The Circulations of Culture.

On Social Distribution of Content.

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Authors: Mirosław Filiciak, Justyna Hofmokl, Alek Tarkowski

Research team: Mirosław Filiciak, Justyna Hofmokl, Agata Jałosińska, Paweł Stężycki, Alek Tarkowski, Przemysław Zieliński

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Introduction for global readers

This report is a translation of a report published originally in Polish in January 2012, as a result of a survey study conducted in 2011. The publication took place at the height of the debate on ACTA and became an important element in public debates on copyright and regulation of online circulations of content.

After the introduction, parts two and three constitute the theoretical part of the report, in which we present a framework for understanding formal and informal circulations of content. Parts four to seven contain results of our empirical studies. They contain additionally comments on the report by three Polish scholars studying the interplay of culture, society and digital technologies.

At the end of the report we include three comments from foreign scholars and thinkers that have not been published in the original report.

We are making this report available in English as we believe that our study, while focused on the Polish socjety, addresses issues that are important globally. We hope that readers from other countries will be able to relate our report to conditions, events and debates in their own countries.

The Authors

Report Summary

The report "*Circulations of Culture. Social Distribution of Content*" is an attempt at analyzing the phenomenon of informal cultural content sharing in Poland. It describes how books, music, and movies circulate among Poles who sometimes buy them, but more often than not acquire them via the Internet and borrow or copy them from friends. We focused our study on the comparison of formal and informal circulations of cultural content, in the form of either digital or cultural copies. We decided not to study broadcast media use, due to the lack of circulating copies that allow comparisons with informal circulations online.

Yet the public discussion, revolving around file sharing networks and more broadly around obtaining and making use of cultural content in a digital form, usually situates these practices on the margin of typical activities of Poles. Such practices still seem to be – as they are described in the public discussion - an embarrassing subject; stigmatized as an illegal activity that hurts legal content markets, creators, and intermediaries.

We conducted this research study in order to provide this public debate with an empirically absed descriptuon of the circulations of content in digital form and foremost on the Internet. And also to show the cultural and social aspects of this phenomenon that go beyond the question of its legality. First and foremost, we seek to explain why informal circulations of culture in digital form are an important issue for research on contemporary culture. Secondly, we stress that exploration into this issue provides important evidence for cultural policy.

The goal of our project was purely exploratory – instead of making rigid assumptions in order to verify them, we decided to analyze the answers that the respondents put down in the questionnaires, their attitudes, and the opinions they expressed. This approach sought to help us understand how often, in what way, and why Poles engage with informal content circulations.

Most importantly, we chose not to distinguish nor discriminate between legal and

illegal circulations – mainly because the border between the two is often fuzzy and unclear for people who participate in either of them. Therefore, this is not a report about "pirates" that conduct illegal activities, but rather about people who engage in informal content sharing practices.

But abandoning the simple legal-illegal binary has yet another reason. The goal of this report is to foster real dialogue on the issue of acquiring cultural content in Poland. The overuse of labels such as "piracy" or "theft" will not improve the chances of establishing such dialogue. An opposition between "formal" and "informal" is in our opinion a much better way for framing this debate.

We conducted a quantitative, survey study and one of our primary goal was to establish the scale and general character of the informal content circulation – especially the distribution of digital formats. The project consisted of two surveys. The first one, a pilot survey, was conducted through computer-assisted personal interviews between May 19 and May 26 of 2011 on a sample of 1004 people over 15 years of age, which was representative for the Polish population. The goal of this survey was to describe the scale and basic characteristics of informal circulation in the whole Polish society. We were in particular interested in differences between Internet users and non-users, and between age groups.

The second survey was conducted over the Internet through computer-assisted web interviews on a sample of 1283 people. The survey was conducted on a random nationwide sample and the demographic structure of the analyzed set was representative of the Polish Internet user population (according to Nettrack) with respect to gender, age (16 to 50 years old), place of residence, and education. We have focused upon the population of Internet users based on the results of the first survey, according to which non-users do not participate in circulations of digital content.

Principal conclusions of our report are:

13% of Poles purchase content, as opposed to 33% that obtain it through informal, digital circulations. Only 13% of Poles have purchased a book, a movie, or a musical recording in the year before the survey. On the other hand, one third of Poles are engaged in the informal sphere understood here as sharing books, music, and

movies in digital formats via the Internet. Informal circulation is the second source of cultural content with the broadcast mass media like radio and TV being the first. If we consider various forms of cost-free borrowing (e.g. from friends) of content (primarily books) stored on physical media an element of the informal circulation, then the informal sphere will cover 39% of Poles – thus being three times as large as the market-bound circulation of cultural content.

Engaging with the informal circulations of digital content strongly correlates with age. The survey demonstrated that 17 % of people within the 40 to 59 age range and only 6% of people within the 60 and older group claimed to use any form of digital sharing. Further, only 5% of people within the 40 to 59 age group and 1% of the people within the 60 and older group claimed to have downloading content from the Internet done so – therefore, we should assume that populations ages 40 and older do not participate in smaller circulation of digital content.

The survey did not corroborate the thesis about informal circulations supplanting the formal ones. The people who most actively engage in the informal content circulations (i.e. Internet users who download files) constitute the largest segment of the purchasers. They comprise 32% of all people purchasing books, 31% of all people purchasing movies, and over half of all people who buy music. They also make up the largest segment of people who lend each other content. People from that group probably treat both informal and formal circulations as complementary. What's important, similarly as in the case of the opposite group – people who engage with the informal circulation but not with the formal one – there is a correlation between percentage of users and age. The 15 to 24 age group made up the biggest part of the group of people that both purchase content and download it from the Internet – despite common assumptions that younger generations lack funds to purchase content.

A quarter of all Poles engage with the informal circulation without purchasing any content from the formal circulations. Membership in this group is strongly linked with age – the percentage of such people is much higher in the younger age groups, while significantly dropping off in age groups over 50. Our survey does not give a clear

answer whether these people dropped out of the formal circulation, or whether they never participated in it and became more culturally active because of the availability of the informal circulation. Yet based on historical data on participation in formal circulation, the first hypothesis is highly improbable, as participation in formal circulations has always been low in Poland.

62% of Poles do not participate in either the formal or the informal circulations of cultural content. The primary form of cultural activity for most Poles is probably watching television and listening to the radio.

The average Internet user buys three times more books and movies and seven times more music in comparison with people who don't use the Internet. Internet usage is the primary distinguishing factor when it comes to interest in cultural content, which is further correlated with age and education. More importantly, these differences are even more pronounced where accessing content doesn't require any financial commitment, such as borrowing books, movies, or music.

Active Internet users are a group especially inclined to participate in circulations of culture. Strong differences are revealed when Internet users are split into less active and more active ones, with the latter being the focus of the second survey. 89% of them claimed to have read a book in the past 12 months. Further, engaging with the informal content circulation is commonplace for active Internet users; 88% of active Internet users Internet participate in the informal circulation of music, 73% participate in informal book circulation, and 78% engage in informal movie circulation (in the three months preceding the survey). These circulations include downloading content from the Internet, using content downloaded by other members of the household, and copying content from family members and friends; but also photocopying and scanning books, lending CDs and DVDs and using the library. If we combine the activities related to books, music and film then 72% of active internet users claim to have downloaded files from the Internet – e.g. from file-sharing networks or from file hosting services.

92% of active users claim to have engaged in informal circulations if their definition is expanded to include all avenues of content access (such as

streaming, sharing files with friends, etc.). If we include the informal circulation of content stored on physical media (e.g. sharing and copying books or CDs and DVDs) in the aforementioned definition, then practically all of the respondents (95%) claim to have engaged in such content circulations. The survey indicates, that among people who actively use the Internet, the informal, non-market economy of cultural content is the norm. Additionally, 75% of the respondents claim to have engaged with circulations related to the downloading of content.

75% of active internet users indicated price and a wider selection of content available on the Internet as justifications for their behavior. Two-thirds of them pointed to such factors as availability without delays (typical of formal circulations, where global content arrives in Poland often with a delay) or the selection available.

Internet distribution impacts the way active internet users interact and use media formats. Only 8% of people who download music from the Internet download entire albums only; 31% download both albums and single files, while 61% download strictly single audio files. The fragmentation of musical albums is also visible in the structure of the amassed collections.

The most commonplace attitude of active Internet users (50% of respondents) towards the informal circulations is moderate and focused on the broadening of cultural horizons. For them, the crucial factor is the ability to know more and see more, not acquire free content. Additionally, two countervailing attitudes exist between fans of the informal circulation (8%), who think that "everyone's downloading content," and its staunchest critics (11%), who claim that downloading is theft and that the law should be more stringent with people who acquire content from the Internet via illegal means. A fourth group (13%) claims that "downloading is simply easier." Interestingly, prices do not discourage them from acquiring content from the formal circulations, but rather the inconvenience of using the formal channels, that are not present when engaging the informal ones.

1. Introduction, or what we studied, why, and how we studied it.

Since 2007 questions concerning downloading files from the Internet have been included in the *Diagnoza społeczna* (*Social Diagnosis*) study, the largest research project focused on the living conditions of Poles. Half of Polish Internet users claimed to have downloaded music or movies from the Internet and in the subsequent editions of the project the percentage was increasingly higher.[1] In 2011, 27.4% of Polish Internet users (who make up more than half of the Polish populace) were designated as regular downloaders.[2] Downloading cultural content from the Internet has proven to be more than a niche practice, however, it is but one method of obtaining content from unofficial sources.

Yet the public discussion, revolving around file sharing networks and more broadly around obtaining and making use of cultural content in a digital form, usually situates these practices on the margin of typical activities of Poles. The aforementioned data from the *Social Diagnosis* alone suggests that they are not as marginal as it might seem. Moreover, the growing level of Internet usage together with related social and cultural trends suggest that the prevalence of these practices is growing and will continue to do so. Such practices still seem to be – as they are described in the public discussion - an embarrassing subject; stigmatized as an illegal activity that hurts legal content markets, creators, and intermediaries. Available data is largely focused on economic aspects, trying to prove the effect upon the market circulation of cultural content.[3] Yet circulation of content on the Internet has a clear cultural and social dimension as well.

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1   D. Batorski, Korzystanie z technologii informacyjno komunikacyjnych [Use of information communication technologies], in: Diagnoza społeczna 2009 [Social Diagnosis 2009], ed. J. Czapiński, T. Panek, pp. 308-309; www.diagnoza.com.

2   T. Panek, J. Czapiński, Kultura [Culture], in: Diagnoza społeczna 2011 [Social Diagnosis 2011], ed. J. Czapiński, T. Panek, p. 117; www.diagnoza.com.

3   We provide an overview of the literature on the subject in part 2.

We conducted this research study in order to describe the circulations of content in digital form and foremost on the Internet, as well as to show the cultural and social aspects of this phenomenon. First and foremost, we seek to explain why informal circulations of culture in digital form are an important issue for research on contemporary culture. Secondly, we stress that exploration into this issue provides important evidence for cultural policy. We begin by answering why we chose this research subject and what we wanted to achieve. There are three answers to this question.

An incomplete conceptual apparatus for studies of culture and society

The first is related to the notion that the depiction of everyday contact that people have with culture, as painted by social sciences, is increasingly incomplete in today's networked world. This is especially true in the case of statistical studies of culture. As of the time of this particular study, categories of description used in the industrial era now obscure rather than reveal new phenomena developing in the information era. According to Alain Touraine, commonly accepted sociological categories „exclude much of our lived experience,"[4]. Our interest in the informal flow of culture, its scale and inherent mechanisms can be attributed to a belief shared with Tourraine – that sociology needs to make an effort to include them. Institutionalized culture is only a part – as we will show in this report, certainly a smaller part – of that which makes up the entire sphere of culture. And the statement is valid even when we limit the field of analysis to a narrow spectrum of professionally created content, thus excluding an entire sphere of amateur creativity. Elements produced in that small sector of culture circulate in society, stimulate the creation of meta-content (by which we mean opinions and comments) and foster new interpersonal relationships. The character and scale of these processes is influenced by networked digital media, which establish different relationships to their users as opposed to centralized, mass media. Thus the informal circulations in which cultural elements circulate account for a large part of cultural activity as a whole.

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4   A. Touraine, A new paradigm for understanding today's world, Cambridge: Polity 2007, p. 1.

Cultural content travels along multiple trajectories – we're convinced that in our modern world one can be a culturally active person and still not leave a trace in traditional cultural participation statistics, as the latter are focused on access and usage mediated by public institutions and the market. Our study is also a step towards answering the question of what role cultural institutions will play in this changing world. We understand these institutions in the anthropological sense, as any social efforts that have as their goal the fulfillment of human needs. We think that these institutions cannot be analyzed sans a greater context, comprising the informal circulation sphere – or, more precisely, a sphere based on new cultural institutions (very different from public institutions or market entities).

The question we pose is also a question about how culture functions in a social context, about the effects of culture's "personalization" caused by an unprecedented autonomy of the user, and the effects of the ease with which we can reconfigure the social connections constructed around culture.

Finally – we take into account the issue of our very own conceptual apparatus, used in this study. In the report titled "The Youth and the Media" Marek Krajewski wrote that "some situations of reception, which not long ago have been synonymous with the relations between humans and media, have now simply become »outdated«."[5] Krajewski writes about sitting in front of the television or listening to music coming from a device with no other function besides that of playing the music – situations which were synonymous with our contact with the media not long ago. Today they're unique, special even, and our everyday life looks completely different. We're convinced, however, that conceptualizations of other cultural practices have also become outdated – practices not only linked with receiving and creating cultural content, but moreover, with their redistribution and cultural circulation.

The category of a "circulation" or "circuit" has a long tradition in Polish sociology of

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5   M. Krajewski, Przeterminowanie [Beyond expiry date] , in: M. Filiciak, M. Danielewicz, M. Halawa, P. Mazurek, A. Nowotny, Młodzi i media [Youth and media], pp. 145-6; URL: http://www.wyborcza.pl/mlodziimedia.

culture. We refer to this tradition and at the same time use the term in a different manner. In early 1980s, Antonina Kłoskowska had already described three circulations of culture in analyzing social ties through the lenses of communication. Kłoskowska described the first circulation as based on personal contacts in which the roles of the sender and the receiver are interchangeable. The second, institutionalized circulation, was based on direct contact as well, but took place inside formal frameworks. Finally, she described a third - media circulation[6]. Barbara Fatyga then defined a fourth circulation, based on individual access to the Internet and mobile phones[7]. The phenomena which we are studying forms a large part of this "fourth circulation," however, they are not limited to it. Further, these phenomena, almost always avoid the formal circulation of content. With the current level of overlap between social and communication networks, it is impossible to distinguish a separate mediated circulation. Our understanding of the term "circulation" does not fit another typology as proposed by Mirosław Pęczak, who in his study of the culture of Communist-era Poland described three circulations of his own. The first was official, the second was oppositional, and the third was youth circulation. Tied primarily with the punk movement, youth circulation established its own newspapers, an alternative distribution system for music recordings, and a negation of politics (both in the official and oppositional form)[8]. We believe that the informal circulation of cultural content in digital forms does not fit directly into any of these three circulations described by Pęczak, including the youth circulation.

Despite these conceptual differences, we have decided to use the concept of "circulation" partially because the abovementioned typologies stress the fluid character of diagnosed trajectories and a lack of strict borders between them. Fatyga

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6   A. Kłoskowska, Socjologia kultury [Sociology of culture], Warszawa: PWN 1983, pp. 363-370.

7   B. Fatyga, J. Nowiński, T. Kukołowicz, Raport o edukacji kulturalnej [Report on cultural education], chapter 6, URL: http://www.kongreskultury.pl/title,pid,541.html

8   M. Pęczak, Kilka uwag o trzech obiegach [Several remarks on the three circulations], „Więź", no. 2/1988.

described youth culture as "relatively autonomous" circulation[9], and Pęczak described the oppositional circulation as exposing an oppositional political option and supplementing the official circulation[10]. Finally, the use of the term "circulation" brings to mind, in the Polish context, the concept of the "second circulation," the independent circulation of content beyond the reach of the Communist power. In our report, we try to play a game with this historical tradition of thinking about an alternative cultural circulation. We would like to point out, first of all, a certain level of subjectivity present in any description of the importance of different forms of circulation. Additionally, we agree with an approach that sees communication processes and the circulation of content as elements crucial for the creation of social ties despite these differences. Yet in the new technological environment these processes have characteristics very different from the circulations of content at the time when culture was dominated by centralized, mass media. Thus, the key distinction, in our opinion, is between two circulations. The first is the formal circulation, intermediated by the market and by public institutions, such as libraries, and an informal circulation, in which such public or commercial intermediaries are not present. The formal circulation often requires payments to be made and the distinction between its "public" and "corporate" elements does not overlap with the distinction between "free" and "paid" content. On one hand, many public cultural institutions compete with commercial entities in the marketplace by selling the content that they own or are stewards of. On the other, business models are developed that do not depend on the payment of fees for content. Thus the distinction between formal and informal is not one between free and paid for, or public and corporate.

The rapid growth and popularity of digital networked media has changed the functioning of these circulations of culture. These new innovations have made circulation of content inside horizontal social networks possible, a model which is

9   B. Fatyga, Dzicy z naszej ulicy. Antropologia kultury młodzieżowej [Wildlings From Our Hood. Anthropology of Youth Culture], Warszawa: UW 2005, p. 111.

10 M. Pęczak, op.cit., p. 29.

exceedingly different from both the broadcasting of content and the market distribution of physical units. This has led to the growing importance of the informal circulation. Currently, cultural content flows through multiple circulations between the market, public institutions, and, most of all, between people whose meaning as nodes in those circulations has radically gained significance due to networking technologies. However we wanted to confirm that particular notion through research to ground our theories in verified data.

Missing evidence for cultural policy

The informal circulation of content escapes today's official statistics of participation in culture and mechanisms of regulation as applied by governments to the cultural sphere. That is the second reason behind our decision to focus on this subject. Among those mechanisms there is of course the copyright system, which is a method of regulating the copying and processing of cultural content – therefore it shapes the circulation of culture. In an ideal situation, these regulations should fit and support both the institutionalized circulation of content and informal cultural practices. However, in the face of increased exchange of content in multiple cultural circulations created by the digital society, the regulations currently in force are becoming increasingly irrelevant in our new cultural reality.

We believe that the discussion concerning the regulation of the Internet, and especially copyrights, should be grounded in facts describing the sphere governed by that regulation. Thus, it should be based on a real assessment of the cultural practices of Poles, including the specificity of the digital universe and its influence on changing the life of citizens. This particular area in politics is absolutely key to the future of culture. Meanwhile, rather than filling the debate with proof and facts – even if they are criticized or differently interpreted – we engage in discussions based on the simplest of stereotypes and an emotional approach to change.

Without research we will be unable to break the current mold where the discussion revolving around the informal circulation of content on the Internet is led on one hand by "thieves," with whom there is no sense in talking and on the other by "greedy corporations," whose voice need not be taken into account. This debate must be

conducted in a much less polarized and emotional manner. Therefore, this report does not only diagnose the current state of affairs, but also – via examining the opinions and motivations of the respondents – attempts to provide a dataset, later to be expanded through qualitative research, which would allow us to break this deadlock.

Re-examination of contemporary creativity

The third issue that pushed us towards focusing on this particular subject is the belief that even in academic discussions revolving around the influence of networked digital media on the practices of its consumers, the facts are all too often ignored. Even though many are familiar with the slogans claiming that the borders between content creation and consumption are becoming blurred, the data collected in our country clearly indicates that the development of new communications technologies has not resulted in a radical increase in bottom-up creativity. According to the aforementioned *Social Diagnosis*, in 2009, 8% of Internet users claimed to have created or modified their own website or blog in the week prior to the interview (the result is identical to one from the 2007 edition), whereas 34% claimed to have done so at some point in the past. These results are significantly lower than the ones related to downloading music and movies from the Internet that we mentioned above. Only 34% of Internet users claimed to have created and published any kind of content on the Internet, while only 7% claimed to have done so in the past week.[11] According to the *World Internet Project Poland 2011* report, 19% of Internet users posted a comment on a social network in the past year and 5% posted a comment on another person's blog in the same timeframe. 2% of Internet users have written on their blog in the 12 months prior to the interview, whereas 1% claimed to have maintained their personal website.[12]

Therefore, our project also sought to demonstrate that while the issue of bottom-up creativity is undoubtedly significant, we should be looking for another, no less important, cultural change that is affecting the redistribution of content created by

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11 D. Batorski, op. cit., pp. 308-309.

12 World Internet Project Poland 2011, p. 64; URL:
   http://worldinternetproject.com/?pg=reports&inHamtadId=516

someone else. Internet users are increasingly taking on roles heretofore reserved for e.g. big media conglomerates. While usually this is stated in relation to content creation, in our opinion this applies equally to such activities as dissemination, reviewing or recommendation of content. The border between these two areas of activity – that of content production on one hand and distribution with associated practices on the other - is quite blurry. When looking for ways to describe the "new institutions" of content redistribution, we considered multiple concepts, including Yochai Benkler's "peer production,"[13] describing bottom-up creativity. Currently, from the Polish point of view, any interest in the creativity of Internet users seems to be inadequate to the real extent of that phenomenon – while in the case of the mechanisms of reproduction, redistribution, and recommendation it is the opposite.

Despite being aware of the global character and homogeneity of contemporary culture, we require theories of media and of the digital society that fit our local experiences and conditions. Oftentimes, the language we use in Poland to describe them is based on analyses conducted in completely different contexts – usually, the American society. In Polish media, in the public debate, and even in the local academic discourse, we eagerly bring up theses of American thinkers all the while forgetting that they describe a completely different cultural reality. Placing the project in the Polish "here and now" does not necessarily mean that we perceive it as a strictly local undertaking.On the contrary, the exchange of content through digital networks is faster than the formal flow – it bypasses national regulations, customs, and trade agreements. For example, informal translation groups work faster than actors, often providing localized versions of global products almost instantly after their release. The traditional circulation is mostly bound to nation-states and regulated locally while the new, networked flows often use the help of intermediaries who operate on a global scale unrestricted by national borders. For protions of citizens, these new circulations are not only another form of reaching the desired content, but a channel via which they can use content that's inaccessible through the traditional, local circulation (we are, of course, aware of the fact that another large group of users do not utilize that

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13 Y. Benkler , The Wealth of Networks, New Haven and London: Yale University Press 2006.

international offer).

We would also explicitly like to describe, what our report certainly is not. It is not, a report focused on "piracy," for a number of reasons. Firstly, we do not judge the actions of our respondents, especially from a legal point of view. Sharing content on the Internet without consent from the rightsholder, commonly called "piracy," is illegal and immoral. However, these practices remain part of a grey area. There is no consensus among Polish lawyers as to the legality of some of the practices associated with copying content that, depending on the interpretation, either fall under fair use or are simply illegal. We also assume that arbitrarily marking some practices as illegal – under current law – makes it difficult to analyze these phenomena in a way that could serve to reform that law. Finally, we assume that the "piracy" category portrays the effects of the phenomenon in one-dimensional, focusing only on the financial consequences borne by the creators and intermediaries. It omits, among others, the issue of positive – from the point of view of a nation's cultural policy – consequences, such as expanding the nation's social and cultural capital. Only through a neutral approach to the phenomenon can we begin to look for regulative solutions, which would balance out the interests and serve at the same time creators, intermediaries (producers and distributors and users of content. Such approach is also necessary to construct regulation able to serve not just balanced particular interests, but a broader social good as well.

