realize that over the faces of pedestrians appearing on the screen their names are displayed, so that the person watching the video stream can learn people's personal data in the real time. Science fiction? Not at all. Experiments from 2011 show that through using a web cam, face-recognition software, and publicly accessible Facebook data one could identify, in no longer than three seconds, 32% of students walking on campus [Shaw, 2012, p. 169]. Construing such a system intentionally, let us say, for the need of the police or the secret service would consume an enormous amount of time and money, assuming it was possible at all. Meanwhile, it came true unnoticeably, moreover, it is cheap and accessible to everyone. Such a system emerged accidentally, as a fortuitous consequence of an activity undertaken for a completely different purpose.

This phenomenon has not been predicted by visionaries or writers in historical visions of the future of the civilization. George Orwell in *1984* describes a world of total invigilation, but his idea, "Big Brother is watching," was implemented by show-business, rather than by political forces. Loss of privacy seemed to Orwell a fundamental feature of a totalitarian system and was introduced by force by the government of Oceania. History showed that it can also be a part of democracy, since there are a lot of people who are eager to "lose" their privacy, as it means gain of fame and becoming a celebrity. TV shows, such as "Big Brother," recruit their candidates to become objects of invigilation from thousands of volunteers.

Now, this mechanism of making someone's private life public got mechanized, thanks to the development of computer mediated communication. Every second millions of Facebook users upload thousands of photos and publish information documenting their everyday life, including the most intimate elements like romantic relations, a childbirth etc. Privacy settings, such as limiting visibility of one's content only to a group of friends does not matter too much. As researches show, 72% of Facebook users accept invitations from strangers [Lemieux, 2012].

All these private contents, building high context of communication, make McLuhan's vision of the Global Village consequently approaching

reality, maybe not exactly in McLuhan's original understanding of this term. For him the Global Village was a realm of secondary orality, tribal state of consciousness, and tradition-directed cultural type [McLuhan, 1962]. To the situation brought about by Facebook, i. e. gathering personal data and making it publicly available, a concept of Ferdinand Tönnies can be applied. He introduces and opposes one against the other the notions of community [*Gemeinschaft*] and society [*Gesellschaft*] [Tönnies, 1957]. The former could be exemplified by a group of people living in one small village, where everyone knows everyone else and a new face appears only exceptionally. The latter is instantiated by a big city, the inhabitant of which every day meets a lot of strangers, individuals, he or she has never met before and will never meet in the future. Now, Facebook data and face-recognition software let us recognize humans randomly met in a public place. This is a new technology, which extends human's capabilities and serves as an extension of man, to recall another of McLuhan's concepts [McLuhan, 1964]. In this way our social environment transforms into a village community, with its personal, non-anonymous social interaction, even though mediated through an electronic social network.

At this moment one starts to feel that his or her own presence on Facebook is necessary. It concerns both individual and institutional bodies. Maintaining a company fan-page may help in communication with customers and in marketing, as it may increase consumers' interest in a brand [Snell, 2010]. This is quite obvious, since if a consumer "likes" a fan-page he or she may receive notification on his or her wall from the company, what is a form of publicity, moreover, publicity intentionally demanded by a consumer. "Facebook is now a corporate necessity," announces an independent media specialist in 2010 [Snell, 2010].

Also an individual person may perceive her/his presence on Facebook as a necessity. One of the obvious reasons to "be on" Facebook is to have access to information, often interesting for a broad public, like cultural or political events, but accessible only for registered and logged users. There are other reasons as well, like "to be socially connected," and "get the opinion of others," as a user of Yahoo Answers enumerates [Is facebook a necessity to your social life?, n.d.]. Another user complains that without having a Facebook account it is almost impossible to get to know new people, since almost every one asks for a Facebook account in order to stay in contact [Is Facebook a necessity now?, n.d.]. Yet, another one person confesses: "I read some articles

that pick on people without a facebook page and make them look like psychopaths…" and remarks that she personally have been called "anti-social, a motherf****r, and such," after saying she has no Facebook account [Is facebook and twitter a necessity?, n.d.].