The "pirate" category, formerly used to describe those selling unauthorized copies of content, is misleading when it comes to analyzing content sharing on the Internet.[14] Most of all, however the category itself hampers any dialogue related to attempts at regulating that sphere. Of course, the issue of potential law-breaking on the part of the respondents must be mentioned due to the potential impact on the results of our research. We assume that due to the social stigma of illegal downloads our respondents might hide the fact that they engage in such practices. It is worth

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14 Cf. J. John, 2006, Peers, Pirates and Persuasion. Rhetoric in the Peer-to-Peer Debates, West Lafayette, Indiana: Parlor Press 2006.

pointing out that the results presented in this report are likely conservative estimates of the size of that sphere. While it is hard to believe that someone without access to file-sharing networks would claim to use them, the reverse situation is also possible. Though this reasoning can be reversed, our research demonstrates that a large part of Poles are willing to admit that they participate in informal circulations and do not consider the downloading of files to be an illegal or improper activity.

This is why we refrained from writing about "pirates," and focused on people participating in informal content sharing practices. As we mentioned earlier, we did not want to create rigid categories in which to include our respondents – and "piracy" is such a category. Rather, we started by analyzing the activities, attitudes, and opinions gleaned from the surveys, which would inform us on how often, in what way, and for what reasons Poles use informal circulations of cultural content developed around networked, digital media; and to also probe the relationship between these activities and the formal circulation. Through our research, we attempt to present the perspective and experiences of users, which are underrepresented in the public debate. This last issue is visible outside of Poland, although last year brought increased interest in researching informal trajectories of cultural circulations across the globe. We would like to participate in this trend and use this as an opportunity to compare the results we obtained in Poland with results collected in other countries. We hope that this report – together with research data available on our website – will help formulate arguments in the debate on informal cultural practices and the shape of contemporary culture.

2. International research on informal circulations of digital content

Reviewing the state of international research on informal sharing of audiovisual content is a task which certainly falls outside the scope of this project. That's why we included only a partial review, which seeks to accomplish two tasks. First of all, it's supposed to serve as a reference point, allowing us to assess whether the sizes of the informal sphere in Poland and in other countries are similar or maybe very different.

Secondly, it is supposed to point out the analyses of social norms and sharing mechanisms, which are based on qualitative research and can suggest further directions for the interpretation of statistical data.

Let's start with scale by bringing up the United States, a country which serves as the primary provider of globally consumed content and which sets the tone of the copyrights debate, as well as Sweden, a country with an extremely law-abiding citizenry and one of the top European countries in terms of Internet access (84% of the population has access to broadband Internet). Information about the informal economy in the US is provided by preliminary results of Joe Karaganis' research project, finalized as of this writing, called *Copy Culture in the U.S. and Germany.*[15] These results were obtained through analysis of data collected in the US and they represent the media practices of Americans, their attitude towards copyright law, and the degree of their consent towards breaking it. The most important thesis of that project can be summarized thusly: using the informal content sharing networks, which the authors call (highlighting the haziness of the term) "piracy," is common practice in the United States. About 46% of adult US citizens bought, copied, or downloaded illegal copies of music, movies, and TV shows. Almost 70% of respondents from the 18 to 29 demographic claimed to engage in that practice, whereas in the 30 to 49 age group exactly half of the respondents claimed to do so. The authors have also shown that the intensity of said practices is moderate, evidenced by the small size of the collections of illegally downloaded files. Moreover, only 14% of Americans, which is less than one third of all who claim to download audiovisual materials from the Internet, claim that that they acquired most of their audiovisual collection this way. Thus, the report suggests that purchase and free informal access are complementary, rather than mutually exclusive. Moreover, the appearance of websites that stream legal content, allowing free access to content, seems to decrease the prevalence of informal activities. The attitude towards using informal distribution observed among family and friends is also interesting – although the activity violates American law, it is

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15 Copyright Infringement and Enforcement in the US. A Research Note, November 2011, URL:
    http://piracy.ssrc.org/the-copy-culture-survey-infringement-and-enforcement-in-the-us.

generally treated as acceptable (75% and 56% of acceptance for sharing music with family and friends, respectively; 70% and 54% in the case of sharing movies). However, the level of support for uploading unauthorized copies of content to the Internet with intent to share is significantly smaller – at 16%.

File sharing is also generally treated as acceptable in Sweden. A report prepared by Mans Svensson and Stefan Larson, using a sample of a 1000 respondents, shows the Swedish society lacks any norms which would regulate or limit informal content sharing. In this regard, the practices of Swedes are radically different from the current legal norms – the researchers write that "there is a striking discrepancy between the social norms on illegal file sharing of copyrighted content and the legal regulation."[16] While analyzing the collected answers, the researchers also expressed doubt that the trend could be reversed by radicalizing the law. What's the size of the informal circulation in Sweden? As the Swedish edition of *World Internet Project* shows, 24% of Swedish Internet users (and that's 20% of the entire Swedish population) use file sharing networks – at least from time to time. That number is significantly higher among young males. The report reads: "As blogging is part of young women's Internet culture, file sharing is part of young men's Internet culture. Half of the young men between 16 and 25 share files and an additional 25 percent in the same age group have shared files."[17]

The results of other studies enable us to better understand the motivations of people who engage in informal file sharing on the Internet. In his ethnographic study of music fans from both US and Japan, Ian Condry pointed out a belief held by people who download content from the Internet, namely that money spent on records ends up in the pockets of big recording companies and that using unpaid distribution channels does not undermine the emotional relationship between listener and artist. Paying is considered an exception, an ethical choice on the part of the consumer – but at the same time the values held by respondents did not require condemning of

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16 M. Svensson, S. Larsson, Social Norms and Intellectual Property, Llund University 2009, p. 59.

17 O. Findahl, Swedes and the Internet 2010, p. 48, www.iis.se/docs/soi2010_eng_web.pdf.

downloading illegal content from the Internet.[18]

An even stronger rejection of formal distribution channels is presented by David Novak in his analysis of the "world music" case, wherein "overlapping categories of piracy, appropriation, sharing, and bootlegging have become crucial to the participatory ethics of World Music 2.0. The criminality of piracy proposed by copyright law is not just defused or ignored, it is reversed. Redistributors insist that freedom of access always trumps the controls of ownership; in fact, it would be criminal to allow these recordings to remain uncirculated. Further, they argue that existing industrial setups for authorial compensation are practically dysfunctional anyway, especially in the informal economies of regional music scenes."[19]

The work of Alf Rehn, a researcher from Finland, is also focused on mechanisms of file sharing. He described how groups that engage in sharing copyrighted computer programs and games realize the anthropological concept of the gift economy by closely analyzing the organization of one such group.[20] Rehn claims that two elements were mentioned with every release: honor and prestige. A working release is evidence of the abilities possessed by the person who shared it with others. Releasing a working version of a program before anther group is an achievement that every member of the releasing group can be proud of. The group's structure (division of labor – crackers, uploaders, people who spread the news of fresh releases) and the necessary tools (servers, software) are also elements that participate in the process of building and sharing values. Thus, every shared piece of software increases the prestige of an individual within a group and enhances the sense of community. And even though our report does not take software into account, we bring up the example because it highlights a potentially significant issue that applies as well to distribution of other

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18 I. Condry, I., Cultures of Music Piracy: An Ethnographic Comparison of the US and Japan, "International Journal of Cultural Studies", vol. 7, 2004.

19 D. Novak, The Sublime Frequencies of New Old Media, "Public Culture", Volume 23, Number 3, 2011, p. 624.

20 A. Rehn, Electronic Potlatch. A study on new technologies and primitive economic behaviors, 2001; URL: http://www.alfrehn.com/academic/page1/files/page1_4.pdf.

types of content, for example movies.

The depiction of film- and music-lovers existing together in an ecosystem characterized by a supremely effective content sharing system must be supplemented with an additional point of view. A group of researchers from Spain, Germany, and the US has analyzed the data on proportions between downloaders and uploaders (the latter category doesn't include downloaders who share downloaded files) on two websites that were the most popular at the time of the project's inception: PirateBay and Mininova.[21] It turns out that about 100 people/groups of people are responsible for 66% of the content generating and 75% of the downloads. The research shows that there are two types of entities that publish content on PirateBay and Mininova. The first type are *fake publishers*, who share so-called "fakes," which are files with misleading descriptions. They are mainly people associated with the organizations which fight "piracy." The second type are users, or groups of users, who upload the most popular content and bear the expenses and risks associated with doing so. Their primary motivation is financial gain – mostly from online ads and paid accounts for users that want faster download speeds. The report thus shows that at the bottom of the informal content sharing chain are – just like in the case of formal economies – people, who treat their activity in those file-sharing networks as a job and profit from it financially.

This leads us back to the "audience" and "redistributors" of content, "serviced" by groups of people who upload content to sharing networks. Why do people decide to use informal channels? In her provocatively titled study *Piracy is the Future of Television*, Abigail de Kosnik claims that not having to pay for access to content is just one of many factors at work.

She concludes her report with the following sentence: "Many individuals do not pirate TV just because it is free, but because piracy is the easiest, simplest, most feature-rich

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21 R. Cuevas et al., Is Content Publishing in BitTorrent Altruistic or Profit-Driven?, Proceedings of the 6th International Conference on emerging Networking EXperiments and Technologies, 2010, URL: http://e-archivo.uc3m.es/handle/10016/10116.

means available to them for acquiring TV by means of the Internet. Ideally, as television migrates more and more to the Internet, the TV industry will incorporate some of piracy's benefits in an effort to offer the highest-quality product possible to customers."[22] Bodo Balazs and Zoltan Lakatos followed a similar path in their analyses of Hungarian BitTorrent users and the data they collected on the popularity of downloaded movies. Taking into account the way cinemas are operated in Hungary (only in big cities, very few Hungarian movies get screened), Balazs and Lakatos looked at the most frequently downloaded movies from two perspectives: whether they complement the poor repertoire or replace it entirely. Their research shows that Hungarian users of file sharing networks are mostly interested in movies that are not currently screened in cinemas across their country.[23] The authors state that material that gets uploaded to file sharing networks depends on local circumstances and local demand. In the case of Hungary it means that not all downloads of movies from peer-to-peer networks result in losses for the movie industry. What makes the Hungarian study unique is its methodology – the authors used the history of downloads from sites offering torrent files which in turn allowed them to compare downloaded movies with the then-current cinema repertoire. On the other hand, Bart Cammaerts and Bingchung Ment point out that when writing about the informal distribution of cultural content, it is necessary to consider a whole group of factors, including the changing models of consumption and decreasing entertainment expenditures.[24]

The team headed by Joe Karganis offers another way of looking at the economic results of piracy in their research report on piracy in developing countries.[25] One of

22 A. de Kosnik, Piracy is the Future of Television, p. 16, URL: http://cms.mit.edu/news/2011/01/piracy_is_the_future_of_televi.php.

23 B. Balazs, Z. Lakatos, P2P and cinematographic movie distribution in Hungary, 2010, URL: http://www.aea-eu.com/2009Marseille/DOCUMENTS/Publication/Abstract/Bodo-Lokotos.pdf.

24 B. Cammaerts, B. Meng, Creative Destruction and Copyright Protection. Regulatory Responses to File-sharing, London School of Economics and Political Science, Department of Media and Communications, 2011; URL: http://www.scribd.com/doc/51217629/LSE-MPPbrief1-creative-destruction- and-copyright-protection

25 Media Piracy in Emerging Economies, ed. Joe Karaganis, SSRC, 2010, URL: http://piracy.ssrc.org/the-

the key elements of the report was pointing out the issue of pricing strategies. According to the authors, the growth of the informal circulation in Bolivia, Brazil, India, Mexico, Russia, and South Africa was influenced not only by technological developments (falling hardware prices, increasingly easier access to broadband Internet), but also high prices of content.

The report compares not only absolute prices but also the CPP (comparative purchase power) indices, calculated using International Monetary Fund data. The report was supposed to make Americans (and by extension, the populations of other developed countries) aware of how much "pirated" goods cost in other parts of the world relative to local earnings. That idea can be easily transplanted onto Polish ground, given the fact that in 2010 the per capita GDP was 46,860 USD, whereas in Poland it was only 12,323 USD. It means that to calculate a price which would take the CPP index into account, one would have to multiply the sale price by a factor of 3.8.

For example: the *Rise of the Planet of the Apes* DVD premiered on December 6 – and merlin.pl, a Polish online retailer, carried it at 49.49 PLN. The same film premiered on Amazon.com a week later and was priced at 16.99 USD which amounts to about 56 PLN – 13% more than in Poland. But if we take purchasing power into account, the DVD price will rise to 188 PLN (almost 57 USD), and spending that kind of money on a DVD will be as painful to the monthly budget of an American as nearly 50 PLN is for a Pole. Thus legal participation in culture is for an average Pole significantly more expensive than for an average American. The report also pointed out a positive aspect of informal distribution, saying that it increases the comfort of life of individuals who don't have the means to engage with the formal distributors, and also highlighting that it creates demand and helps to expand the entertainment industry.

3. Theoretical basis: the informal economy of the media

In October of 2010, during the third Free Culture Research Conference organized by

report/

the Free University of Berlin, Volker Grassmuck was in the middle of reviewing the state of research on file sharing networks when he stated that "while over the last ten years file-sharing has become a daily practice for millions of people, the universe of this practice is still a terra incognita."[26] Grassmuck did not mean that this topic is completely absent from research. Rather he was talking about the consequences of the fact that an overwhelming majority of research on that issue is used as ammunition by various interest groups. In providing his own perspective, Grassmuck proposes to treat file sharing primarily as social practice – individual activities conducted at a mass level and thus able to propel and organize a part of cultural content's flow through society. This perspective was our starting point.

In our study, we were interested primarily in looking for informal channels of content distribution used by Poles. We took the concept of "informal media economy," as proposed by Ramon Lobato, Julian Thomas, and Dan Hunter as the basis for our research due to the need of evading the trap of perceiving culture exclusively through the eyes of public institutions (in this case local and national government entities tasked with fostering the development of culture) and commercial middlemen (in this case companies selling cultural content or access thereto), but also to escape the aforementioned stigmatizing classifications, such as "pirate."

In their article titled *Histories of user-generated content: Between formal and informal media economies*, the aforementioned three point out that the assumption about professional production and distribution being the norm in culture is completely wrong. Moreover, as clearly evidenced by the Internet, the difference between professionals and amateurs is getting less clear and harder to define. According to the authors, another division might be more effective, one separating the formal elements of media industries from the informal. "Following the anthropological and sociological literature on informal economies, we define informal media systems as those which fall largely or wholly outside the purview of state policy, regulation,

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26 V. Grassmuck, File-Sharing as Social Practice, 2010, p. 9; URL: http://wikis.fu-berlin.de/download/attachments/59080767/Grassmuck-Paper.pdf.

taxation and measurement. The informal media economy encompasses an extremely diverse range of production activities — including DIY publishing, slash video and other forms of amateur production, as well as community and diasporic music and film production — and an equally large range of distribution activities, from disc piracy and peer-to-peer file-sharing through to second-hand markets and the parallel-importation of CDs, DVDs and games."[27]

Placing formal and informal distribution of content in separate categories highlights the fact that their relationship is dynamic, some practices oscillate between one and the other. Sometimes content travels horizontally between the two (on one hand we have the informal distribution of professionally created content, e.g. in file sharing networks, and on the other we have institutionalization and commercial use of content created in a bottom-up way, which in itself is the basis of Web 2.0 services but is nowadays increasingly often used by traditional media). Sometimes the differences between them are practically invisible for content consumers – because how many people check whether a YouTube video was posted by someone holding the copyrights to that particular material?

The history of the concept of "informal media economy" clearly portrays the problems encountered by modern cultural research, the latter often using tools that are inadequate to the reality they're supposed to help analyze. Lobato, Thomas, and Hunter transplanted the "informal economy" concept to the media sphere after encountering it in reports on African job markets written in the early 1970s. [28] Studies on Kenya and Ghana have shown that activities with marginal – at least from a Western perspective – significance, like street hawking, selling second-hand goods, urban gardening, or moneylending – are the production base or sometimes even the

27 R. Lobato, J. Thomas, D. Hunter, Histories of User-Generated Content: Between Formal and Informal Media Economies, p. 2; URL: http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1749803.

28 International Labour Organizarion, Incomes and equality: a strategy for increasing productive employment in Kenya, International Labour Office: Geneva 1972; K. Hart, Informal income opportunities and urban employment in Ghana, "Journal of Modern African Studies", 11(1)/1973, pp. 61-89.

foundation of an individual's economic existence.

The informal economy – bypassing state regulation and taxation, not included in research – turned out to be at least as important as its "official" counterpart. Without it, the portrayal of life we registered was simply incomplete. The next breakthrough in thinking about the informal sphere came more than a decade later, when Saskia Sassen, Manuel Castells, and Alejandro Portes showed that the informal economy isn't just a vestige of the pre-industrial era, a troublesome heritage that will disappear along with the next stages of modernization, but rather a constitutive element of neoliberal restructuring.[29]

They proved that linking informal economies exclusively with developing countries is a mistake, as small businesses – the crucial part of the neoliberal economy – are poorly controlled and bursting at the seams with informal phenomena: people are hired without any contracts or the rules of these contracts are bent, profits are hidden, etc. In short: they have shown that the informal economy is present to a similar degree in both developing and well-developed countries. Therefore, the formal-informal binary isn't supposed to separate the developed countries from those less-developed, or countries with stronger, well-established markets from those that are just starting their adventure with market economies, but rather it's supposed to represent two analytical dimensions.

It might be good to provide a little Polish context. In 1989, after the socialist government fell, our thinking was dominated by the belief that "informal activities" are somehow shameful, an effect of the demoralizing influence of the socialist system, where you couldn't function any other way. In the private sphere this change was not so radical – we can rather speak of a conflict, or tensions, between different value systems, focusing either on individual utility, or the public interest, protected by law.

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29 S. Sassen, New York City's Informal Economy, "ISSR working papers", 4(9), Institute for Social Science Research, UCLA 1988; M. Castells, A. Portes, World underneath: The origins, dynamics, and effects of the informal economy, in: A. Portes, M. Castells, L. A. Benton (ed.), The informal economy: studies in advanced and less developed countries, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press 1989, pp. 11-40.

The second alternative meant capitalist modernization, whose goal was to make informal activities – perceived as pathological – disappear. That type of thinking dominated the debate revolving around "piracy" as a vestige of the times when informal operations filled the void left by the formal sphere and service providers associated with it. Since providers of missing goods (as well as cultural content) appeared in the mainstream distribution channels, the informal circulation had to be pushed to the background. The positively valued "second circulation" of yesteryear became stigmatized by the new official discourse.

We're now observing that the reverse situation is gaining ground – thanks, no doubt, to the rising popularity of the Internet – where activities outside the purview of the state and the market (or commercial entities) are once again part of our daily practice. These cultural practices and behaviors similar to those exhibited by citizens of the socialist People's Republic of Poland were also observed in countries with the highest development index – which we will prove later. It is also necessary to remember that the practices we analyzed are not limited strictly to the world of the Internet. One needs only to bring up the extremely prevalent practice of television license evasion in Poland[30]. When a person decides not to pay the license, watching television becomes unauthorized and part of the informal sphere. And just like with "piracy," analyzing that phenomenon in purely legal terms makes it difficult to understand the reasons behind the behavior of Poles in the case of television licenses.

That's just another jump-off point for a discussion on how relations between the standard-defining center and the peripheries imitating it are rapidly changing. The emanation of that division onto other types of informal practices is yet another. When referring to practices commonly associated with the underclass, working without a permit, the dominating discourse will condemn them. But when referring to immaterial labor, especially one using new technologies, focused on fostering innovation – the lack of formal linkage becomes an element of discourse on social

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30 2/3 Polaków nie płaci abonamentu RTV [2/3 of Poles do not pay the television license], „Wirtualne media", 5 January 2012; URL: http://www.wirtual- nemedia.pl/artykul/2-3-polakow-nie-placi-abonamentu-rtv#.

capital, trust, and flexibility. It's an asset rather than a problem – an element of entrepreneurship and a civic attitude. Something that the state wants to foster, rather than punish. Nowadays, however, this approach lacks any type of justification, outside of discourse-created power relations. In a knowledge society, the manipulation of symbols and creation of new ideas no longer lies in the hands of the privileged few.[31]

However the Polish context is important for us not only because of the historical perspective it provides. It's also crucial for a critical reflection of our attempts at changing the way socio-cultural practices are perceived (conducted in line with the research perspective proposed by Grassmuck[32]. What important areas of these practices have changed thanks to the advances in digital networking technologies, like the Internet and all the services it made possible? How much has universal access to a decentralized communications network that blurs the distinction between audience and broadcaster really changed the producer-consumer binary? As we already mentioned, available statistics show that not that much has changed at least in Poland. According to the *World Internet Project Poland 2011* report, only 1 in 5 Internet users has published a comment on a social network in the last year (1 in 3 if we limit the age of respondents to 24). But only 1 in 20 posted a comment on a blog, while only 1 Internet user in 50 wrote on his or her own blog or posted reviews somewhere on the Internet.[33] And these are one of the least demanding forms of creative output. Similar results can be found in *Social Diagnosis*: only 8% of Internet users claim to regularly write on a blog or a website (writing or editing a post), or publish their own literary work, music, or art. In the subsequent editions of *Social Diagnosis*, that percentage does not increase.[34]

We do not intend to diminish the significance of possibilities offered by the Internet to grassroots creators, but instead of on creation, we'd rather focus on how the Internet

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31 Cf. M. Lazzarato, Immaterial Labour, trans. Paul Colilli & Ed Emory, in: Paolo Virno & Michael Hardt, eds., _Radical Thought in Italy, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1996, pp. 132-146.

32 V. Grassmuck, op.cit.

33 World Internet Project Poland 2011, op. cit., pp. 62-65.

34 D. Batorski, op. cit., p. 308.

influenced activities associated with content consumption. That's why we feel that transplanting Yochai Benkler's concept of *peer production* onto this field is more than justified. The concept describes production that is "radically decentralized, collaborative, and nonproprietary; based on sharing resources and outputs among widely distributed, loosely connected individuals who cooperate with each other without relying on either market signals or managerial commands."[35] Benkler also points out that the Internet enabled people to collaborate while bypassing markets and corporations – we want to show that these exact changes that influenced the production process have also influenced the reproduction and redistribution of goods on the Internet. Moreover, it also influenced the process of reviewing and recommendation, because according to Lev Manovich "We see new kinds of communication where content, opinion, and conversation often can't be clearly separated."[36] In a situation, in which the receiver has full control over the content – and can copy and redistribute - the discussed media object might be "fused" with the comments and opinions, sometimes it's the only reason the latter exist. If we want to use Benkler's terminology – which, according to us, effectively describes the mechanism of creating and supporting new circulations for cultural content – we need to assume that new content distribution infrastructure, new circulations, are constructed socially.

We're describing social, or rather techno-social networks of cultural content sharing, where radically decentralized, collaborative, and nonproprietary practices of reproduction, redistribution, and recommendation are commonplace. Within those networks, individuals share their resources – just as they did before the Internet became popular. Today, however, that sharing is taking place on a massive, industrial-like scale (previously serviced by an illegal, organized circulation), while individuals engaging in the process are rarely linked in any way. This differs significantly from other informal economies, often permeated by social relationships. In the sharing

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35 Y. Benkler, The Wealth of Networks, New Haven and London: Yale University Press 2006, p. 60.

36 L. Manovich, The Practice of Everyday (Media) Life, URL:

   http://www.manovich.net/DOCS/manovich_social_media.doc

processes we observed, social relationships can be important – content is often shared between friends and family. But sharing can also occur between people who do not know each other in any way and remain anonymous or even invisible (like in peer-to-peer networks, where participants in the sharing process are represented symbolically by the number of "seeds," without any interaction taking place, there's also no information about who we're downloading our files from). The role of middleman is played by an easily accessible and easy to use infrastructure, consisting of multiple broadband links and free software. Thus, individuals engaging in the sharing process have to put in only a minimum amount of effort.

It is worth mentioning at this point the concept of the gift – potentially very useful for our research, but at the same time risky. The gift is a concept important in the tradition of ethnographic research, which is today being tied to think in terms of network metaphors. Alain Caille writes that "Network relationships are gift relationships" and points out that the gift builds social networks, the reproduction of which helps build trust inside them[37]. Trust is another category that is salient to informal economy perspective. But is it also important for understanding informal media economy? One can argue that inside file exchange networks we are dealing with a double logic of the gift. The first applies to direct contacts during which a file, even if it does not have material value, becomes a gift of emotional value and potentially also has value built on the basis of user competences. These can be of different types, from technical skills – which our research suggests do not play a crucial role – to cultural competences that allow one to choose a given work over another. In the second logic, trust is a function of the software, which ensures the anonymity of the participants in the exchange of files. In this logic, the situation is reversed: it is the network that builds the gift, not the gift that forms the network. Participants of such exchange care more about their own interest and the lack of commitments. This double logic of the informal circulation is one possible direction of further research and fits into a conflict always raised by the concept of the gift:

37 A. Caille, Gift, in: The Human Economy, ed. K. Hart, J.-L. Laville, A.D. Cattani, Cambridge: Polity 2010, p. 183.

between acting for one's own good and for the good of others.

It is furthermore worth considering to what extent an informal circulation that is intermediated by software is similar to an exchange in which code is not an intermediator. Lawrence Lessig wrote that today code displaces law[38]. In an informal circulation of cultural content, it takes the place of law. Although the exchange very often takes place beyond the reach of law, its form is precisely defined by code – which often simply offers better access conditions than in the traditional circulation. This code is of course evolving under the influence of the law, as seen by legal problems of Napster and the resulting development of next generations of peer to peer networks, which are not dependent on a centralized server. Participants in this sphere do not have to improvise, as everything is determined by the creators of a given software or service. They also lack a sense of participation in a certain agreement based on mutual trust, since the level of anonymity is very high, and trust becomes a function of the software. They also do not conduct almost any work, their involvement is close to none. So the non-hierarchic character of this relations might be simply related to the shape of the Internet's infrastructure. And perhaps it serves as basis for an institution that regulates access in a way much closer to traditional ways, than we might think. These are just some possible questions.

Finally, we need to mention a sphere of social relations, in which ties often have a minimal character, related simply to the confirmation of the relationship through an appropriate feature of a social networking website. Afterwards, the ties are based mainly upon the exchange of reviews, recommendations and possibly content itself. Polish copyright law allows fair use of content when there is a social relationship between those sharing it[39]. Thus, new forms of social relationships are problematic from a legal point of view. And we're not talking about extremes, like claiming that people sharing content in peer-to-peer networks are linked by some form of social relationship. We're rather thinking about a situation, where tenuous social networks

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38 L. Lessig, Wolna kultura [Free culture], Warszawa: WSiP 2005, s. 180.

39 Vide: Ustawa z dnia 4 lutego 1994 r. o prawie autorskim i prawach pokrewnych [Law of February 4, 1994, on Copyright and Neighboring Rights].

are maintained not through traditional social relationships but through content sharing, which in these networks plays the role of a new social "glue."

But let us return to the issue of formal and informal circulations. What is the relationship between informal practices and the formal circulations? As we might have surmised from the lesson on informal economies, the relationship is dynamic and complex. To handle that relationship, Mirko Tobias Schaefer proposed the term "extended culture industries." "The extended culture industries are characterized by the dynamic interaction of all participating parties. Production processes are not only extended into the domain of users – where the (old) culture industry's media texts and products are appropriated – but also happen completely independent of established production and distribution channels. In conclusion, we can state that this present culture is constituted by new design and appropriation of existing content, unfolding along the lines of accumulation, construction, and archiving from the culture industries to its fringes and beyond."[40] The important thing is that the activities linked with extended culture industries include not only creating and processing content, but also archiving – which we're interested in in this case – which Schaefer defines as "organization, maintenance and distribution of digital artifacts."[41]

Schaefer's concept expands the way we think about "participating in culture" and "participatory culture," rightly pointing out that since the roles performed by users and commercial entities are flexible and interchangeable, then commercial producers are also participating in culture. "Participation cannot be assigned only to users who get involved with media and 'oppose' a dominant vendor. The original producer and other commercial units – who are either actively involved in the process of modifying the original design or benefit from its outcome – are also part of participatory culture."[42] Moreover, as Schaefer points out, indirect participation is also a very

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40 M.T. Schaefer, Participation inside? User activities between design and participation, in: Digital Material. Tracing New Media in Everday Life and Technology, ed. M. van den Boomen, S. Lammes, A.-S. Lehmann, J. Raessens, M.T. Schaefer:, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press 2009, p. 150.
41 M.T. Schaefer, op.cit., p. 149.
42 M.T. Schaefer, op.cit., p. 153.

important element in the modern cultural ecosystem. Indirect participation is a result of solutions implemented in software (like in the case of the abovementioned peer-to-peer networks, where people who download content from others automatically share their content), instead of being a result of the conscious choices on the part of the users.

From this point of view, "participating in culture" includes relations of various entities, constituted by the content they share. These circulations of digital content are intertwined – all of them are part of their users' daily routine. According to us, it's not the job of the researchers to judge which of these networks are important and which are not. In the words of Lobato, Thomas, and Hunter, "informal media systems should not be analytically ghettoised but brought into the mainstream of media and communications research as objects for comparative analysis."[43] That's why we adopted a particular theoretical perspective for our research project – one that goes against the normative approach, focused on what's formalized, professional, but also creative.

4. Research methodology

Our project consisted of two surveys. The first one was a nationwide pilot survey based on computer assisted personal interviewing (CAPI), conducted from May 19 to May 26 of 2011 by Millward Brown SMG KRC company, on a representative sample of 1004 persons over 15 years of age. [44]

The goal of the pilot survey was to investigate the extent of the informal circulation of content such as digital forms of books, music, movies, and television shows, among both people who use the Internet and those who don't. We also wanted to collect data that would allow us to compare the level of activity in the formal and informal circulations of content. The pilot study consisted of three groups of questions. The

43 R. Lobato, J. Thomas, D. Hunter, op. cit., p. 4.

44 The survey, as well as full datasets can be downloaded from http://obiegikultury.centrumcyfrowe.pl.

first concerned participation in the formal circulation, by purchasing content either in digital form or on physical media. The second concerned sharing and copying of content, treated as basic measures of participation in the informal circulation. The third part was a detailed investigation of activities related to digital content. One of our basic research hypotheses was that there exists an informal distribution of digital content outside of the Internet, on physical media. But analysis of the results has clearly shown that sharing digital content outside of the Internet is a negligible.

That's why the second survey, a deeper look into the mechanisms of acquiring and recommending content was conducted on the Internet, based on computer assisted web interviewing (CAWI), and included only respondents who were Internet users. We have therefore assumed that the informal circulation of digital content, which is of interest to us, exists only among Internet users. Thus the main study, the goal of which is to obtain more detailed data about the mechanisms of obtaining and using content, was conducted through computer assisted web interviews (CAWI) with a sample of 1283 people. The study was conducted between 20th September and 2nd October 2011. The identity of all respondents was confirmed offline at an earlier date (they were recruited during personal interviews). To take part in the research, the respondent had to have and Internet connection in their household and use the Internet and email at least a few times every week. Respondents received remuneration for time spent on filling out the survey.

The research was conducted on a random, nationwide sample, and the demographic structure of the analyzed set is representative for the population of Polish Internet users (according to Nettrack results) with regard to gender, age (16 to 50 years old), place of residence, and education. Given our earlier assumptions about age and the limitations of methodology (online) we can assume that we've covered 25% of the Polish population from a demographic standpoint, and about 45% of Internet users from the 15 to 50 age group.

A consciously made decision to distort the sample in the second stage of our research project enabled us to reach a group representative of the population of active Internet users under 50 years of age (over the age of 50 the percentage of such users

in the population drops dramatically and we thus did not include them in the sample). The requirement of frequent Internet usage automatically eliminated all the people who access the Internet only from time to time, thus leaving us with people who use it every day, and whose decision to take part in the study probably means that they use both the computer and the Internet quite skillfully.

We're going to demonstrate later that this exerted a huge influence on their cultural practices, simultaneously distorting the image with which we were all too familiar in Polish research circles. It turns out that the differences between age groups – presented in the earlier part of this report (in the entire population, and among broadly defined Internet users) – which radically affected the usage of both formal and informal circulations, were basically rendered meaningless when we focused on people displaying heavy Internet usage. In the second stage of our project, we tried to describe the character of practices related to new content circulations, instead of trying to diagnose the reach of these practices (which we accomplished in our pilot survey). We also focused on a segment of society that is most likely to actively and regularly engage with informal circulations of content.

As we will demonstrate, this specificity of the group studied by us makes their cultural practices highly specific. At the same time it questions some key results of previous studies of Polish Internet users. For example, differences between different age groups, visible both in the population as a whole and among the general population of Internet users, are largely non-existent among active Internet users. Thus in the main study we focused not on the reach of practices tied to new circulations of content (which were the subject of our pilot study), but rather on describing the characteristics of those practices among those users, who most probably will actively and regularly take part in informal circulations.

We decided to conduct a quantitative study in order to establish how commonplace these practices are, and at the same time to distinguish among them as precisely, as possible. Our main goal was to describe the general shape of new cultural mechanisms, and also –as much as this is possible – to describe the ways in which participation in informal circulation is defined and rationalized by users. Finally, we

wanted to establish the scale of this circulation and its relations to other cultural activities. Still, we consider this study to have an exploratory character – we were collecting and interpreting data, instead of just testing previous hypotheses.

At the same time we are conscious of the limitations of the chosen research method. It is well suited for testing hypotheses and applicability of theoretical models, but gives limited possibility of studying how these processes are perceived by Internet users. This became obvious when we attempted to reconstruct the circulations of recommendations among participants in small social networks. After studying the data, we realized that this is impossible based on survey results. We are also aware of the risk of building „optical illusions"[45] when using statistical data: of thinking in terms of overly general and monolithic concepts built on the basis of quantitative data – which just as well could be interpreted differently. For this reason we are to some extent treating this study as a way to build context for further research projects. As a continuation of this study, we are already conducting qualitative studies on perceptions and attitudes towards digital circulations. We are further planning an analysis of discourses related to the circulation of digital content, and finally an economic study of these circulations.

4.1 Formal and informal methods of obtaining content

We conducted this study in order to describe different circulations of content, in particular in digital formats. In order to achieve this, we distinguished several main types of obtaining content. First among them is the **borrowing** of content – both informal, from friends, and formal, from libraries or rental stores. Related to it is a relatively new practice of **copying**, which displaces borrowing due to the ease with which content can be copied, and not just shared (copying content for friends on CDs, USB Flashdrives etc. Instead of borrowing) . Thus while the two forms should be distinguished, we should note that borrowing is today often tied to copying.

From the point of view of this report, most important are those types which are

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45 P. Saukko, Methodologies for cultural studies: An integrative approach, in: The Sage handbook of
    qualitative research, ed. N.K. Denzin, Y.S. Lincoln, Thousand Oaks: Sage 2005.

specific to the Internet. Crucial among them is the **downloading** of files from the Internet to a computer and storing them on a hard drive or other medium. Internet users download content both directly from web pages and file locker services (like rapidshare.com or Polish chomikuj.pl), but also download files from peer-to-peer networks. These networks are constituted through the use of special programs that make it possible to download content directly from computers of other users – either through a centralized intermediary or in a decentralized network. The users remain anonymous.

The third type of circulation is the **streaming** of content, used most prominently by popular video sites like YouTube or online radios. This method gives the user access to content, but without the possibility of downloading – one can consume, but cannot own. Streaming applies mainly to music and movies, though to some extent books can also be „streamer" – a good example of such approach is Google Books, which gives access to books but does not allow downloading. Streaming is used to publish both professional content – either made available legally or without authorization, and amateur content, created by users. This is easily demonstrated by any online video site, like YouTube or Vimeo, where all three types of content can be found. Video on Demand (VOD) services constitute a specific type of streaming sites, as they offer only legal content (either paid or free) like eg. Ipla.pl or Iplex.pl.

Buying is the primary form of participation in the formal circulation of content, and a point of reference for our study. Another form of content consumption, to which we pay little attention in our study, are **broadcasting** media – television and radio.

Among these forms of obtaining content, some – like buying - are obviously tied to formal circulation. On the other side of the spectrum we have forms that are found almost solely in informal circulation, such as downloading from peer-to-peer networks. Among them there is a range of hybrid practices. For example, watching streamed, unauthorized content on a legal video site, or buying copied content in a photocopy shop. In both cases an individual practice of a clearly informal character is made possible and supported by a commercial intermediary that functions in the formal sphere, often as a commercial body. We qualify such cases as belonging to the

informal circulation, due to our focus on the user's perspective. From such perspective, practices remain informal even if undertaken with the help of formal intermediaries. A key differentiating factor in the case of online streaming services is access for free – we treat paid streamed content as a separate category, belonging to the formal circulation.

We should note that the distinction between formal and informal circulation and practices to some extent overlaps with the distinction between market and non-market circulation. The non-market character of many practices, even if they are formalized to some extent, is the reason for which we include them in our study of informal circulation.

Another distinction is that between legal and illegal circulation. As we have mentioned in the introduction, we put aside, to some extent, the issue of legality of a given method of obtaining content. Even more importantly, we believe that participation in the informal content circulations that we have identified cannot be equaled uncritically with illegal activities. That is because in every circulation that we study one can find both legal and illegal content. The latter is made available by parties that own copyrights to the content that is used by others on the basis of fair use exemptions to copyright. Secondly, depending on the interpretation of the legal status of a given circulation, it can be defined either legal or illegal, without a clear consensus. This is the case of the legality of content downloading in the framework of Polish copyright – which according to some lawyers is legal even if the content is made available in an illegal or unauthorized manner (downloading of content is perceived as basic "pirate" practice) . Finally, we need to distinguish between two main types of content usage online. On one hand, the exchange of content in peer-to-peer networks and the downloading from file locker services like rapidshare.com or chomikuj.pl. On the other, the usage of content available online for streaming. In the second case, the content is predominantly available legally, or functions in a „grey zone." For example a mini-report by the TubeMogul company from 2010 shows that among the 100 most popular videos on YouTube, 35% are unofficial or illegal (professional content made available by parties that do not own sufficient rights to do this), 43% are made legally available by professional creators and commercial intermediaries, and 17% are created

by individual users[46]. Still, we lack precise data on the legal status of content, without which we cannot establish the legality of practices related to obtaining and consuming content. In order to obtain such data, we would have to combine our survey with inventories of content obtained by respondents, and then conduct legal analysis of such content – a task, which is practically impossible to conduct.

This uncertainty as to the legal state of obtained content is characteristic of the users' perspective. We confirm this by studying user views on downloading (see part 6.8).

One should therefore keep in mind the complexity of different circulations and forms of obtaining and consuming content. This can cause the users to falsely assign actions to abovementioned categories (which require knowledge of not just the law, but the technical aspects of different modes of content consumption). For this reasons, we have avoided as much as possible forcing the users to qualify their own actions in legal or technical terms. For the same reason we assume that our results can be to some extent imprecise. Most importantly we assume that people who do not directly use the Internet, but make use of content obtained online through intermediaries, might improperly declare participation in different forms of online circulation of content.

5. Poles and the informal circulation

We have conducted a pilot study in order to establish initially the size and character of the informal circulation of content. Our other goal was to identify the differences in cultural activity between Internet users and people who do not use this technology. In particular, we wanted to test whether the informal circulation is a purely online phenomenon, or whether it exists beyond the Net – and among those who do not use it. We have also wanted to collect basic data that would allow us to compare formal and informal circulation and to check whether the two circulations overlap – or whether they are distinct.

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46 YouTube's Top 100 by Type, URL: http://www.tubemogul.com/research/report/31

5.1 The extent of the formal and informal circulations

The primary goal of the pilot survey was understanding the extent to which Poles use both the formal and the informal distribution of cultural content. By usage of the formal network we understand the purchase of legal books, records, movies or television shows on physical media or in digital form. By usage of the informal network we understand both borrowing content free of charge (primarily from friends) as well as various forms of free access to digital content, mostly online – but also content shared on physical media (CDs, flash drives).

The first conclusion – and not an optimistic one – of the survey is that using cultural content is not a priority for most Poles. **Only 13% of the respondents claimed to have bought a movie, a recording, or even a single song – thus engaging with the formal circulation**. It needs to be mentioned, however, that given our focus on the processes of content distribution, at this point in our research we decided to exclude other forms of participation which are not based on content circulation (e.g. going to the movies, attending concerts and music festivals, using public broadcast media). Although, we might assume that excluding these activities did not significantly distort our results – after all, it's hard to imagine cinemas being besieged by people who do not even watch movies at home. 10% of Poles claim to have bought a book last year, while 4% claim to have bought a recording, a movie, or a television show. Despite the spread of the Internet, digital media purchases constitute only a fraction of total purchases, about 1-2%, so in most cases within the margin of error. It's interesting to note that not only digital media purchases, but other media purchases as well are age-correlated – younger people buy more often, whereas people over 40 practically don't buy any digital content (see Fig. 1).

Fig. 1. The formal circulation of culture (n=1004)
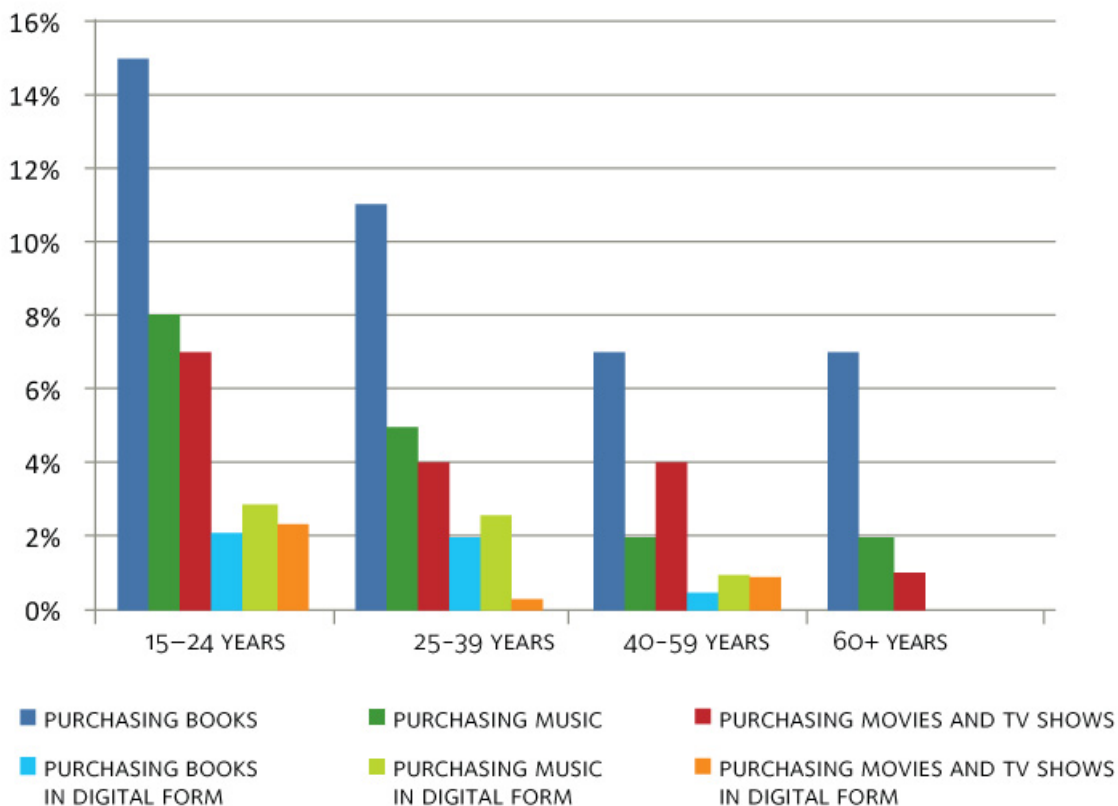
The key difference between engaging with the formal and informal distribution is using the Internet (understood here as using it at least once in the past month) – 50% of the Poles we interviewed claimed to be Internet users. This variable owes its significance to the fact that a large part of the informal circulation is Internet-based. Age is a related variable, due to the fact that Internet usage differs among various age groups. Without investigating whether the Internet culturally activates Poles, we assume that bisecting the Polish population into people less and more often engaging with cultural content is mostly consistent with the division into people who use the Internet (statistically younger, better educated, and wealthier) and those who don't.

33% of Poles engage with some type of informal digital content sharing, understood as: downloading content from websites, including hosting services; downloading content from peer-to-peer networks, using content received via email or IM; using multimedia content online – e.g. streaming movies or music, especially

sporting events, reading books online; and using digital content shared via physical media (see Fig. 2).

Fig. 2. Percentage of Poles engaging with different types of informal content distribution (n=1004)
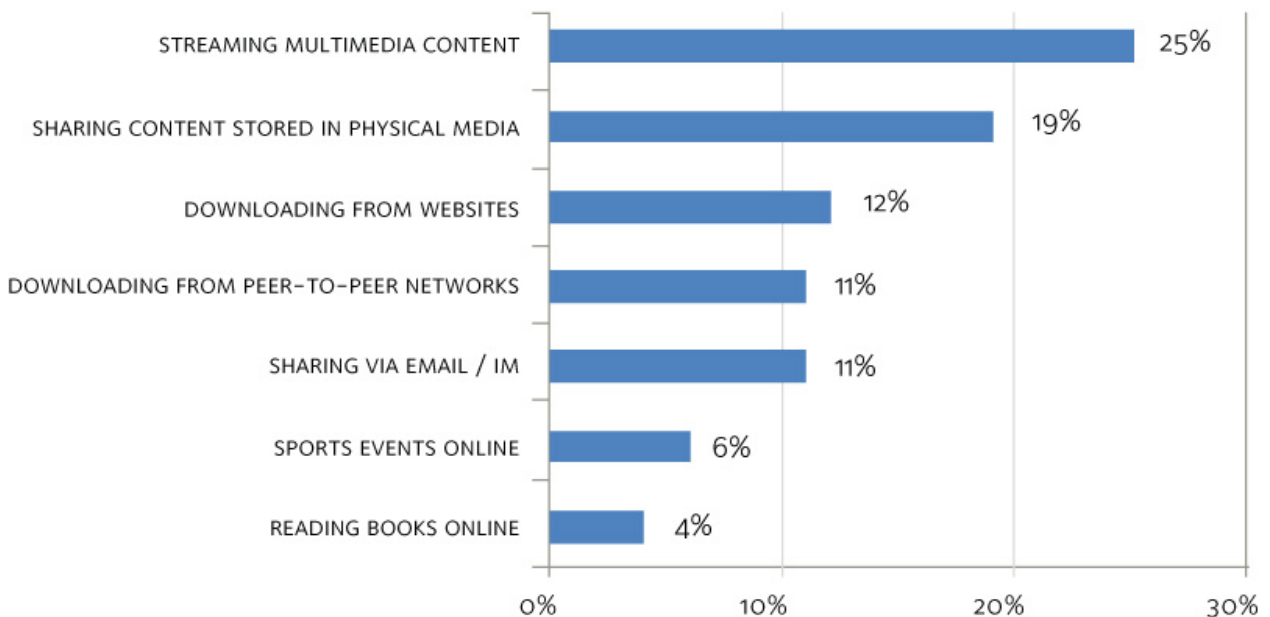
Out of all these types, only the last one is available for people who do not use the Internet. **62% of Internet users and 5% of those who don't use it (they share files stored on physical media) engage with informal circulations.** The pilot survey seems to tentatively confirm our hypothesis about the digital exclusion of people who have access to the Internet but don't use it – due to lack of motivation, generational differences between those using it and those who don't while inhabiting the same household. The results of the pilot survey also suggest that people who don't use the Internet basically don't use online content in an indirect way as well – the sharing of content stored on physical drives takes place almost exclusively between Internet users; we haven't found any instances of intergenerational sharing (a child who uses the Internet downloading content for his or her parents).