Nevertheless, opinions are contradictory. Someone comments on the question about a necessity of having a Facebook account in such a way: "Me & My boyfriend both deleted ours because it was destroying our relationship" [Is Facebook a necessity now?, n.d.]. Another participant of a discussion conducted on Yahoo Answers characterizes Facebook as it follows: "it is a place where you can be fake, rude, bullied, and above all noise […] it starts rumors that leads to gossip" [Is Facebook a necessity now?, n.d.]. In a Polish movie entitled *Suicide Room* [2011] by Jan Komasa, a teenager kills himself after being bullied by his friends on the wall of an internet social network, similar to Facebook.

Anyway, as far as business purposes are concerned, according to the quoted words of George F. Snell, Facebook is now a corporate necessity and this thesis does not seem too extravagant, when we realize that roughly all the companies, very often even these smallest ones, like shops and bars, have their own Facebook websites, which are open to every Facebook user who feels free to write anything on it. "Before Facebook" the websites of companies rarely provided a functionality of public, open discussion. The reason was rather obvious: if anyone can write anything, such a public wall may become a place of information very easily, whose publication would not be in the properly understood interest of the company. Social media can be a danger for PR.

At the same time, bilateral, two-way communication provided by social media can be a powerful tool in negotiations of someone's own consumer rights with big corporations. Jakub Górnicki, a Polish blogger and a media activist, won a fight against a phone corporation that did not transferred his old number to its network in due time. He published a photo of him and his partner with a paperboard saying "Don't transfer your number to the company NN, we are waiting for 4 days already." Other Facebook users supported Jakub's protest, so that the negative comment flooded the company's fan-page. A competitive company XX got involved in the discussion, but quickly it also got some critical comments from its consumers, describing unpleasant cases concerning XX. The whole discussion took few hours and was closed by a spokesman of NN, who posted his photo with a paperboard saying "Jakub, your number is in NN. Now, sorry for the delay, NN. Spokesman" [Jak wygrać z dużą korporacją?, 2012]. The blogger confirmed the information. In

such way a social media crisis was averted. Management of social media crisis became nowadays an important part of PR know-how [Baer, n.d.]. Today a company looking for customers has no choice but to "be on" Facebook and to maintain an unceasing discussion with them in proper manner.

Method

The approach represented above in the paper is mostly speculative and theoretical, however, based on a set of empirical data, such as case studies. One can indicate three types of materials used as a base for reflection. First of all, it is technical documentation concerning Internet standards and content published by managers of internet services. Second group of sources were publications of professional media theoreticians, journalists, and academics, third – all the spectrum of texts of participatory culture, such as internet comments, blogs, discussion posts, provided useful examples of cases to study and explanatory statements.

The third part of sources may seem at first sight fairly disputable. Probably no one is going to undermine the value of beliefs and judgment of a professional published on his or her scientific blog, in spite of the fact that this is a case of self-publication. In this situation an extra-network recognition or an official status of a person in question can guarantee a quality of the opinion published and its value as a source. But how can one ground a theoretical, academic reflection on opinions of random, often anonymous people who publish their loose thoughts on Yahoo Answers or as a Facebook comment?

So far, this kind of content, apparently the most abundant in the global network when researched, is an object of quantitative investigation in most cases. Such an approach is justified by a big amount of data if one is dealing in this kind of research with. Nowadays, a method of content analysis [e.g. Krippendorff, 2004] is applied here almost entirely. It is extremely useful, since it can help to analyze a huge corpus of examples. Procedures based on key words allow the usage of a software helping to measure specific features of texts collected. Yet, one single example of a user statement is invisible for this methodology. To grasp a voice of an individual one could use tools of discourse analysis, looking for unexpressed presumptions and frames of categories the outlook of a speaker is situated within. We need to devote to the reading of a message of every internet user, even anonymous, the same or

even bigger amount of attention as we do when dealing with a scientific paper. Very often in human history amateur thinkers demonstrated much deeper views in a state of things than state institutions scientists. Mostly unheard till now, at the present moment wise amateurs gain a way to express their opinions in the global electronic network. Andrew Keen's laments on the destructive influence of the Internet on the traditional human culture can be calmed by showing how global networks provide new possibilities of development of culture and science [Keen, 2007]. One of the main presumptions of the participatory culture paradigm is a thesis that a global process of knowledge creation can be partly outsourced to actors independent of institutional structures that traditionally used to be "ivory towers," accessible only to officially "baptized" professionals, a cast of scientists employed by universities and academies. The relics of this state of things are closed, expensive, full-text scientific databases slowly transforming in our times into open science libraries.