Among forms of informal circulation we should also include varied forms of borrowing content in physical form, from friends and acquaintances. This applies first of all to books. Here we need to remember that not every form of borrowing is an informal practice – it is such in the case of borrowing from friends, but not in the case of

libraries or commercial movie rental services. When asking about borrowing in our pilot study, we did not specify what type of sources should be considered. Books, music or films have been borrowed last year, from any source, by respectively 15%, 9% and 7% of respondents. If we would assume that for each such person one of the sources of borrowed content are friends – and thus could consider this a form of informal circulation (and such assumption seems valid)) – the percentage of Poles that participate in the informal circulation reaches the level of 39%.

Fig. 3. The correlation between age and using informal digital content circulations (n=1004)
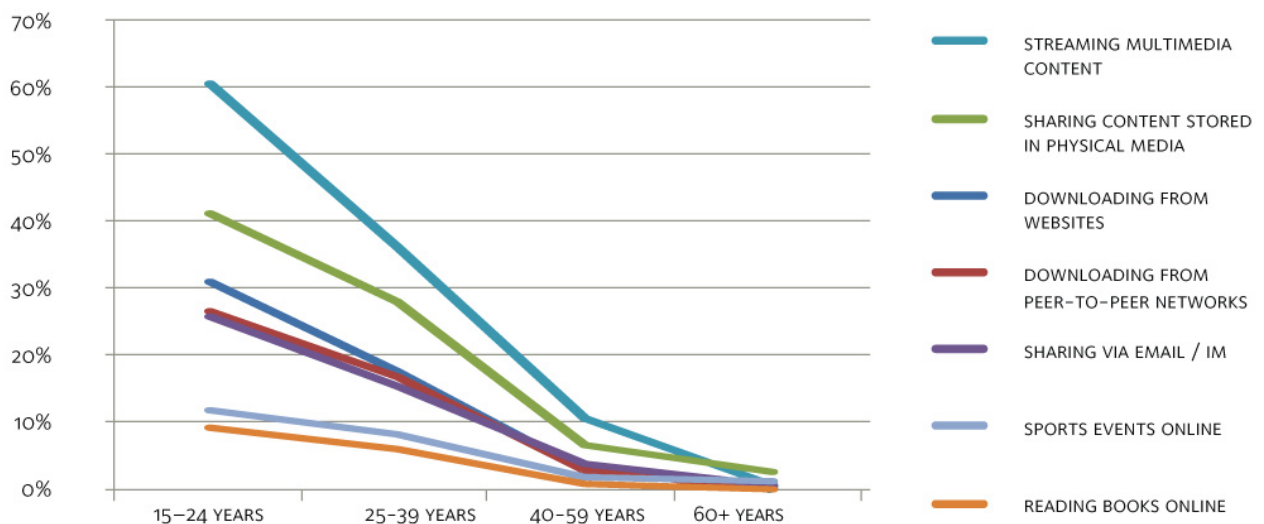
Using informal circulations of digital content (via the Internet and digital copies) is strongly linked with age (see Fig. 3). 17% of people from the 40 to 59 age group and only 6% of people older than that have claimed to have used any type of informal distribution. Only 5% of people from the 40 to 59 demographic and 1% of people older than that claimed to have downloaded content from the Internet – it can be safely assumed that the part of the population that's older than 40 is basically absent from that narrower kind of digital content distribution. It probably is a result of the fact that downloading files is more difficult than watching media via streaming websites.

Fig. 4. Frequency of usage of different types of informal content circulations among people who claimed to have used them (n=1004)

	LAST WEEK	1–4 WEEKS AGO	EARLIER THAN 4 WEEKS AGO	I DON'T KNOW / IT'S HARD TO SAY
SPORTS EVENTS ONLINE	29%	23%	37%	12%
READING BOOK ONLINE	29%	27%	39%	5%
STREAMING MULTIMEDIA CONTENT	57%	28%	11%	3%
SHARING VIA EMAIL / IM	47%	29%	20%	4%
SHARING CONTENT STORED IN PHYSICAL MEDIA	33%	25%	30%	12%
DOWNLOADING FROM PEER–TO–PEER NETWORKS	32%	29%	30%	9%
DOWNLOADING FROM WEBSITES	29%	32%	30%	9%
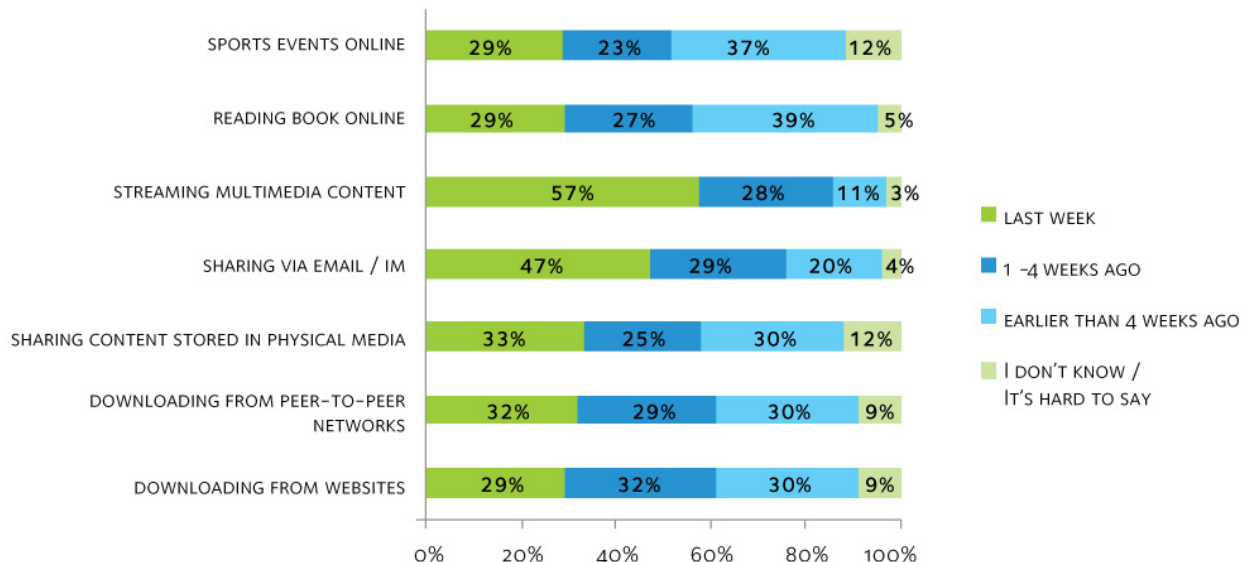
Watching multimedia content online is the most common practice – 85% of people who claimed to have used informal distribution also have said that they watched content online in the preceding month. For comparison, only 61% of informal distribution users claimed to have downloaded files from peer-to-peer networks or websites in the preceding month (see Fig. 4). It's important to note that despite clear age difference, even in the youngest group one third of the respondents were not participating in culture online in any form – contrary to the running theme of how universal these practices are among young "digital natives."

5.2 Categories of participation in cultural circulations among Poles

For Poles, the informal distribution of digital content such as films, music, and movies is a secondary source of cultural content – the primary being broadcast media such as television and radio. 33% of Poles engage with that form of distribution (39% if we include traditional forms of sharing and borrowing content). For comparison, 13% of Poles engage with the formal distribution of that same content.

Using our results we can divide the Polish population in series of groups, according to their degree of participation in the informal digital content circulations:

- 50% don't have access to the Internet – 5% of them engage with the informal distribution via physical media;

- 19% have access to the Internet, but don't use the cultural content available on the Internet;
- 15% use digital content online – primarily through streaming, they don't use hosting services;
- 16% use streaming websites as well as download files from the Internet.

Simultaneously, the largest group of Poles (62%) does not engage with either the formal or informal circulation – their primary form of cultural activity is probably the consumption of content provided by broadcast media, which was not included in our research. **On the other hand, 25% of Poles do not purchase any content from formal distributors while participating in informal distribution.** This activity is strongly linked with age – the percentage of such people is much higher in younger generations, and drops off rapidly in the 50+ age group. There are also people who both buy content from formal distributors and engage with the informal network (8%), and a group of people who only buy content from formal distributors (5%). It's important to note that all three types of access to content: buying, borrowing, and the informal network correlate with age of the respondents – all three types are engaged more often by younger people (see Fig. 5). Thus, even the youngest generation contains the largest number of people who buy content from formal distributors while still engaging with the informal circulation.

Fig. 5. Using different circulations by age group (n=1004)
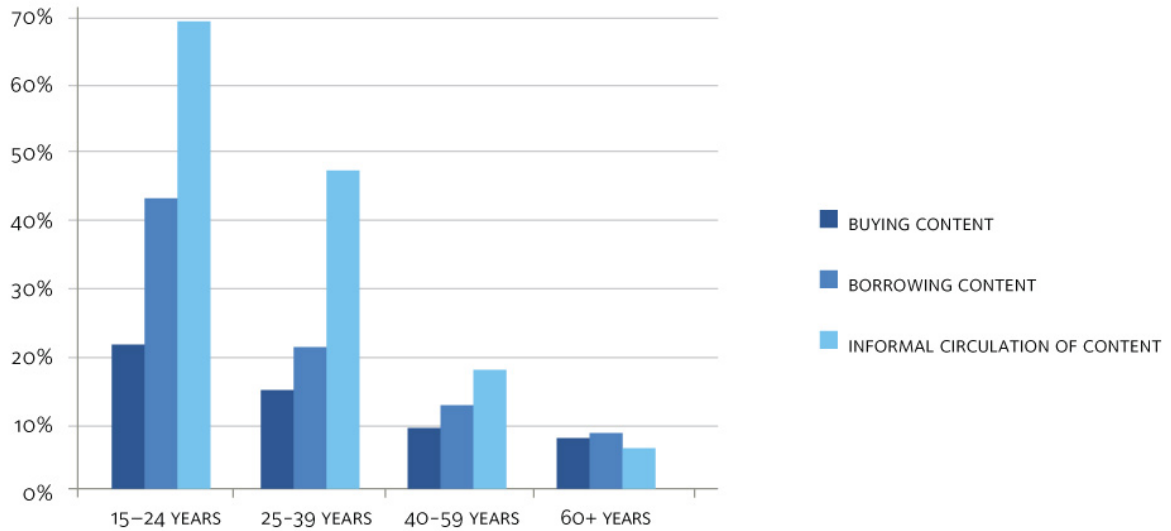
Looking at the ratio of both groups (those who buy content and those who don't) in the population of downloaders, we can infer that regardless of age, about 25% of people engage with the formal circulation, whereas 75% don't. Additionally, age correlates most closely with participating in informal distribution. None of the three aforementioned types, however, correlates in any significant way with the respondents' place of residence.

We did not ask the respondents about how often do they use the Internet in the pilot survey – and during later research it became apparent that a category like Internet usage is crucial for understanding mechanisms of participation in informal and formal distribution. However, if we decide to use the bit rate of the respondent's Internet connection as a measure of his or hers Internet activity (assuming that only people who heavily use the Internet would invest in higher connection speeds) it turns out that having a fast Internet connection correlates with using both informal and formal circulations. We can thus posit a thesis that people who regularly use the Internet are more likely to engage with both types of circulations.

Fig. 6. Internet usage and cultural activity (n=1004)
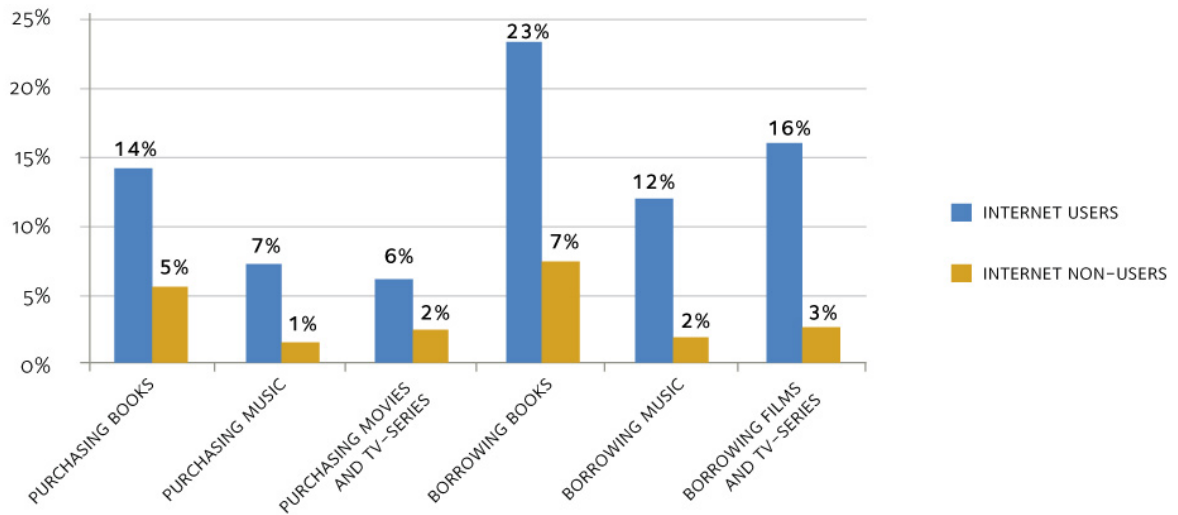
As we already mentioned, Internet use is tied in Poland today with dramatic differences in the level of interest in cultural content. This difference is partially due to the fact that Internet use is related to higher income, and thus the differences have an economic basis. But surely that's not the only explanation, as evidenced by indices related to borrowing books, music, and movies, which requires no financial involvement. In that case, the disproportions are even more pronounced than in the case of purchasing (see Fig. 6). Therefore, **in today's Poland, the breakdown of the Polish population into two groups: those who use the Internet and those who don't seems to overlap with the division into those who actively use cultural content and those who don't participate in any circulations** (except broadcast media – like television and the radio – which were not included in the research).

It's interesting to note that Internet usage also influences the engagement with traditional informal distribution – in the past year, Internet users were three times more likely to borrow books, movies, or music than those who don't use it (30% of Internet users and 9% of those who don't use it engaged in borrowing content, respectively). This number was even higher for Internet users who participated in any type of informal distribution of digital content – 40% of them claimed to have engaged in traditional borrowing.

Similar correlations were observed between using the Internet, using the informal

digital content circulation, and buying content. Content was purchased by 19% of Internet users and 7% of those who don't use it; the same was true for 24% of people who engage with informal distribution and 7% of those who don't. There is a society-wide correlation between using formal and informal circulations – people who participate in culture using one of these circulations are more likely to do so via the other, and both circulations complement each other to a certain degree in everyday practices. **People who display the heaviest use of informal distribution – Internet users and downloaders – make up the largest segment of the purchasers. They constitute 32% of book buyers, 51% of music buyers, and 31% of movie buyers (see Fig. 7).** They also make up the largest segment among people who lend each other content. More importantly, just like in the case of people who use the informal and don't use the formal distribution – there is a correlation between age and usage: the largest percentage of people who both purchase content and use the Internet can be found in the 15 to 24 age group.

Fig. 7. Purchasing and borrowing among four groups of users (n=1004)
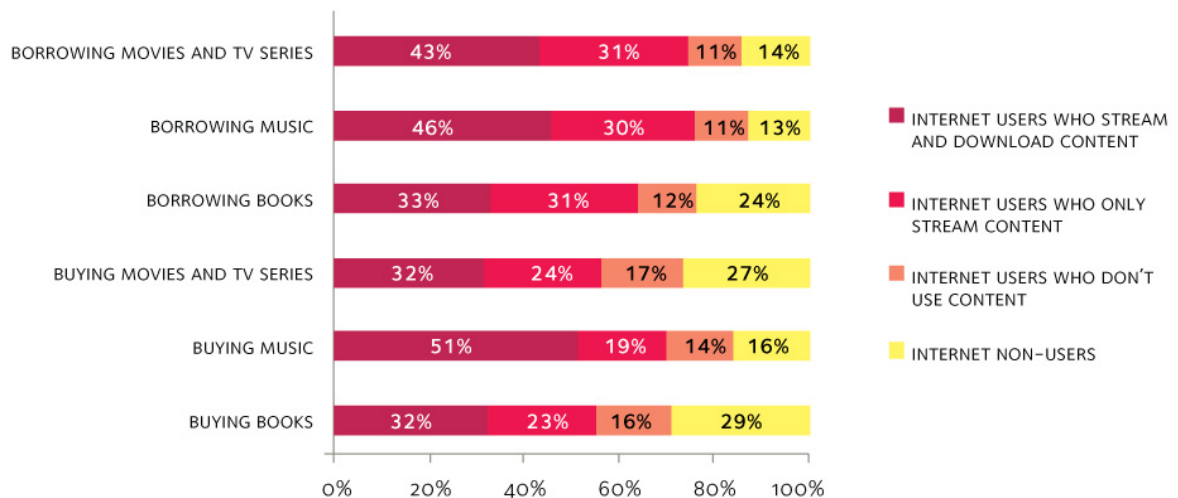
Thus we can conclude that the hypothesis stating that informal circulations supplant the formal ones is false. Even though only a quarter of people who use informal

distribution also purchase content, these "purchasers-downloaders" make up the largest group among Poles who actually buy cultural content. People from that group treat both types of distribution as complementary and using the informal channels does not go against their value system. This means that informal access increases the number of people who use cultural content.

Dominik Batorski: the Internet and participating in culture outside of the Web

Dominik Batorski: doctor of sociology, assistant professor at the Interdisciplinary Centre for Mathematical and Computational Modeling at the University of Warsaw, member of the Social Monitoring Council, a body responsible for the Social Diagnosis report series. Researches the social and psychological ramifications and consequences of using computer and the Internet, as well as the social transformations resulting from the popular adoption of IT and communications technologies.

The significance of the Internet for contact with cultural content and participating in culture is a two-sided issue. First of all, the Internet can be an instrument that enables us to access broadly defined cultural content available in digital format. Secondly, the Internet also acts as intermediary in accessing culture that lies outside of the Internet. Increasingly often, the Internet becomes a gateway to activities that require online presence despite taking place outside the Internet. More and more information on what's happening in culture – such as new arrivals on the music and movie scenes, artistic events, etc. – is available online. Simultaneously, such content is increasingly harder to come by through conventional channels. Moreover, the Internet does not only supply us with and facilitate consumption of information on cultural events, it also enables us to share opinions and serves as a space for discussion, allows us to recommend interesting content and events, and this improves the flow of information among interested parties.

We're left with the question of the relationship between Internet usage and participating in culture outside of the Internet. Does active usage and consumption of cultural content online results in diminished interest in traditional forms of consumption? Maybe it's exactly the opposite and the availability of information on

the Internet facilitates contact with culture outside the Internet?

As evidenced by the results of *Social Diagnosis* from 2009 and 2011, people who use the Internet lead a much more active cultural and social life outside of the Internet than people who don't use it (Fig. 8). In the last month, 37% of Internet users have been at a cinema, a theater, or attended a concert, whereas only 6% of the other group exhibited such behavior. That's six times less people than in the former group.

Fig. 8. The percentage of people who in the last month either went to the movies, to the theater, or attended a concert – differences between people who use the Internet and those who don't, observed between 2009 and 2011. Source: *Social Diagnosis*, own work.
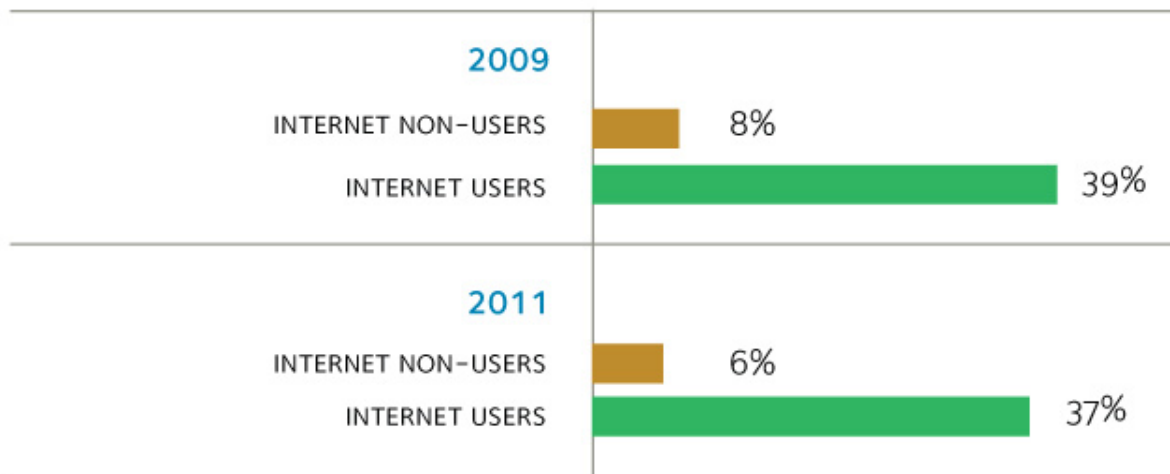
Of course, although Internet users participate in culture more frequently, we have to remember that the differences we depict here were shaped by a multitude of factors, not just Internet usage. Also significant are basic differences in age, education, wealth, and the size of the cities that people reside in. All of these factors are related to Internet usage and that's where the observed differences come from.

Internet usage alone might also have some bearing on the frequency of contact with culture outside of the Internet, if only because of the aforementioned improved availability of information and the ability to discuss cultural events. Especially high behavior polarization was observed between 2007 and 2009, when the accretion of culture-related content was very high in the Polish-language Internet circles. This

period saw a significant drop in participation in various cultural activities, primarily among people who weren't using the Internet. The data gathered for *Social Diagnosis* indicated a diminished interest in buying newspapers (dailies, weeklies, monthlies) – a few percent of Poles decided against buying newspapers for reasons other than financial – and a decrease in cinema visits. Between 2007 and 2009 (for reasons other than financial) over 14% of Poles stopped going to the movies. Simultaneously, the ticket sales were on the rise, indicating that people who were still going to the cinema were doing it more often.

But diminished activity was observed primarily among people who weren't Internet users. People who used the Web were three times less likely to stop buying newspapers than people who weren't Internet users. The same was observed with respect to going to the cinema, with Internet users twice less likely to stop doing so than the opposite group. Moreover, among Internet users, those who read online newspapers were 30% less likely to stop buying traditional ones, while users who regularly downloaded music and movies from the Internet were 25% less likely to stop going to the movies than those who didn't download content. 45% of the downloaders went to the movies at least a few times each month, while only 32% of the opposite group exhibited such behavior. Additionally, the sum of monthly outings to the cinema was higher in the former group.

In 2011, the effects of large-scale participation changes and behavior polarization are not visible anymore. It's partly due to the fact that the decline in participation in culture was not so pronounced during the past two years, some types of participation are even more frequent that in 2009. It is also possible that the shift of the cultural information sphere from analog and into digital space has already taken place and the situation is stabilizing. We can no longer observe significant differences in behavior between people who use the Internet and those who don't. The one significant difference is related to books: Internet users are as interested in books as ever, while among people who don't use the Internet, the group of people who don't buy books and are not interested in them has gotten bigger.

On the other hand, the availability of cultural information and the possibility of

discussing culture online is still very significant. It's apparent when we consider people who are just starting to use the Internet and those who used it before but have since stopped. The observation is confirmed by the analysis of the changes in cinema, theater, and concert attendance that took place between 2009 and 2011 among the four groups of people differentiated by their Internet usage (Fig. 9).

Fig. 9. Change (%) in participation in cultural events (cinema, theater and concerts) between 2009 and 2011 among groups differentiated by Internet usage. Source: *Social Diagnosis*, own work.

Among the people who haven't been using in either 2009 and 2011, the percentage of people going to the cinema, to the theater, and attending concerts has dropped off slightly. A large increase in all of the abovementioned activities can be observed among people who started to use the Internet in 2009. Interestingly enough, among the people who used the Internet in 2009 but have since stopped, participation in cultural activities has significantly decreased. Among people who have been using the Internet for more than two years there were basically no changes. However, as Fig. 8 indicated, Internet users have already exhibited cultural involvement that was above average.

It is also worth mentioning that Internet users spend much less time watching television than people who don't use the Internet. There's nearly twice as many people who don't watch television at all in the former group than in the latter. A significantly smaller number of Internet users spend more than three hours on watching television every day.

To summarize the results, it would be wise to say that the Internet does not replace consuming culture outside of the Web, it facilitates it. Significant increase in participation in culture observed among people who started using the Internet and a decrease observed among those who stopped indicated that the availability of cultural information and the ability to discuss culture online might really influence participation. It should also be emphasized that those who are most interested in cultural content are also actively using the resources of the Internet, participate in discussions, seek out and download content that interests them, and simultaneously they're more often than others involved in cultural activities outside of the Internet. That group of active Internet users and consumers of culture warrants a closer investigation, which the survey presented in this report seems to have accomplished.

6. Cultural practices of active Internet users

Our pilot survey has clearly shown that social circulation of digital content – also stored on physical media – is supported mostly by Internet users. When asked about music, movies, photographs, or books (e-books in this case) stored as files on physical media such as a CD/DVD-R, a flash drive, or a portable hard drive, 12% of Internet users claimed to have used one of the aforementioned forms in the preceding week; 9% claimed to have used one of them in the last 1 to 4 weeks, and 9% claimed to have done so more than 4 weeks ago. Combined, these numbers give us 30% of Internet users accessing files stored on physical media, whereas among people who don't use the Internet – on principle absent from the Internet-mediated informal distribution – 4% claimed to have accesses content stored on physical media in all referenced timeframes. This suggests that **despite the ability to copy content onto physical media and into circulations that function beyond digital networks and reach non-users of the Internet, the informal sharing of content is limited to Internet users.**

That's why we decided that although the pilot survey enabled us to define the reach of the informal digital content circulation in the Polish society and establish the approximate size of the informal circulation, the second – primary – phase of our research should be limited to people who use the Internet. The practices that are the

most interesting to us are simply not frequent enough among people who don't use the Internet. Additionally, we felt that it would be valid to focus on just one segment of Internet users, the so-called "next generation of users." Internet users are generally defined as people who access the Internet at least once a month. We decided, however, to focus on a group of people who use the Internet on a regular basis. We assume that in this group, the practices linked with informal content sharing will be observable in their full form. In the case of this group it is also more legitimate to speak about the relationship between using the Net and observed changes in forms of cultural participation. Simultaneously, we felt it necessary to problematize the issue of "Internet usage," which masks the difference between the users themselves when applied to at least half of the Polish population.

6.1 A new generation of Internet users?

When looking for points of reference for the group of active Internet users that we have identified, it might be good to bring up *2009 Internet Diagnosis*, a research project conducted on a larger, yet unrepresentative sample of Internet users. The team behind the project often speaks of its "pilot" character, explaining that "the process of recruiting respondents was designed to effectively pick out people characterized by heavy Internet usage, with at least a few hours spent on the Internet every day."[47] The effects of this decision with regards to cultural activity are as follows: 42% of respondents claimed that they attend concerts a few times a year, only 28% claimed to never do so. In the case of cinema, the percentages were 74% and 11%, respectively. For comparison – data collected by the Central Statistical Office (from 2009, as reported by the Living Culture Observatory[48]) suggests that 30% Poles

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47 K. Krejtz, A. Nowak, Znaczenie Internetu dla funkcjonowania jednostki w społeczeństwie informacyjnym [The role of the Internet for the functioning of an individual in an information socjety], in: Diagnoza Internetu 2009 [Internet Diagnosis 2009], ed. K. Krejtz, Warsaw: WAiP 2009, p. 15.

48 http://www.obserwatoriumkultury.pl/sub,pl,obserwatorium-zywej-kultury.html

go to the movies at least once a year, while 16% go to concerts at least once a year. The discrepancies between the results are huge – the percentage of active people in this group is comparable to the percentage of inactive people as reported by CSO: 89% of *Diagnosis* respondents and 30% of CSO respondents go to the cinema at least once a year; 72% of *Diagnosis* respondents and 16% of CSO respondents go to concerts at least once a year.[49]

It would seem that heavy use of the Internet is strongly correlated with cultural activity – which our research further confirms. Of course, as we mentioned before, it's not only the effect of the Internet's stimulating influence (although that element cannot be rejected entirely – that type of thinking about the Internet is nothing new to our respondents, which we will mention later in the psychographic analysis), but rather a reflection of the fact that nowadays the average heavy Internet user is younger, better educated, makes more than the median income, and has higher cultural capital. We're fully aware that this is a strong hypothesis, which also means that the digital divide is tied to a broader cultural (and possibly social) exclusion. In the course of investigating Polish active Internet users, a sample representative for the Polish population, we observed surprising results with regards to intensity of cultural content usage and its relation to the regularity of Internet usage.

When we investigated people who were most active in the informal social distribution of cultural content, we basically found the group that was the most active in cultural life, in general. They frequently participated in events organized by public and commercial institutions, however when the offered events didn't fit their needs, they created alternative practices and institutions (from an anthropological standpoint, any type of endeavors that are supposed to satisfy a need). Active Internet users utilize their competences and their technical and social resources to reach cultural content on terms which they consider best for themselves. Simultaneously, they aspire to actively use culture and are ready to engage with the official circulation

49 W. Ciemniewski, Sposób spędzania wolnego czasu i aktywność społeczna internautów [Ways of spending free time and social activity of Internet users], in: Diagnoza Internetu 2009 [Internet Diagnosis 2009], ed. K. Krejtz, Warsaw: WAiP 2009, pp. 89-90.

of cultural content. It's especially visible in the case of books, which, as it turns out, don't lose any of their appeal or status among active Internet users (we are writing about this in more detail part 5.3.)

The results of the annual *World Internet Project* panel, conducted in the UK in 2011[50], suggest that a new, specific group is starting to rise among the Internet users. They're the so-called next generation users, characterized by specific traits that make them stand apart from the average Internet denizen. Next generation users use mobile devices on a much larger scale, staying connected to the Internet not only via their desktop computer, but also their cell phones and mobile devices while on the move. They're also extraordinarily active when it comes to cultural practices – they're characterized by a high output of digital content, they create websites and blogs, make movies, and take pictures. They are also more inclined to share their pictures and movies on social networks and participate in conversations via mailing lists. For the average user, the Internet is a source of news and entertainment to a much lesser degree than it is to a next generation user. They link up with the Internet to download music and movies regardless of the location they're in. Finally, they're more inclined than the average user to download files from the Internet free of charge, but also to pay for services or content. For the next generation user, the Internet is the basic source of information about the world.

Is such a group present in Poland? Before we go looking for an answer, we need to make a few remarks. Despite the framework provided by the British report, it's hard to unambiguously define a next generation user – apart from the general definition that such a person uses modern communications technologies to increase their quality of life. The inability to distill said concept into a clear operational definition based on hours spent on the Internet, ways of connecting thereto, or services used, is its apparent weakness. Another difficulty lies in an implicitly made assumption, that the Internet has a unified, positive potential, from which the next generation users

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50 W. Dutton, G. Blank, Next Generation Users: The Internet in Britain, University of Oxford, Oxford Internet Institute 2011, http://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/publications/oxis2011_report.pdf.

benefit. Thus we prefer to treat this category as a neutral one and do not make any assumptions about the effects of using the Internet by next generation users. Still, we acknowledge that dividing Internet users into those more and less active becomes a necessity due to the high current level of Internet penetration in the society and related growing diversity among Internet users[51]. That's why, despite some reservations, we should focus on searching for next generation users in Poland, but also try to link heavy Internet usage with using cultural content.

Sociologists investigating the rise of a new group of Internet users are mostly concerned with the related threat of a new type of digital exclusion, which separates advanced users from average Internet denizens. In the UK, 42% of all users are considered next generation users. That latter group, quite surprisingly, is not very homogeneous age-wise – we can find them among teenagers, as well as among people over 50. Thus, they are not all digital natives, but rather active representatives of various generations. Next generation users are more commonly found among students and the employed, they're rather rare among retirees and the unemployed. The key characteristic of heavy Internet users is their high income. The next generation users didn't spring up in the UK overnight, in the previous editions of the *World Internet Project* we observed phenomena pointing towards the rise of such a group. The results from 2007 were showing a gradual differentiation of Internet users. A clear division, however, became apparent only later, simultaneously with the quickly developing smartphone and tablet market. How large is that group in Poland?

According to the data collected for the Polish edition of *World Internet Project 2011*, there are reasons to think that the group is already forming in our country. 10% of all Internet users claim to access it via their cell phones. But when it comes to heavy users, mobile Internet usage reaches almost 20%. Given that mobile technology adoption, as well as income level, are quite different than in the UK, we think that comparing Polish and British users directly is just not feasible. In return, we think it

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51 Vide: E. Hargittai, Second-Level Digital Divide: Differences in People's Online Skills. „First Monday", 7(4), 2002.

best to define this new segment of Internet users relationally. We assume, therefore, that these next generation users are ones, who use various Internet services much more frequently than the average Internet user – and it is from this perspective that we try to define the relationship between Poles' behaviors on the Internet and their cultural activity. Because, as evidenced by the second stage of our research, Poles who exhibit heavy Internet usage are extraordinarily active consumers, as well as redistributors, of cultural content. The usage indices in that group were significantly higher than in the case of people who don't use the Internet whom we investigated in our pilot survey, but were also visibly higher than those specific to the general population of Internet users whom we surveyed in the first stage of our project.

We might, therefore, risk stating that people who were investigated during the second phase of our research project belong to a group, whose characteristics indicate that next generation users are already separating themselves from the general population of Polish Internet users. Hardware might be one of the factors that distinguish next generation users. We're far from saying that the issues of physical access and hardware quality are crucial determinants of Internet usage; we want to state, however, that they might be helpful when trying to discern the heavy usage people, who are more inclined to invest in modern hardware (while having the financial means necessary to do so). Mobility and accessing the Internet on the go, via mobile devices – such as cell phones and tablets – is an important characteristic of next generation users. The Polish edition of the *World Internet Project 2011* shows that 10% of Internet users access it via cell phone (that's a 2% increase from last year). But among early adopters that percentage is significantly higher – e.g. 20% of students access the Internet via their cell phone. Mobile Internet access was quite popular among our respondents – 39% of them claimed to have done so. The authors of *World Internet Project Poland* observed that the number of laptop users has also increased since last year – from 20% to 28%. Among active Internet users studied by us this value is much higher. When asked about devices they own, 75% of respondents claimed to have a laptop, which is triple the number presented by *WIP*.

Fig. 10. Electronic devices in the household (n=1283)

Device	%
TV	95%
DIGITAL CAMERA	82%
LAPTOP	74%
MP3 PLAYER	65%
SMARTPHONE	36%
GAME CONSOLE	20%
DIGITAL CAMCODER	20%
EBOOK READER	5%
MULTIMEDIA BEAMER	3%
NONE OF THE ABOVE	1%
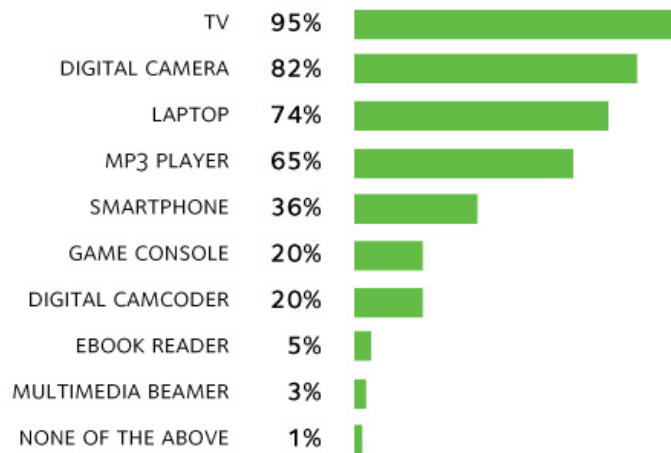
Fig. 11. Devices used to access the Internet (n=1283)

Device	%
DESKTOP COMPUTER	69%
LAPTOP, NOTEBOOK	69%
MOBILE PHONE	39%
EBOOK READER, TABLET	3%
OTHER EQUIPMENT	1%
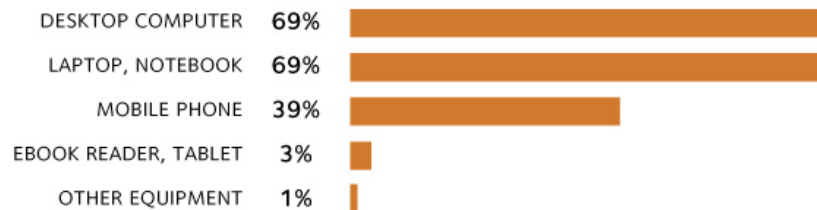
Fig.12. Places where Internet is accessed (n=1283)

Place	%
AT HOME	98%
AT WORK	41%
AT SCHOOL	24%
AT A COFFEE SHOP	10%
ELSEWHERE	9%
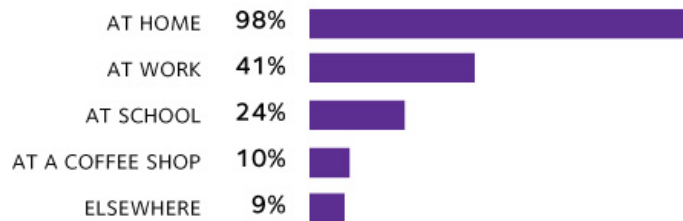
We also observed a rising trend of accessing the Internet from multiple locations. Although nearly all respondents (95%) access it at home, a large group also uses the Internet in other places – mostly at work (41%) or at school (24%). 10% of respondents

claimed to use the Internet at coffee shops, probably enjoying free Internet access offered by some establishments. The data on British Internet users paints a similar picture: 97% access the Internet at home, 47% at work, 21% at school, and 13% at a coffee shop. Respondents in the British survey have also claimed to access the Internet via cell phone (73%) and at other people's households (55%).

The primary distinguishing factor for the next generation of Internet users is not their mobility, but their involvement in consumption as well as production of content. Our respondents, when compared to results presented by *Social Diagnosis* or *World Internet Project*, are characterized by an extraordinarily high creative output. When it comes to digital content production, 93% of the respondents claim to take pictures, 42% record movies, 25% write, 7% have recorded music in the past 12 months (see Fig. 13).

Fig.13. Which of these activities did you pursue in the past 12 months? (n=1283)

PHOTOGRAPHY	98%
VIDEO	41%
WRITING	24%
AUDIO RECORDING	10%
NONE OF THE ABOVE	9%
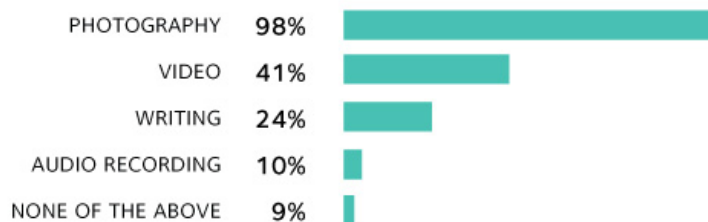
For next generation users, sharing their creative output is just as important as the output itself. In our survey we asked about uploading creative work to the Internet in the last 12 months, and 57% of respondents claimed to have shared their work online. More than half of active Internet users have uploaded the photographs they took. Other creative pursuits are much less common – only 9% uploaded a video or shared a text they wrote. A very small group (3%) shared music they recorded with the Internet. In comparison with British next generation users, Poles are less creatively inclined. Only in the case of photography are the percentages comparable: 50% of Polish users vs. 64% of British NGUs. When it comes to other content, Poles paint a less impressive picture, with less than 10% publishing their texts and uploading movies, and 3% sharing the music they recorded. British NGUs exhibit much more intense sharing proclivities: 42% upload their videos, 31% publish blogs, and 21%

share their literary output.

Total time spent on reading, listening to music, and watching movies can be a good reflection of a group's level of activity (see Fig. 14). Television is still the most engaging medium – 93% of respondents watched television. Yet this group is distinguished by low intensity of television watching. Almost half of the respondents watched movies and television shows for more than 4 hours (and only 20% of those watched for more than 8 hours). Even if we assume that by asking about watching movies and television, we might be getting lower values in the responses than the full time spent watching television, this is still a level significantly lower than the national average. According to TNS OBOP research group, in 2010 an average Pole spent daily 3 hours and 42 minutes on watching television, or almost 26 hours a week[52]. Active Internet users still watch television, but much more rarely than the average. A clear correlation with age can be observed, i.e. more people pass greater amounts of time in front of a television among the older respondents. Internet users spend relatively large amount of time listening to music.

Fig. 14. Total time spent on given activities in the last 7 days (n=1283)
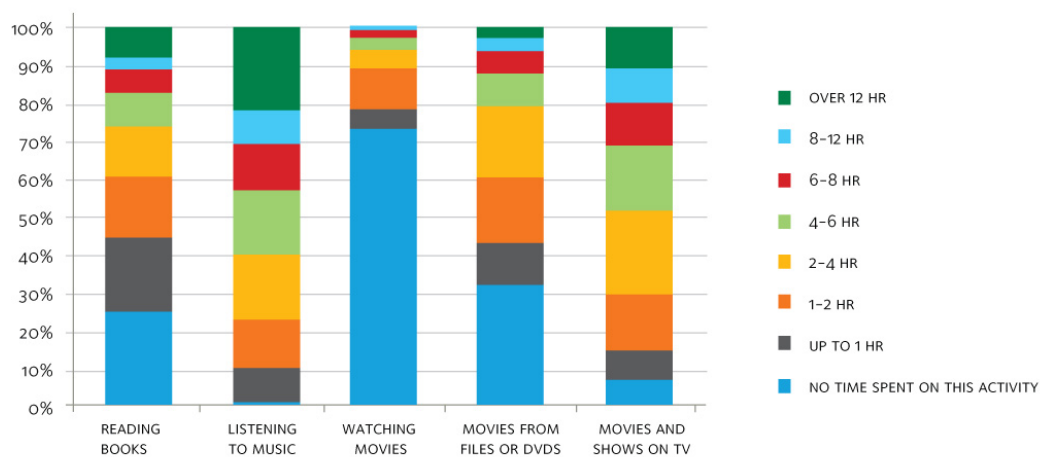
NGUs are also more likely to pay for content and services online. The group we investigated had a high percentage of people buying cultural content online – more

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52 Vide: TNS OBOP, Rynek telewizyjny w 2010 roku [Television market in 2010], URL:
   http://www.obop.pl/uploads/6621/Rynek_telewi- zyjny_w_2010_-_podsumowanie.pdf

than a third of the respondents (37%) paid for content online in the last 12 months. Movies and television shows were the most popular type of bought content, with 30% of respondents purchasing them. Music and newspapers were bought by 10% and 15% respondents, respectively. For comparison, during our pilot survey only 3% of respondents claimed to have bought movies or television shows, while 2% claimed to have bought music online.

Fig.15. Which of these activities did you pursue in the last 3 months? (n=1283)

Activity	%
UPLOAD YOUR MOVIE TO AN ONLINE SERVICE (YOUTUBE, WRZUTA)	61%
LEAN OR MAKE SOMEONE A COPY OF A BOOK	35%
SHARE FILES VIA TORRENTS, P2P, FILE LOCKERS	27%
NONE OF THE ABOVE	22%
LEND OR MAKE SOMEONE A COPY OF MUSIC RECORDING	22%
LEND OR MAKE SOMEONE A COPY OF A MOVIE OR TV SHOW	12%
LEND SOMEONE AN ORIGINAL DISC WITH MUSIC	7%
LEND SOMEONE AN ORIGINAL DISC WITH A MOVIE OR A TV SHOW	7%
LEND SOMEONE A BOOK	18%

In our research we were interested in the extent of both formal and informal circulations of cultural content among heavy users of the Internet. We asked the respondents about content sharing activities they were involved in in the last 3 months (see Fig. 15). The results show that physical artifacts – like books and original CDs – still dominate the content sharing stage. 61% of respondents claimed to have lent someone a book they bought, while 31% claimed to have lent someone an original DVD with a movie or a TV show, and 27% claimed to have lent someone a music CD they bought. Copied content, however, still plays a significant role – 20% of the respondents engage in sharing audio and video files, and 10% engage in file sharing via peer-to-peer networks. Sharing copies is observed more frequently in the 20 to 24 demographic.

Fig. 16. The most important sources of book, movie/TV show, and music recommendations (n=1283)

FRIENDS	36%
DIRECT CONTACT WITH CONTENT	24%
FAMILY	11%
PROFESSIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS	10%
POPULARITY RANKINGS	9%
OTHERS' RECOMMENDATIONS	6%
ADVERTISING	2%
RECOMMENDATIONS IN ONLINE STORES	0%
UNKNOWN	2%
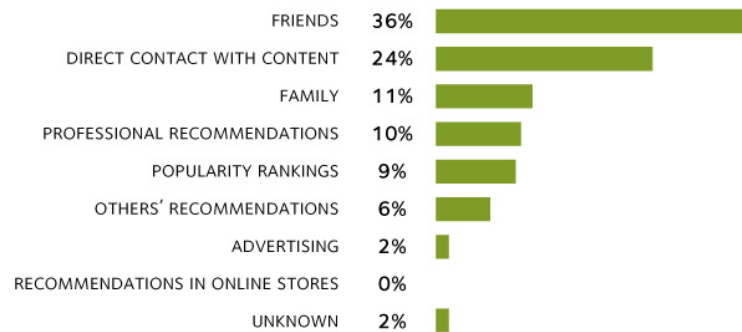
What inspires Internet users to choose particular content for consumption? (see Fig. 16) Friends seem to be the biggest influence – 36% of respondents follows their suggestions and recommendations. The influence of friends is most prominent among very young and young people, where 46% and 48% of respondents, respectively, mention friends as their primary source of content recommendations. As the respondent age increases, the importance of friends' recommendations decreases, while direct contact with content via radio, television, or Internet gains prominence as the primary source. The advice of friends is more important to people with higher education than to people with basic education. Direct contact with content is the second most important (with friends being the most important) source of recommendations. Family takes third place, with 11% of respondents relying upon their recommendations. Thus, we can clearly see a correlation between age and level of education – the older and less educated the respondent, the less likely he or she is to rely on the advice of friends and family.