Results

The main conclusion of the research presented is that instead of perceiving Facebook as a huge social network, one should rather recognize it as a new layer of the Internet, providing completely new approach to Internet communication. The layered structure of the Internet allows creating new layers, and now Facebook seems to become the top one, determining to a great extent the way we use computer mediated communication today.

Instead of talking about Facebook, one should rather talk about facebookization of the global network and electronic communication by and large. This phenomenon is quite analogical to MacDonaldization of society, described for the first time by George Ritzer. Facebookized Internet represents such features as:

1. Easy content sharing thanks to social plugins that, on the one hand, connects every "facebookized" website to Facebook, on the other hand, embeds into it Facebook content such as a discussion forum.

2. Referring to the wisdom of friends, instead of the wisdom of crowds. Therefore, it seems to go further than the basic characteristic of Web 2.0 suggests. Looking for information necessary to take proper decisions supposedly would be easier and more effective, when founded on the activities of people from a close social circle.

3. Contextualization of electronic communication, leading to the increasing common context of communication acts, in terms of Edward Hall's theory of high and low context cultures. Decreasing anonymity of Internet users implies better knowledge about distant interlocutors.

Two supposed implication of facebookization of the network was examined. They can be seen as parts of a progressive implementation of McLuhan's vision of the Global Village.

1. Social pressure to "be on Facebook." In the age of Facebook, a person who refuses to put her/his personal data openly on the Internet can be perceived as an antisocial individual who makes it difficult to trust her or him, a person that has something to hide

2. Since presence on such social media as Facebook became "corporate necessity," a big corporation must "descend" to the communicative level of a single consumer, allowing him or her to communicate on equal rights. In a war between a company and a consumer social media gives every individual a powerful arm to fight with big companies.

After Facebook, even if one day the service will be closed and the domain sold out, the Internet will never be the same. A threshold of participation got low enough and an incentive of participation got high enough, so as to bring about a significant increase of global number of Internet users. The company and its product conceived a new approach to the global network, in a very similar manner as Microsoft and Apple corporations did to personal computers and Google, proposing a new way of indexing and searching the content of the Web. Providing a comfortable and easy way both in broadcasting a message and in gaining an audience, it gets its profits in a form of users' personal data, which is a currency here. Facebook is "free and will always be," but, as an old proverb says, when something is for free, it means that you are a product.

Discussion

The research presented is based to a great extent on a theoretical analysis, so to verify the hypothesis that was put forward one needs some more empirical data. Some cases were presented, but more examples would help to make the statements uttered above more precise.

The hypothesis proposed fulfills the condition of the scientific proposition in the Popperian sense, since it can be easily falsified by uttering a contrary assertion, i.e. that Facebook is just a separated social network without any impact on the whole sphere of the Internet. Several arguments were indicated to support the main thesis of the paper.

Moreover, the hypothesis partly concerns the future development of computer mediated communication, so it has some characteristics of a forecast. Therefore, it can be fully proved or refuted only in the future. One cannot predict at the present moment how far facebookization can proceed. In a subsequent research one could try to define the term more precisely, opening ground for empirical and qualitative research.

It would also be very interesting to compare facebookization to a phenomenon of McDonaldization described by Georg Ritzer [Ritzer, 2004]. Ritzer shows how the work technology invented by McDonald got universalized to several other types of business. The same could be said about Facebook. However, this thesis should be analyzed in a more detailed way.

Ideas contained in the paper open some new perspectives for future research. The paper introduces and theoretically elaborates such notions as facebookization and wisdom of friends, which were not present in the scientific discourse so far. In a manner similar to the one applied by Surowiecki [Surowiecki, 2004], one could scrutinize classes of problems to be solved with this approach and other that are not suitable to handle in such a way. The main notion of the paper, namely a Facebook layer of the Internet, was coined as a semantic generalization of a technical term designed for the description of the technological basis of the global network. All these notions could help to describe the reality of Web 2.0 and enrich the picture of new electronic participatory culture, flourishing on the ground of Internet. It could be potentially interesting to try to determine what kind of problems are solved thanks to facebookization of computer mediated communication and what kind of new problems emerge. Analogical research could be conducted as far as the idea of facebookization is concerned. How it changes the

way people communicate, how it influences our everyday life, what are the possible good and bad future consequences of facebookization? These all are topics for research to be carried out.

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