10% of respondents rely on the professional reviews of journalists and critics (although we might wonder whether the professionals are the source of opinions that are later spread among friends). It's interesting to note the low rank of strangers and people who publish their opinions online, and also the lack of interest/trust in the recommendations we see at online stores.

Fig. 17. Who do you share book, music, and movie recommendations with? (n=1283)

WITH CLOSE FRIENDS	90%
WITH IMMENSE FAMILY	76%
WITH DISTANT FRIENDS	33%
WITH DISTANT FAMILY	26%
ON BLOGS, FORUMS, SOCIAL NETWORKS	22%
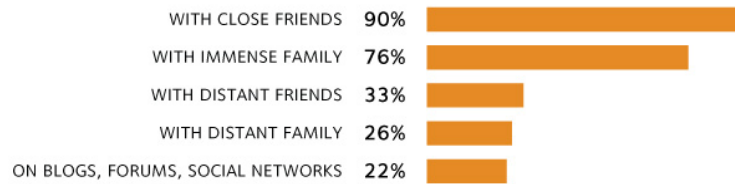
When studying cultural practices of Internet users, it might be pertinent to check out the degree to which the respondents are willing to share their impressions and content recommendations with others (see Fig. 17). Sharing one's opinion seems to be common, with 71% of respondents engaging in the practice. They were talking about content primarily with immediate family (90%) and friends they often meet up with (76%). Distant family and acquaintances follow in third and fourth place, respectively. But it's necessary to mention that for 20% of the respondents, the Internet – blogs, forums, and social networks – is an important conduit for sharing cultural content-related experiences. Thus, active Internet users are more likely to post their opinions on the Internet than they are to trust opinions posted by others.

The aforementioned channels are used primarily by people under 25 (26% of respondents from that age group claimed that Interned-related channels are where they share their opinions with others), with people over 40 being the least likely (13%) to use them to post their experiences.

6.2 The extent of engagement with informal content circulations among active Internet users

The pilot survey demonstrated a high degree of participation in informal distribution – which for many Internet users is the key source of content, right next to broadcast media. Additionally, significant part of Internet users has also claimed to be completely absent from formal distribution – e.g. CDs and DVDs, books, or buying digital content online.

Among heavy Internet users, engaging with informal circulations is basically a common occurrence. 88% of them are part of the informal circulation of music, 73% are part of the informal circulation of books, and 78% are part of the

informal circulation of movies (all data pertains to the three months prior to being interviewed). These circulations include both downloading content from the Internet, using content downloaded by other members of the household, copying content from friends and family, but also copying and scanning books, lending CDs, DVDs, or books .

If we combine activity in these three areas, then 72% of respondents will claim to have downloaded files from the Internet – e.g. from a file sharing network or a hosting service. If we expand the definition of participation in these networks, so that it covers all informal access channels (e.g. streaming, sharing files between friends, etc.), then 92% of the respondents claim to have engaged with such a network. Expanding it even further, to include informal circulations of content stored on physical media (sharing and copying books or CDs/DVDs), then 95% of respondents claim to have been part of such a circulation. **Our research project thus demonstrates that informal, non-market economy of cultural content is the norm among people who use the Internet every day. Additionally, 75% of our respondents claimed to have engaged with circulations related to downloading content.**

Our results not only show that the perspective of "informal circulation" of cultural content is not only analytically feasible – because it points towards an area of surprisingly vast proportions. It also suggests that this phenomenon will likely expand in the coming years, along with the rising number of active Internet users. Although heavy and skillful use of the Internet cannot be simply and unambiguously linked with participating in informal distribution, a strong correlation between the two can be observed and is, quite frankly, easily interpreted: it's easier for people who actively use the Internet to access information about cultural content. Simultaneously, they can communicate with other Internet users and acquire said content – thus creating the abovementioned techno-social content sharing partnerships.

By dividing the online informal circulation into three areas (books, music, and movies) we can see that an overwhelming part of Internet users participates in the circulation of music – only 6% of respondents participate solely in the circulation of movies or books. The largest group (39%) accesses movies and music via the Internet, and 25% of the respondents participate in all three circulations. Simultaneously, we can see

significant differences between the extent to which Internet users participate in individual circulations: 85% of them listen to music, 69% of them watch movies, while only 31% read books.

Fig. 18. Internet user participation in all three content circulations (n=1283)
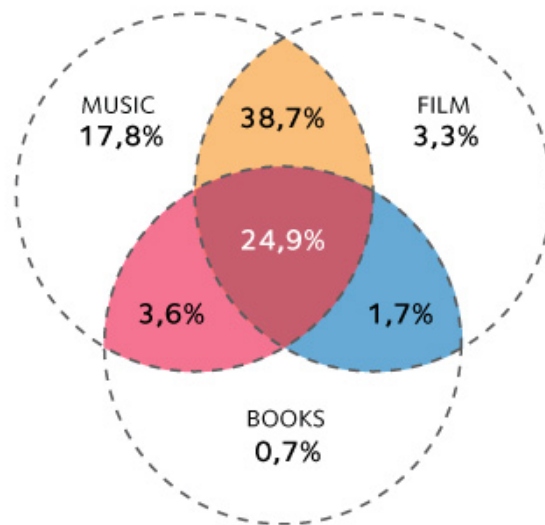
Unlike in the pilot survey, where we could distinguish between people who only use streaming or only download content, the investigation of active Internet users revealed that a significant part of the respondents use both circulations (61%). Only 15% of the respondents use only streaming, while 10% only download content.

After presenting the extent of the phenomenon, we're going to discuss each type of content individually, i.e. books, music, and movies/television shows. In each case we will be using different contexts. Activities related to reading and purchasing books will serve to demonstrate how extraordinary Polish active Internet users are in comparison with average Poles – and that using modern communications technologies does not weaken one's interest in traditional forms of participating in culture. In the section dedicated to music we will pay special attention to collections of content in both physical and digital forms in Polish households, we'll also look at how "original" these collections are. We'll point out how usage practices have changed in recent years, as these changes are especially noticeable in the preferred way of collecting music. When

discussing movies, we will point out the relationship between consuming content via the Internet and going to the cinema; we will also focus on issues that influence participation in informal circulations.

6.3 Books

Even though the departure from an aspirational approach towards cultural content seems to be increasingly pervasive, the data on the cultural activity of Poles still presents us with a lot of discrepancies. Research conducted by the National Library points out that in 2010, only 44% of Poles claimed to have contact (not necessarily reading it) with any book in the preceding 12 months. Out of those 44%, only 38% – that's about 16.5% of the entire population – claimed to have purchased a book.[53] On the other hand, according to the *World Internet Project Poland 2011*, only 33% of Poles did not read a single book last year.[54] In the other group nearly half – 48% – of the respondents claimed to have bought a book at a bookstore, and 8% bought it in an online bookstore, while 6% bought them via other online channels.[55] Even if people who buy books via retailers other than the bookstore are the same people who use other retail channels and these percentages should not be added, it would mean that at least 32% of the Polish population is still buying books. Although the question asked by the National Library researchers was more inclusive ("contact with a book"), we can see that both results differ by a factor of nearly 2. How does our research look in comparison?

The results of our pilot survey (conducted on a representative sample of Poles) paint a picture similar to the one created by the National Library research team – even though our results are more pessimistic. According to surveys conducted on a sample representative for the population, only 10% of the respondents have purchased a

53 Z czytelnictwem nadal źle - raport z badań Biblioteki Narodowej [There are still problems with readership – research report from the National Library], URL: http://www.bn.org.pl/aktualnosci/230-z-czytelnictwem-nadal-zle---raport-z-badan-biblioteki-narodowej.html

54 World Internet Project Poland 2011, op. cit., p. 68.

55 Op. cit., p. 69.

book in the last 12 months (12% out of those 10% have bought e-books. 15% of the respondents claimed to have borrowed books (not only from libraries, also from friends), while 8% of Internet users claimed to have read books online (e.g. via Google Books), which amounts to 4% of the entire surveyed group. After switching the focus from the entire population to Internet users only, the percentages rise – 14% of "common" Internet users buy books, while 23% engage in borrowing them. At the same time there is no visible competition between the formal and informal circulation. The first one is strongly tied to books in paper form (due to still low popularity of e-books) and is based on purchasing or rental from libraries. Yet people obtaining books in the form of files online are the largest group among those buying books.

In comparison to the results of the pilot survey, results obtained by the National Library's research team, and results presented in the *World Internet Project*, the readership results obtained during our study of active Internet users are disproportionately high. According to our study, 89% of the respondents claimed to have read a book in the past 12 months. It demonstrates that we were **dealing with a group of people that's very culturally active in comparison with the rest of the population, but also in comparison with the general population of Internet users.** It's necessary to mention that we treated textbooks, manuals, guidebooks, comic books, e-books, and audiobooks as valid answers. On the other hand, we didn't want our respondents to mention "coming in contact" with books, like in the case of the National Library study, rather we wanted them to mention only the books they read (as evidenced by the verb "read" in the survey question).

In the group we studied, 69% of the respondents claimed to have read more than 5 books (see Figs . 19, 20) . 25% of the respondents have read more than 20 books last year. Only 11% of the respondents confessed to not reading a single book last year. It's half of the group presented in *World Internet Project*, where 22% of the respondents claimed that they haven't read a single book in the past 12 months. Differences between genders are also interesting: women read much more than men. Only 5% of female respondents claimed that they haven't read any books in the past year, while the same has been said by 17% of male respondents. Significant differences between genders are also visible among the most voracious readers.

Almost a third (29%) of female respondents claimed to have read over 20 books, while the same answer was given by 16% of male respondents.

Fig. 19. Total number of books read in the past 12 months (n=1283)
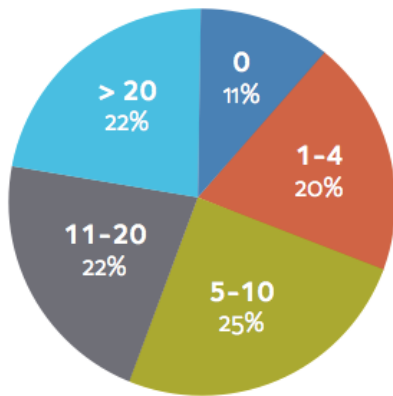
Fig. 20. Total number of books read in the past 12 months by age group (n=1283)
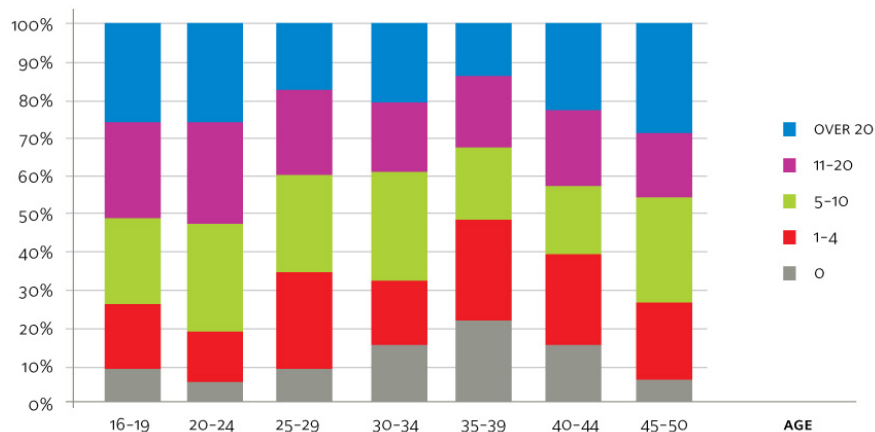
If we look closely at the age breakdown, we'll notice that the youngest and the oldest respondents are the most voracious readers. The largest number of books was consumed in the 20 to 24 age group and the 45-50 age group. We should also remember that the "below 30" group includes students who do much school-related reading. People who are still studying are relatively active readers, compare to the rest of Poles. According to research conducted by the Polish National Library, in 2010 any form of contact with a book was declared by 67% of students and school pupils,

compared to the national average of 44%.[56]

Readership in the last three months was also very high – 81% of respondents read paper books, 34% read e-books, while 18% listened to audiobooks. E-book readership is surprisingly high –   one third of our respondents came into contact with an e-book.

Fig. 21. Total number of books read by people who download content and by those who don't (n=1283)
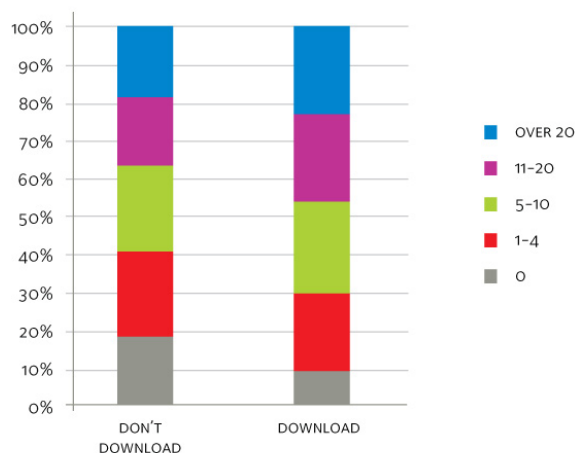
In the context of our study, it's very interesting to compare the behaviors of people who claim to download files from the Internet free of charge and those who, despite their heavy Internet usage, don't download them. If we compare the number of read books between those two group, **we will notice minor, and yet significant, differences that indicate higher readership among people who download files from the Internet**. It's already noticeable when we examine the number of people who haven't read any books in the past year – 9% in the downloaders group, and 18% in the other group. Differences are also noticeable when comparing the most voraciously reading segments. 46% of the downloaders claim to have read more than 11 books, while the same answer was given by 37% of respondents from the other group.

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56 Vide: Z czytelnictwem nadal źle - raport z badań Biblioteki Narodowej [There are still problems with readership – research report from the National Library]

The formal distribution is still an important source of books – 68% of respondents claim to have bought themselves a book at a store in the last 3 months. The fact that 25% of the respondents bought more than 4 books in the same timeframe is testimony to the high activity of the studied group. 43% of the respondents claimed to have bought at least one book as a gift.

The group we studied also stands out when it comes to being open towards new ways of reading. Respondents claimed to have used digital formats – 34% of them have read e-books in the past three months, while 18% have listened to audiobooks in the same timeframe. 30% of e-book reader owners purchased a book for themselves. Simultaneously, Internet users eagerly participate in e-book sharing – almost 80% of respondents downloaded books from the Internet free of charge. 30% of the respondents downloaded more than 4 e-books, while 13% downloaded more than 10. The average number of books downloaded free of charge in the last three months for this particular group is 5 (next to 1 purchased, and nearly 2 borrowed of copied from someone else). There is a distinct correlation with age: the oldest download the least amount of books, with the 25 to 29 age group being the most intense downloaders. Almost half of the respondents have downloaded/copied an e-book from another person.

From this comparison we can easily infer that audiobook penetration is still relatively low. Out of all the people who claimed to have listened to an audiobook (18% of the entire group), one-third has bought at least one audiobook for personal use, two-thirds have downloaded an audiobook free of charge from the Internet, and a half copied or borrowed at least one audiobook from someone else. If we look closely at the average number of books in all three categories, we'll see that people who use audiobooks have in the last three months: downloaded 2.5 audiobook from the Internet, copied or borrowed 1.5 audiobook from another person, and bought 1 for themselves.

Fig. 22. Which of these activities were you involved in in the last three months (n=1283)

READING PAPER BOOKS	81%
READING EBOOKS	34%
LISTENING TO AUDIOBOOKS	18%
NONE OF THE ABOVE	14%
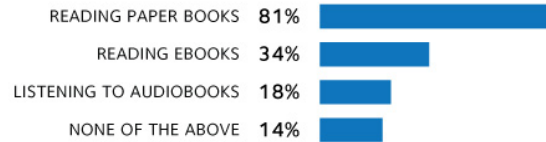
Despite having access to digital content, Internet users don't give up on traditional sources of access to books (see Fig.22). A very high number of Internet users still borrow books from the library, especially when compared with the results of our pilot study, where 15% of respondents claimed to use a library. Two-thirds of the respondents from our main study claimed to have borrowed one book from the library in the past three months, while one-third claimed to have borrowed more than 4 books. Among the people who claimed to have read any paper book in the past three months, the average number of books borrowed from the library hovered over 5. We also need to take into account that a large group of our respondents was still in school, which can be confirmed by a glance at the age breakdown of the people who borrow books. The most frequent users of libraries can be found in the "under 25" age group. The people in that group purchase more than 2.5 books for personal use.

Half of the respondents borrowed or copied books from other people in that same timeframe. In this case, respondents from the 20 to 24 age group were the most prolific – as we might have suspected, because photocopying books or their fragments is one of the key elements of the college experience in Poland, even though itself a part of the informal circulation. The average number of photocopied or scanned books is nearly 2.

Fig. 23. Reasons for downloading books from the Internet free of charge (n=402)

PRICE	67%
WIDER SELECTION	64%
ACCESS TO NEW RELEASES	41%
MODE OF USAGE	33%
NO OTHER MEANS OF ACCESS	14%
OTHER REASONS	13%
I DON'T KNOW / IT'S HARD TO SAY	3%
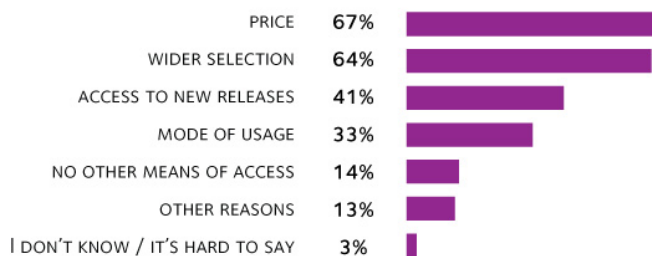
Analysis of the Internet users' behavior clearly shows that the Internet is a very important source of cultural content for them. Thus, the issue of motives or reasons

that push them towards using this particular access channel is absolutely crucial. During the survey, we asked our respondents a question about the reasons they might have for downloading books from the Internet free of charge. The results show that we must abandon using material gains, resulting from acquiring content without the need to pay for it, as sole motivation for illegal downloading practices. Obviously, it's still a very important motive, with 67% of respondents indicating high price as the primary reason for downloading free books from the Internet.

It's worth mentioning that nearly the same number of people (64%) justifies their downloading of books for free with a wider selection offered by the Internet and ease of finding volumes that interest them. As we will demonstrate in the chapters dedicated to music and movies, these motives are popular among consumers of all three types of content. **The fact that selection is just as important as price means that respondents have high expectations of the book market and that they're active consumers with established preferences, who appreciate wide selection and quick access to content.** That statement is backed up by the high number of respondents who emphasize that access to new releases is very important to them – 40% of people who download books from the Internet think, that the selection of books available on the Internet is more up-to-date than the selection offered by formal distributors. The selection issue is especially important to people from the 20 to 24 demographic. 80% of that particular group of Internet users claimed that a wider selection was a significant factor in their decision to download books from the Internet.

One-third of Internet users who download books from the Internet emphasize the ease of using digital version of books, such as e-books and audiobooks. For them the digital format itself is the reason to download the book.

The issue of impeded access to content, mentioned by 14% of respondents as the reason for downloading books, also begs closer inspection. In this case, place of residence is the primary differentiating factor – there is a clear correlation between city size and frequency of picking the aforementioned reason. Impeded access to books in their places was reported by 31% of people living in rural areas, 11% of

people residing in cities with up to 19 thousand inhabitants, and 2% of people living in cities with over 100 thousand inhabitants. Thus we can clearly see that in this particular case, the Internet compensates for the lack of local cultural infrastructure.

Fig. 24. Median monthly expenditure on books (n=1283)
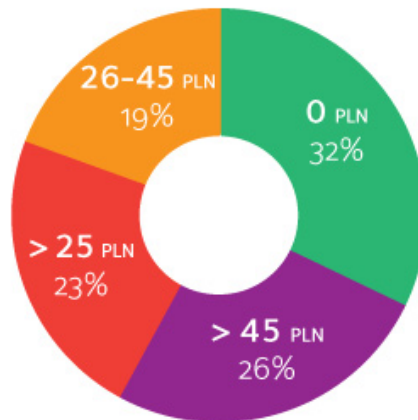
A large part of content consumed by Internet users who were included in our study comes from the Internet, more often than not, for free. But how much do they pay for books? Although almost a third of the respondents claim not to have any monthly book expenditures, the rest of the group more than makes up for it. Almost half of the respondents (45%) claimed to spend an average sum of 26 PLN on books each month, and 25% of them claimed to spend more than 45 PLN. In this case, there is a clear correlation between high monthly expenditures on books and education of the respondents. The higher the level of education, the higher the sum spent monthly on book purchases. More than half of the respondents who finished their education on elementary school do not spend any money on books.

6.4 Music

Practices related to listening to music among our respondents during the past three months were as follows: 91% listened to radio (via traditional receivers or via the Internet);81% listened to audio files or copied CDs; 71% listened to music on streaming services like Last.fm or YouTube;55% of the respondents listened to music from CDs; 30% listened to music at a concert.

Listening to the radio ranks as number 1 among music-related activities, with content from the informal distribution – audio files and copied CDs and streaming services behind it (as we've already mentioned, the status of content offered via streaming services may vary). Our respondents also attended concerts with relative regularity. The low rank of original CDs is undoubtedly the effect of widespread computer and Internet access. Only in the "40 and above" age group do original CDs approach the popularity of copied discs and audio files. The reverse situation can be observed in the "below 34" age group, where popularity of files and copied CDs is above average.

How likely were our respondents to buy music? The situation's quite complicated even though – as we proved earlier – CDs are no longer a key media in music consumption, the formal distribution in Poland is still built around optical discs. The selection at online music stores is limited (we need to mention that when we were conducting our research, the Polish iTunes music store wasn't operational). Less than 29% of the group we studied bought a CD in the three months preceding the interview. A similar number of people who use audio files also bought a CD in the same timeframe – a result of the extent of engagement with formal distribution we described earlier, but most of all, a result of the prevalence of file downloading practices in the studied group of active Internet users. On the other hand, 51% of respondents claimed that they don't spend any money on buying music each month. Surprisingly enough, 47% of audio file downloaders claimed that they don't spend any money on music. 21% of the respondents claim to spend a sum of up to 30 PLN each month, while 28% claim to spend more than 30 PLN.

How do our respondents justify downloading music for free? We'll focus on this issue later in the section dedicated to movies – because the differences between rationale behind downloading music and movies are minute. In both cases 72% of people who use informal circulations say that the price of original content is too high, while a similar number of people points out that the selection of content available on the Internet is much wider than the one available through official channels (73% for music, and 75% for movies). Minor differences were observed in the cases of both timeliness of the content, which turned out to be more important for movies (67%, next to 56% for music), and there being no viable alternatives at the respondent's place of

residence (15% for music and 20% for movies). The latter discrepancy probably has to do with the lack of cinemas, which in small towns is probably even more pronounced than lack of access to music CDs. The biggest differences were observed in the case of the convenience argument. 49% of video file downloaders claimed that downloading is much more convenient than other forms of access, while 67% of people gave the same answer when asked about music. This is undoubtedly a result of the widespread popularity of portable mp3 players and the "fusing" of music stripped of its physical media with everyday cultural practices.

The key issue for us is participating in the informal, social circulation of music – both on original CDs and audio files acquired through informal means (for example files downloaded from the Internet and copied to physical storage). 33% of our respondents have borrowed a CD from someone in the past three months, while 20% received one as a gift. Moreover, 45% of respondents have in the past three months listened to music downloaded by another member of the household. The list of "social" uses of music is completed by copying – 25% of respondents claimed to have copied a CD or audio files for another person – and sharing music with others via the Internet, with 17% of respondents claiming to have done so.

Fig. 25. Average number of original CDs, that in the last 3 months the respondent... (n=1283)

COPIED FROM OTHERS	2,26
BORROWED FROM OTHERS	2,25
BOUGHT FOR PERSONAL USE	1,44
BOUGHT AS A GIFT	0,84
RECEIVED AS A GIFT	0,75
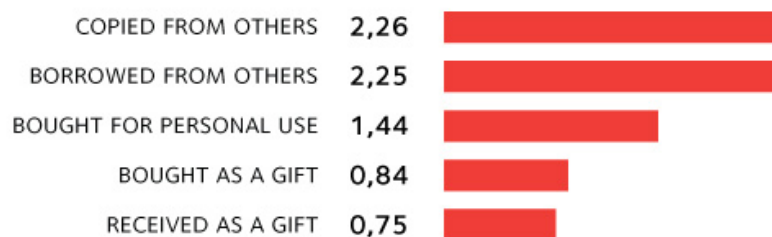
73% of people who claimed to have listened to audio files or copied CDs also claimed to have downloaded audio files in the past three months. More than 58% of all the active Internet users we studied engage in regular downloads, with people under 34 years of age downloading above-average amounts of files. **How frequently do the downloaders engage with the informal circulation to download music? As it turns**

out, not that often. 63% of downloaders have downloaded no more than 5 albums in the past three months, while 16% downloaded between 6 and 10 albums. Only 12% have downloaded more than 10 albums (the rest of the respondents answered "I don't know/It's hard to say.")

22% of the respondents claimed to attend concerts more or less once a year, while 24% claimed to attend them between 2 and 3 times a year. 10% reported attending concerts every two or three months, while 4% claimed to attend a least once a month. How does concert attendance correlate with participating in informal circulations? People who listen to music from audio files are moderately active when it comes to live shows, albeit higher than average. The situation looks similar when it comes to music festivals, which are less popular than concerts. 15% of the entire surveyed group attended music festival 2-3 times a year, while 24% attend them once a year. People who listen to music from audio files once again place a little above average.

6.5 Household collections of books, music, and movies

Below we're going to present some information on the size of book, music, and movie collections accumulated by our respondents. We're going to compare the average size of the collection with the collections accumulated by people who use files (assuming that in most cases they're downloaded from some type of informal distribution), and also we'll present the ratio between the "original" and "pirated" elements in the collections (again: highlighting people who claim to use a given medium in a computer file format).

70% of respondents have over 50 books in their household. A tenth of them reported a collection under 500 volumes, while nearly half (45%) claimed to have between 50 and 250 books. Only 1% of the respondent claimed that they have no books in their media collection.

There is a clear correlation between the number of books owned and level of education. One-third of Internet users with a college degree reported having more than 251 books. Simultaneously, our results show that even though during the second phase of our project we focused on a group of both early adopters and voracious

readers, it is evident that e-book penetration is still quite minor. Half of the surveyed group does not have a single e-book in their media collection. One-third of respondents reported having up to 25 e-books, while 16% claimed to have more than 25 e-books.

The number of respondents who do not have any CDs at home is minute, amounts to 5% of the group. CD collections, however, are significantly smaller than book collections – 44% of CD owners do not have more than 25 of them. 24% own between 26 and 50 CDs, while 13% of respondents own between 51 and 100. Only 14% of respondents have collections of more than a hundred CDs. Less popular – although far more common than e-books – are pirated CDs and mp3 files, with 61% of respondents claiming to have them in their media collection. Interestingly enough, only 9% of them rigorously organizes them into albums and claims not to have any stray, single files. 48% of the group, however, openly declares that single audio files are all they have in the mp3 format.

On the other hand, movie collections are pretty diverse when it comes to size. Although the average size of a respondent's movie collection is 32.3 original DVDs/Blu-ray discs, collections of 54% of our respondents number somewhere between 1 and 25 discs. Only 13% reported having no discs in their collection. 17% of respondents claimed to have between 26 and 50 discs, while 8% have collections ranging from 51 to 100 discs. Only 4% reported having more than 100 discs (the rest was unable to estimate the size of their collections).

Fig. 26. Average size of collections
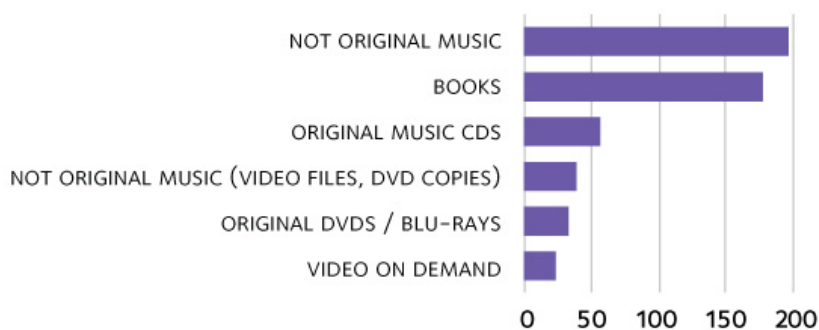
Fig. 27. Average size of collections accumulated by people who reported using a given medium in a computer file format
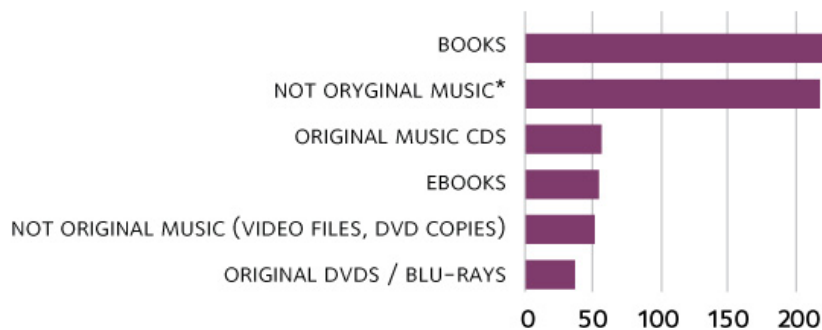
* refers to complete albums accumulated on a computer – single files turned out to be difficult to assess – 60% of people who claimed to have such files did not answer the question about the size of their collection.

We were surprised by the relatively small size of "pirated" collections, which included copied CDs/DVDs and audio and video files on computers. Even though accumulating these collections is free, the average movie collection consisting solely of copies is only slightly larger than one consisting of original DVDs, with 38.1 movies. This state of things is probably distorted a little bit by a different breakdown of collections – 33% of respondents do not own a single "pirated" movie. A similar group, with 32% of respondents, claims to have between 1 and 25, while only 10% claim to have collections ranging from 26 to 50 movies. Collections of 51 to 100 and over 100 discs were reported by 6% of respondents, respectively. The higher number of movies in these collections than in the collections of original discs might be the result of the fact that in this case the number of people who answered "It's hard to say" was three times as high.

It's also worth emphasizing that the number of people with unauthorized copies of movies in their libraries who accumulate large collections of them is minute. If we assume that having a "large collection" means accumulating over 50 movies, then it would be only 12% of all people who have any number of copies in their collections. We haven't observed any radical differences between various age groups – even though 12% of respondents own collections of over 50 "pirated" discs or files, the

largest share of such collections in a single age group was observed in the 25 to 29 demographic and consisted of 16% of respondents. Of course, we can interpret these results in different ways – they can be explained by both a small number of acquired movies, or a continuous "purging" of collections, which ends in deletion of a movie that has been watched.

What's most surprising, however, is that when it comes to music and movies, the size of collections accumulated by people who use downloaded files isn't all that different from the size of collections accumulated by the entire group. It's another argument supporting the thesis that people who engage with the informal circulations do not own smaller collections of paid content. The informal circulation seems to exist right next to the formal one, instead of supplanting it. Moreover, when it comes to books, the collections of people who use downloaded e-books are larger than collections of people who don't use any digital book formats.

6.6 Technology and the practices of content usage

New technologies have significantly influenced the way people consume cultural content. Interestingly enough, it did not limit our cultural consumption to our households – people who actively use cultural content via the Internet are also most likely to go to the movies or attend a concert (even though we might speculate as to the evolution of the meaning of such outings). But we can also clearly see that changes are taking place in different areas and are primarily a result of the users' greater freedom of decision. It's obvious in the way audio files are downloaded – **only 8% of downloaders download entire albums, while 31% download albums and single songs, and as much as 61% download only single songs. The fragmentation of albums is also noticeable in the structure of media collections.** The music industry's traditional model of operations was very quickly redefined by the ease with which Internet users can access a wide selection of content. It might also be a result of a particular way of thinking about content management, often exhibited by people who are used to the database logic characteristic of computer work, which according

to Lev Manovich is a cultural form that is slowly supplanting orderly narration.[57] It seems that people engaging in heavy Internet usage are increasingly often plagued by the need to have access – at least as an option – to a spectrum of opportunities that is as wide as possible, even if it loses some of its order in the process. It gives one a chance to create one's own musical collections, designed solely for oneself, without taking anyone else's choices into account.

Also surprising was the small size of most of the collections – despite easy access to free content via the informal circulations, the respondents were not accumulating sizable collections. One possible explanation is the respondents' awareness that the content is **"waiting" to be downloaded and there is no sense in keeping it on their own computers or archiving it in any other way.** The content is deleted after use. In a way, that model is an informal counterpart of the popular "cloud" model, in which a subscribing user can use content stored on remote servers via the Internet.

6.7 Movies

Unlike books and similarly to music, interface is not an obstacle when it comes to movies (and TV series). With e-books, method of use is still problematic – a relatively small group of Poles owns appropriate e-reader (only 5% of active Internet users from the second phase of our project own them), and reading from a computer screen for extended periods of time is tiresome. It's different with movies. The cinema has not been the primary site for watching movies for quite a long time. Nowadays, the cinema premiere is simply the beginning of a movie's life cycle – probably the most prominent part of that cycle, but simultaneously it's only the start of its travels through multiple distribution channels, including the unofficial ones. Digital technologies, which have found its way into Polish homes through home cinema systems and other devices, have also enabled us to watch movies via streaming services where unauthorized content sometimes ends up as well (both on general purpose websites, such as YouTube and specialized streaming websites, e.g. iitv.info). Users also watch video files downloaded from file sharing networks and other Internet

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57 Vide: L. Manovich, The Language of New Media. Cambridge: MIT Press 2001.

repositories on computer screens or other display devices hooked up to their computers, consoles, etc.

The group we studied in the second phase of our project was very interested in cinematography, especially when compared with the general population of Poland. Cinema attendance is one indicator which points to such state of affairs. According to the Polish Central Statistical Office (GUS), 30% of Poles have visited a cinema in the past year (the most recent CSO dataset comes from 2009).[58] Meanwhile, 82% of the respondents we interviewed claimed to have been to the cinema in the past year. What's interesting is that the downloaders were the most active part of that group. It turns out that engaging with the informal circulation is not an alternative to going to the movies, but rather another form of coming in contact with the cinema. And so, 49% of people who download over 10 video files per month go to the cinema at least once a quarter, while the same answer was given by 40% of people who download between 1 and 10 movies per month, and 34% of those who don't engage in downloading movies. Among those that do not download movies, the largest group – amounting to 25% of the non-downloaders – comprises people whose cinema attendance is the lowest (they go to the movies less than once a year). 14% of both moderate downloaders and heavy downloaders demonstrate that kind of low attendance. This data seems to suggest that **people interested in movies tend to use multiple – both formal and informal – channels to acquire content that interests them; simultaneously the people who don't participate in the informal circulation also tend to stay away from the formal circulation.**

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[58] Vide: http://www.obserwatoriumkultury.pl/sub,pl,obserwatorium-zywej-kultury.html.

Fig. 28. Sources of movies watched in the past month (n=1283)
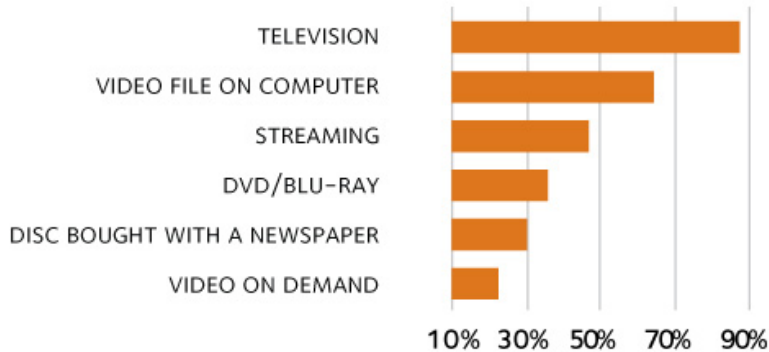
On average, video files and content streaming are second only to television. Television remains (and similar results were presented e.g. in the *World Internet Project 2011 Poland*) the primary source of movies and television shows (in most cases also available online) for most people, regardless of age. Greater popularity of online circulation in relation to the viewing of movies on physical media points to a significant change that has occurred in the last decade. For the younger segments of the population, the "digital" sources are more important than others (see Fig. 29). All respondents under 39 years of age have listed sources in order of importance (but with varying frequency) as follows: television, video files, and streaming. The top three chosen sources change only in the group of 40-50 year-olds: television, video files and DVD/Blu-ray. This again confirms results from the *World Internet Project* study. In it, two groups of intensive users have been selected – those spending over 10 hours a week either using the Internet or viewing television. In the first group, people below the age of 39 dominate, while in the second it is exactly opposite – and people over the age of 40 dominate.

Comparing these results with the results of our pilot survey is very interesting – in the latter study, streaming turned out to be more popular than downloading files. One possible interpretation is that most heavy Internet users have a few years of usage under their belts and thus their content-acquiring behaviors and habits were formed some time ago, when streaming from websites was in its infancy and the selection websites offered was very narrow. It seems that streaming services will continue to gain popularity at the expense of other forms of content acquisition – streaming

solutions will also be promoted by the formal circulation. Moreover, we're currently seeing (and as we demonstrated in the part dedicated to household media collections) that accumulating large media collections at home is a pursuit undertaken by a only a minority of Internet users.

Fig. 29. Sources of movies and television shows watched in the past month, by age group (n=1283)

WATCHING MOVIES OR TV SERIES EPISODES ON TV

WATCHING MOVIES OR TV SERIES EPISODES FROM A VIDEO FILE (E.G. ON A COMPUTER)

WATCHING (FEATURE) FILMS OR TV SERIES ON STREAMING WEBSITES (E.G. IPLA) OR SEPARATED INTO PARTS ON YOUTUBE

WATCHING MOVIES OR TV SERIES EPISODES FROM AN ORIGINAL DVD / BLU-RAY DISC

WATCHING MOVIES OR TV SERIES EPISODES FROM A DISC ADDED TO A NEWSPAPER

VOD (VIDEO ON DEMAND)

49% of respondents who have watched movies from DVDs/Blu-ray discs claimed to have purchased an original disc in the past month, while 65% reported borrowing it

from a rental shop or from friends. 27% claimed to have received a disc with a movie as a gift. The primary source of movies for people who watch video files on their computers was downloading them free of charge from the Internet – 72% of that group claimed to have done so in the past month. Despite the fact that the question referred to a shorter timeframe – only the past month – 31% of respondents claimed to have downloaded 7 or more movies/TV shows in that period, while 23% reported downloading between 3 and 6. 9% claimed to have downloaded 2 movies/TV shows, while 10% claimed to have downloaded only one. Although downloading does not necessarily mean consumption, we have to acknowledge that their activity in that area was high, and for the most of the respondents downloading movies and TV shows from the Internet is routine and common part of their cultural life, rather than something of a singular occurrence.

59% of people who have used video files in the past month claimed to have borrowed or copied movies or TV shows from friends – 9% reported to have downloaded only 1, 12% - only 2. 21% of them (which amounts to 36% of the downloaders) – claimed to have borrowed or copied between 3 and 6 movies, while 17% - over seven. This situation indicates that **technological file sharing networks overlap with social networks – sharing movies is a part of one's family and social life.** Active viewers also dominate the streamers – 28% of them are people who have watched 11 or more movies or TV show episodes, while 46% claimed to have watched between 3 and 10 movies or episodes.

Comparing the various sources of content with regard to the number of movies watched via a given source enables us to measure the relative meaning of individual sources. Television is still the dominating source, the respondents averaged about 26 movies or episodes per month watched via television. The second most important source was free streaming, with an average of 14 movies or episodes watched. Downloaded video files took third place (with an average of 9 movies per month) while movies borrowed or copied from friends placed fourth (nearly 4 movies per month). Physical media – like DVDs and Blu-rays - are the rarest source of movies in the group.

Fig. 30. Reasons for downloading movies and TV shows from the Internet free of charge (n=590)

WIDER SELECTION, IT'S EASIER TO FIND WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR	75%	
PRICE, MOVIES AND TV SHOWS ON DVDS ARE TOO EXPENSIVE	72%	
TIMELINESS, ALL NEW RELEASES ARE AVALIABLE THERE	67%	
EASE OF USE, I'D RATHER WATCH VIDEO FILES	49%	
NO ADVERTISING	46%	
IN MY PLACE OF RESIDENCE THERE IS NO BETTER WAY TO ACCESS MOVIES AND TV SERIES THAT INTEREST ME	20%	
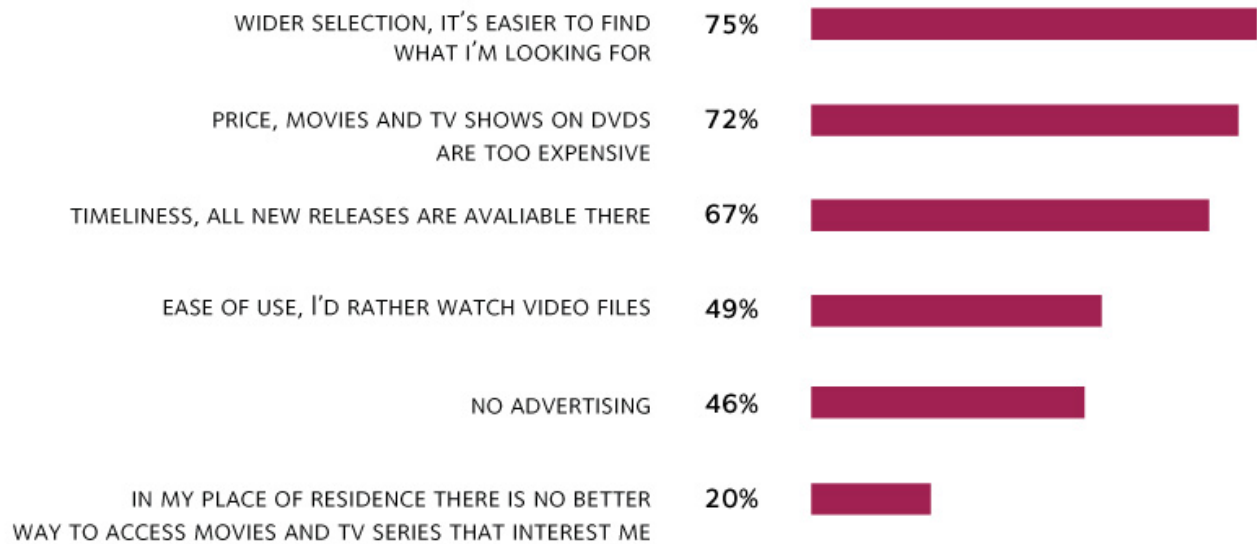
We asked people who watched video files they themselves downloaded about their reasons for getting movies and TV shows for free from the Internet. Besides the predictable "price," the issues of selection and timeliness also turned out to be important. Respondents also mentioned ease of use and lack of ads. Relatively few respondents claimed that their place of residence had any alternate, better ways of accessing content – regardless of city size. Thus, it seems that **most Internet users which we have researched do not feel forced by circumstance to engage within the informal circulation of content. They rather make a choice to access, through informal circulations, the widest possible selection of content with maximum freedom of its use, although formal options are available to them**.

But we need to mention the differences in various groups – especially in the case of city size, which is crucial for this particular indicator. **The number of times that difficulty in accessing other forms was reported was inversely proportional to city size** – it was reported by only 3-4% of respondents living in cities with more than 100,000 residents, thus we might consider it statistically insignificant, whereas in cities with over 20,000 but less than 100,000 residents, it was reported by 14% of respondents. In cities with up to 19,000 residents – 28%, and in rural areas – 38%. We can't underestimate the role that these Internet-mediated, informal forms of access to

content play in areas with an underdeveloped cultural infrastructure.

The lack of "other" or "better" ways of accessing content is also treated differently by individual age groups – it was mentioned by 31% of respondents from 16 to 19 age, while in the older age groups, that issue was mentioned by 19% or less respondents. It might be difficult to definitively state what is the reason behind this age distinction – maybe it's because the younger users have higher expectations as to the flexibility of content providers or maybe due to high expectations resulting from the low cost of content acquisition.

When investigating informal content circulations it's worth remembering that when said content is in the form of downloaded files, it can be later shared with other people – family members, friends or people residing in the same household. As we've already mentioned, 72% of users who watch video files (that's 64% of the Internet users) download said files from the Internet. 40% of that group claims that in the past month they have watched movies downloaded by another member of the household. When asked about the person in the household who downloads or borrows movies or TV shows, 36% of respondents claimed to do it themselves; 32% claimed that multiple persons download, while 10% claimed that someone else does it for them (18% refused to answer, which might indicate that this is a sensitive subject).

Dominik Batorski: Culture on the Internet – liberty of access, freedom of use

The digitization of an increasingly greater amount of cultural content means an increased role for the Internet as an instrument of direct access to said content. This, of course, results in problems related to the cost-effectiveness of producing that content and the necessity of changing the model of remunerating the content creators. As this report indicates, the general opinions on these problems are not necessarily a good reflection of reality.

There's no doubt that many Internet users enjoy the availability of content on the Internet, including music and movies. That notion seems to be supported by both data

collected for the *Social Diagnosis* (Fig. 31), as well as the popularity of file hosting services and file sharing networks.

Fig. 31. Downloading music or movies from the Internet, at any time in the past and in the past week, among Internet users between 2005 and 2011. Source: *Social Diagnosis*, own work.
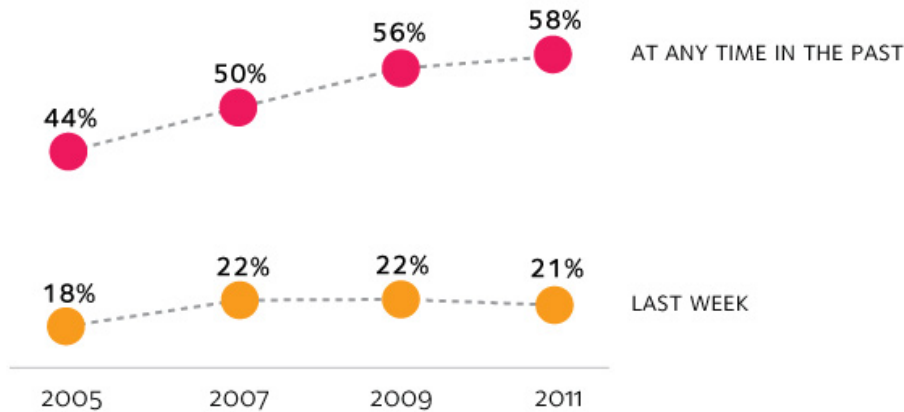
Only a fraction of Internet users download content from the Internet – although over half of them have experience with such action, only about 20% are regular downloaders. The research conducted for *World Internet Project – Poland 2011* (WIP) indicates that most of the users who download content from the Internet limit themselves only to content that they don't have to pay for (Fig. 32).

Fig. 32. Content downloaded from the Internet – users paying for content and downloading it without paying for it. Source: *World Internet Project – Poland 2011*, own work.
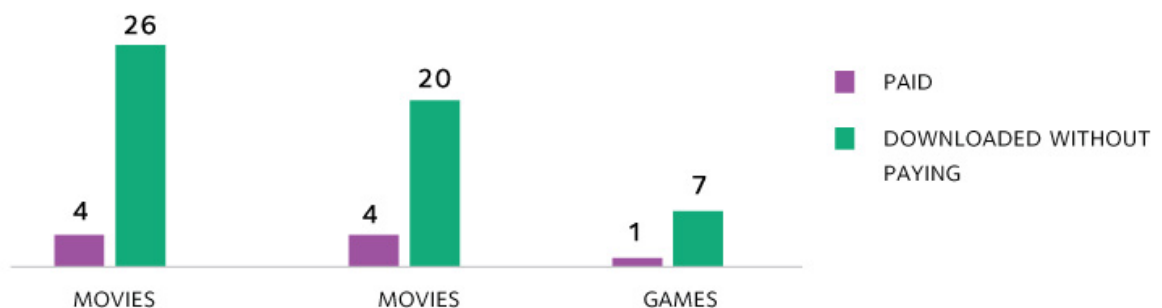
This unwillingness to pay for content on the Internet does not have to be necessarily

linked to purely financial considerations. As another chart prepared from WIP data indicates, the users primarily appreciate convenience and ease of access. Some explain their actions by claiming lack of funds for legal purchase, especially in the case of video games. However, there's not that many of those who have the necessary funds and still download content without paying for it. A quarter of those who download music and movies and 16% of those who download games belong to that group.

Fig. 33. Reasons for not paying for content downloaded from the Internet. Source: *World Internet Project – Poland 2011*, own work.
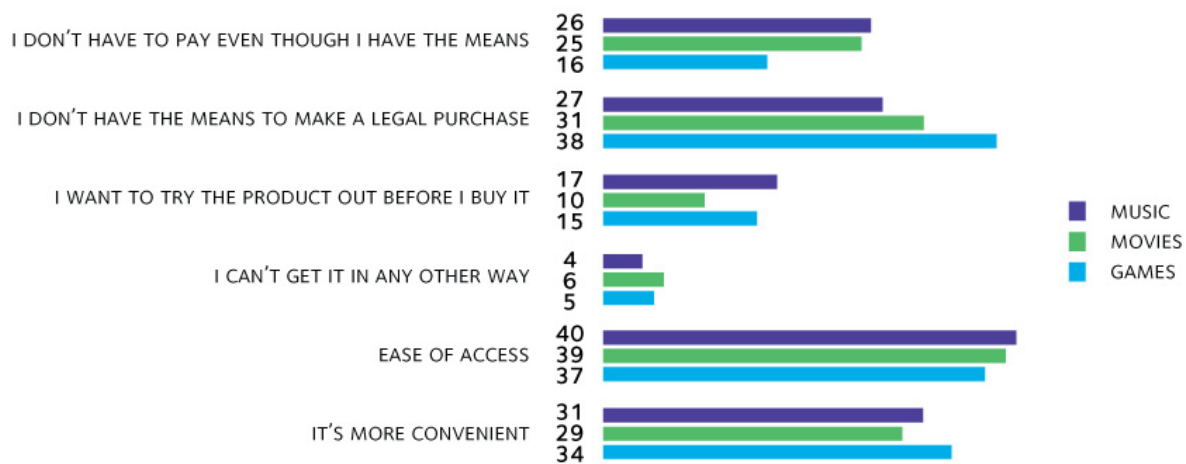
The presented results indicate how misleading it is to talk about piracy as a phenomenon related solely to not paying for content and to brand it as theft. From the point of view of the users, ease of access and freedom of use seem to be crucial, and that hypothesis seems to have been confirmed by the success of the iTunes Music Store. It turns out that many users are willing to pay if in return they will receive quick and convenient access to content that interests them, content that can be later used in any way they desire. It's the other way around with DRM-locked CDs, which cannot be played on a portable player. Users value not only convenient access, but also freedom of use, they themselves want to decide how they'll use the content they paid for.

6.8 What are the obstacles to acquiring content through formal channels?

The part dedicated to analyzing the rationales behind the users' decisions to engage with informal circulations and the possible factors that might be used as arguments for moving part of these activities to the formal sphere seemed so significant, that we decided to verify them in one more way.

We decided to perform a conjoint analysis, similar to the one used in price optimization models and product and services configuration – the difference being that the offered content included an equal share of materials from both the market distribution and the informal circulation. The conjoint analysis enabled us to statistically determine the value of the characteristics of a given product or service. In this context, it was a jump-off point for questions like: what are the obstacles to acquiring content through formal channels? What conditions would have to be met for people who download content to be able to buy it? That instrument allowed for us to determine the preferences of respondents and establish the most important factors that influence the decision to purchase content; even those factors that the respondents are unaware of.

We have conducted conjoint analysis solely in relation to movies – assuming that presented results demonstrate broader preferences of Internet users. The interviewees were supposed to choose which out of three "products" seems to be most attractive to them, and the process was repeated 12 times. Each of the proposals was made up of four elements – means of access, price, quality, and timeliness, drawn randomly for each individual set. The respondents had to decide between a low quality movie downloaded from the informal circulation which recently premiered in cinemas, a DVD priced at 20 PLN (high quality, less timely), and buying a movie online for 10 PLN[59]. Below we listed all the variants out of which the proposals were drawn up (with one exception – buying a DVD was always the priciest variant, while

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59 1 Polish Zloty (PLN) is approximately 25 Eurocents and 30 American cents. 20 PLN equals approximately 5 Euro and 6 dolars.

downloading it from informal sources was always free).

Table 1

Means of access	Price	Quality	Timeliness
Movie downloaded illegally from the Internet	0 PLN	low quality of both audio and video	a new picture – just released
Movie downloaded legally from the Internet	5 PLN	standard audio and video quality	relatively new, ca. 6 months past the release date
Movie rented on a DVD	10 PLN	high quality of both audio and video (HD)	a movie from 1-2 years back
Movie seen at a cinema	15 PLN		a classic from a few years back
Movie bought for personal use	20 PLN30 PLN / 50 PLN (only in case of purchase)		

The significance of a particular factor, measured as an average, taken from all cases, of the effect of a factor on the decision made, is as follows: price 43%, means of access 25%, quality 17%, timeliness 16%. It's easy to notice that these results differ from the answers that the respondents provided when asked direct questions: then they tended to consider timeliness almost as important as price, whereas the conjoint

analysis shows that price is definitely the most important criterion.

Table 2 Influence of the characteristics of access to the content on the preferred form of access

Description:	informal download for 0 PLN, formal download for 5 PLN, both of identical quality and recently released	informal download for 0 PLN, formal download for 5 PLN, pirated movie in SD, legal movie in HD, pirated movie if a new release, legal movie is fairly new	informal download for 0 PLN, purchase for 10 PLN, formal download for 5 PLN, movies of identical quality and all recently released	informal download for 0 PLN, purchase for 15 PLN, formal download for 5 PLN, with all movies of identical quality and all recently released	informal download for 0 PLN, purchase for 15 PLN, formal download for 10 PLN, with all movies of identical quality and all recently released	informal download for 0 PLN, purchase for 20 PLN, formal download for 10 PLN, with all movies of identical quality and all recently released
Informal access	18.15%	14.27%	19.25%	22.45%	33.72%	35.14%
Purchase of disc	60.17%	61.89%	46.85%	26.32%	31.52%	29.51%
Formal downloading	21.68%	23.84%	33.89%	51.23%	34.76%	35.35%

On the basis of the conjoint analysis, we are assuming that the decision depends to the greatest extent upon the price. The table below presents changes in preferences depending on the changing characteristics of the product being bought. When faced with a movie of similar quality and timeliness, 18% of respondents will decide to get it from the informal circulation for free, 22% will obtain it from a formal online source and 60% will purchase it on a DVD. When price differences were kept (informal access for free, formal access for 5 PLN) but quality was differentiated in favor of the formal circulation and timeliness in favor of the informal circulation, choices tend to favor the former – 25% would purchase the film online, while 14% would download it for free. But formal access was still the most attractive, with the cheap DVD being the winner (62%), due to the quality of the content. Taking into account all the offered options, even when the difference between content downloaded for free and paid for is only 5

PLN, respondents prefer the cheaper (free) option. When the price difference increases to 10 PLN, two times more respondents would choose the free download. At the same time, when the actual price of the good becomes more than 15 PLN for a DVD and 10 PLN for a downloaded file, the most popular option – chosen by one-third of respondents – becomes free, online access.

Based on the conjoint analysis we can state that respondents are willing to pay for better quality of content but at the same time are satisfied only with minimal prices. With the increase of prices, more respondents prefer informal, free sources. It is worth noting that the deciding price level of 20 PLN for a DVD is a price, for which almost none of the current movie offer can be purchased in Poland.

These results are consistent with the relatively small monthly expenditures on purchasing or renting movies or DVDs: 54% of surveyed Internet users didn't spend any money, 25% spent 25 PLN or less, while 21% spent more than 25 PLN. **It might be surprising that not only the younger age groups are unwilling to pay for content – the differences between individual age groups are statistically insignificant. The same is true for differences between genders, education levels, and places of residence.**

Piotr Toczyski: Active Internet users – a perspective on managing the experience

Piotr Toczyski: Initiator and co-author of the Polish edition of the World Internet Project, before that he contributed to the Portrait of an Internet User report, the Internet Diagnosis, and a series of reports prepared for the media industry, especially its Internet branch. Internet market analyst for Agora, member of the European Studies Unit at Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

(The text does not necessarily have to reflect the opinions held by the abovementioned institutions and initiatives.)

How can we describe active Internet usage and why it might be good to expand our perspective by including the "managing of the Internet user's experience"? How does the World Internet Project overlap with the Circulations of Culture and what new perspectives does the latter report open up?

Researching the circulation of cultural content with particular emphasis on the role of the Internet is a thankless task. The Internet is a part of a multi-tier system of content access. Content, which sometimes is only a symbol, a reference to "full content," that flows through ad space, editorial space, and recently even transactional space. By superimposing a network of media types – starting with textual media, through audio, visual, audiovisual, up to unidirectional and interactive – we obtain a field that's impossible to cover with a single research project. In consequence we end up with a lot more questions than answers, but on the other hand we're ending up with new areas that are worth a closer look. In the context of this report, the legal aspect is shaping up to be a very important matter, but slightly detached from the real behaviors exhibited by Internet users. Legal conclusions formulated deductively surely don't match the ones extracted via inductive reasoning from the observation of mass behaviors of Internet users. As a consequence of this discrepancy, we might go with an environmental analogy: if a group of people tramples a path through the middle of the lawn, it might be best to resolve the conflict or at least to keep all involved parties comfortable by making the trampled path an official walkway.

Managing the experience of the Internet user. For partial answers to the dilemmas posed by the report I would start looking – as it often happens with the Internet – in the not-so-obvious place: the managing of the user's experiences. It might be good to base the conversation about informal access to content on a research- or intuition-based emphatic understanding of the Internet users and the acceptance of his or her world. And that world is not all that obvious, it might be exhausting for the user to make one more click, one more page view, to wait for a website to refresh, to wait for something for just a few seconds more. To put it bluntly: people get accustomed to higher standards very quickly. Websites that offer content in streaming, thus not requiring the user to download and store files, are becoming that higher standard nowadays. They allow the user to save a few clicks, which is all an active user wants, to save a few flicks. From this point of view, the Internet is still imperfect, because not all its elements will rise up to meet the users' high standards. But if it's still operational that means that the informal circulation of content must meet those high standards. It meets them better than the official market does. From this point of view one doesn't

consider legal, economic, and systemic entanglements . The comfort of the end user of content or a service is all that matters.

There's no shortage of authors who criticize the users' drive towards comfort and minimizing their broadly defined "costs" in computer-mediated communications.[60] But because that drive already exists on a mass scale – as this report indicates – it is reinforced by some authors and publishers, who see this "immediacy" as their competitive advantage and something very attractive for the users, and rightly so. In line with this reasoning, a website that allows a user to stream new episodes of TV series free of charge, without the need to download a file, is more responsive to the user's needs than a store offering physical medial or a website that requires registration and payment. But there are cases out there, where users were known to paid for content that was presented illegally, which might give us something to think about. Taking the Internet user's needs into account, including "invented" needs such as minute reducing the time between intent and factual consumption of content, is crucial for understanding the issues surrounding the informal circulation of content.

We might risk saying that optimization of user experience is a challenge for both professional online and offline publishers, whose content appears on the Internet often against their will. For example, publishers who use ads might consider optimizing their ad space. Going overboard with ads might end up being counterproductive. In the transactional model, the question of payment on the Internet might turn out to be a barrier that's at least equally significant from both the point of view of managing the experience, as well as the point of view of microsavings on the user's part. Paying is more difficult, and not necessarily in the financial sense. It simply requires the user to do more, especially if it's payment outside of the Internet, related with physically relocating oneself to the store. This area of research, related to quality as understood by the users, i.e. user experience, seems to be absolutely basic.

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60 R. Piłat Robert, Internet i ludzki umysł [Internet and the human mind], in: Publicystyczny komentarz socjologów. Analizy – polemiki – wywiady. Wybór tekstów z lat 1957-2006, [The public commentary of sociologists. Analyses – debates – interviews], ed. H. Domański, A. Ostrowska, Warszawa: IFiS PAN 2006.

Despite that fact, it is very often ignored. So it might be worth to mention it in Circulations of Culture.

The informal circulation of content according to *World Internet Project*. The Circulations of Culture report opens up new avenues for a discussion that's already been started, by basically the same group of authors, in the Polish edition of the WIP report.[61] In the present report, the *World Internet Project: Poland 2011* is quoted extensively and critically. This source of reflection on the Internet, very new for academic and business circles, draws upon more than ten years of international experience in collecting, analysis, and interpreting declarative questionnaire data on the social aspects of the Internet. In Poland, the research was carried out in the homes of the respondents, and was conducted on a representative albeit a quota sample of 2 000 Internet users and people who don't use the Internet, with the help of the computer-assisted personal interviewing method. Thus, it's a relatively high quality source. *World Internet Project* came to Poland through the efforts of business entities involved in the development of the Internet, especially its content (gazeta.pl group, a subsidiary of Agora) and physical layers (TP Group and Orange). The project staff invited multiple scholar to participate. The research of these prospective collaborators included projects focused on the „Polish Internet" – including "Polish mobile Internet," but was primarily revolving around the development of new technologies in Poland and patterns of their use and application. The researchers, who by poring over the research results and by participating in discussions on *World Internet Project: Poland* have co-created the Polish edition of the report were mostly affiliated on one hand with academic research centers, mostly located in Warsaw, including Collegium Civitas, the Warsaw School of Social Sciences and Humanities, and Warsaw University, and on the other hand with NGOs and non-academic research centers, like the Digital Center Project: Poland and the Observatory of Media Freedom. The aforementioned facilities, and especially the researchers affiliated with them, often align themselves with a particular point of view, but it turned out that they were quite unanimous in a

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61 M. Filiciak, Nieformalny obieg kultury – skala i znaczenie [Informal circulation of culture – scale and significance], in: World Internet Project: Poland 2011, op. cit.

discussion that could easily lead to confrontation.[62] Thanks to this expanded perspective, the list of issues raised by the Polish edition of the *World Internet Project* included a long list of questions absent from the global questionnaire, the answers to which could reveal some fresh insights from the informal media economy: "Do you occasionally download from the Internet the following media: music; movies; Polish TV series; foreign TV series; television shows; books (e-books); games; press articles; other media (what are they?); I've done no such thing; I refuse to answer; it's hard to say." And later, in a similar vein: "There is a possibility of accessing the abovementioned content without paying. Do you occasionally download from the Internet…" And to deepen the inquiry: "Why do you download content without paying… – because I don't have to pay, even though I have the means; because I can't afford to buy it; because I want to try it out before I buy it; because I'm not able to get the content in any other way (can't buy it even though I want to); I refuse to answer; I don't know/it's hard to say."

The data elicited for the Polish edition of WIP is currently being analyzed by people preparing their own work at research facilities other than the ones mentioned above. It will also be presented with data collected by researchers from America (gathered by the Digital Center at the USC Annenberg School of Communication) and the UK (gathered by the Oxford Internet Institute at Oxford University) Although the informal circulation module made its first appearance during the Polish edition of WIP, the Polish deliberations on the informal circulation of content on the Internet are not detached and separate from deliberations of researchers in other countries. Starting in Oxford: "Bill Dutton gave the example of the use of the word »piracy«, comparing its use in terms of sharing of copyrighted material versus attacking and robbing ships

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62 D. Ćwiklak, P. Toczyski, Polscy internauci na tle świata: którędy i dokąd zmierza polski Internet? [Polish Internet users compared to the world: where and along what route is the Polish Internet moving to?], in: Materiały pokonferencyjne. Profesor William Dutton z Oxford Internet Institute dyskutuje z polskimi badaczami Internetu na premierze World Internet Project: Polska 2011, http://badania.gazeta. pl/file/mediakit/364446/b5/profesor-william-dutton-z-oxford-Internet-institute-dyskutuje-z- polskimi-badaczami-Internetu-na-premierze-world-Internet-project-polska-2011.

at sea. While the use of 'piracy' is a useful rhetorical device for proponents of copyright protection, it is misleading in terms of law enforcement and public policy," noted the authors of a report on cybercrime.[63]

The issue of conceptualizing heavy Internet usage. I'll come back to citing Professor William Dutton, in the meantime, however, we should make a note of his role as the head researcher of the British edition of *World Internet Project*. The premiere of the first Polish WIP report in 2010 was graced with the presence and lecture of the researcher who originated the WIP concept, Professor Jeffrey Cole. His lecture was called *The Ever-Changing New Media User*. While describing the 12 to 24 age group, he said that his experiences in the last ten years he spent in the field seem to indicate that only in 2005 did a tendency to pay for content form in that group. A tendency that wasn't there before. Regardless of that, users from the below 25 age group want to move content across platforms, "without any limitations."

A concept similar to that of the ever-changing new media user appeared during Professor William Dutton's lecture, which he gave at the premiere of the Polish report in 2011, just as he was finishing his decade-long tenure as director of the Oxford Internet Institute. The concept of next generation Internet users, proposed by OII and based on the data from the British edition of *World Internet Project* seems to be theoretically convergent with the division proposed after elaborate statistical operations by the authors of the *2009 Internet Diagnosis,* a report prepared under the eye of Krzysztof Krejtz that was already quoted in this report. According to the research and the publication that followed it, active Internet users captured in the sample tend to exhibit three motivational patterns when it comes to Internet usage: a creative one, a consumer one, and an observational one. The "observers" – although active – are the least involved with the Internet and are mostly distrustful. "Consumers" are focused on active use of Internet resources, while "creators" satisfy most of their needs online.[64] Are all of the respondents from that survey "next

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63 S. Fafinski, W. Dutton, H. Margetts, Mapping and measuring cybercrime, Oxford Internet Institute Forum Discussion Paper, No. 18, 2010.

64 Diagnoza Internetu 2009 [Internet Diagnosis 2009], op. cit.

generation users"? Could "Creators" be considered NGUs, while "Observers" not so much? The issue of conceptualizing the process of Internet immersion remains open and should not bypass the other side of the matter, meaning the further stages of digital exclusion increasingly inhabited by active Internet users.

Directions for further exploration. The need of a clear conceptualization of digitization processes and the need to abandon the conceptual chaos that plagues research focused on the Internet becomes more and more apparent. It's easy to imagine defining content consumption in not only legal and payment morality categories, but also in categories of digital exclusion, with the exclusion vector pointing in any possible direction. The "digitally excluded" descriptor might be conferred on both people who are unable to reach content that's potentially important for them, as well as people who use that content while staying in place developmentally. This review of theoretical proposals, along with some conceptual systematization seems to be a task that is still unfulfilled, thus leaving some of the terms open to ideological use.

Nevertheless, subsequent observations, made by the researchers in a quantitative scheme in this report, seem to confirm the involvement of Internet users in heavy consumption and sharing of cultural content – also outside of the Internet, and in the form of accessing paid content. Similarly, when Internet users' involvement in social and political spheres of life was analyzed, it also turned out that active users are more involved than others. Although the fact that heavy Internet use might lead to information fatigue and reveals the issues related to the superficiality and credibility of information[65], it still is a designator of a group that quickly gains new competencies and exhibits a much greater interest in the world. However, in the interest of balance, we should bring up the so-called "Internet inequalities,"[66] which is a term for the

65 A. Keen, The Cult of the Amateur: How Today's Internet is Killing Our Culture. New York: Doubleday/Currency 2007.

66 P. DiMaggio, E. Hargittai Eszter, From the „digital divide" to „digital inequality": Studying Internet use as penetration increases. Princeton University Center for Arts and Cultural Policy Studies, Working Paper Series, 15, 2001.

differentiation of Internet users combined with subsequent degrees of digital exclusion: the second degree, related to competencies, and third degree, related to content.[67] It's probable that a section of active Internet users does not enrich the social capital with their Internet activities. It might also turn out that the informal circulation of cultural content, especially its Internet branch, favors the reinforcement of values or socially desirable forms of capital. These avenues haven't been explored in the report, but that of course is a result of the neutrality stance taken by the researchers who worked on it. Besides, it would not be feasible to investigate the described sphere with quantitative research, because the obtained results will be more superficial than the insights obtained via qualitative research. Theses revealed thanks to *World Internet Project* and either reinforced or narrowed down in this report, in respect to both formal and informal circulations, should be investigated further, while the results obtained in the past should be treated as an introduction to the world of the Internet user's perception. Some of the results are hard to interpret. One of the possible directions to choose would be recruiting respondents from the quantitative survey into a subsequent qualitative study, which would also serve to validate the data from the quantitative stage. In quantitative studies, we can never be certain that the respondents and researchers, the latter using either interviewers or the Internet – and, still, a computer in both cases – understand the same words in the same way.

The areas mentioned above, especially the user experience perspective, seem to be a good starting point for a process of looking for solutions in the informal content circulation sphere. The consequences of a end-user-centered approach might be beneficial for the sphere of cultural policy and administration, and further down the road, for the economy.

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67 K. Henne, Zmierzamy ku trzeciemu już poziomowi cyfrowego podziału [We are heading towards the third level of digital divide], [in:] Portret Internauty [Portrait of an Internet user], red. M. Wenzel, M. Feliksiak, P. Toczyski, Warszawa: Gazeta.pl i CBOS 2009.

6.9 Respondents' attitudes towards informal content circulations

Our study included a series of questions that were supposed to diagnose the respondents' attitude towards the phenomenon of informal content circulations – including both their personal behaviors and related phenomena. We asked the respondents to describe their attitudes towards a series of statements using a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 being "I definitely disagree with that statement," and 5 being "I definitely agree."

Using factor analysis and the answer to the abovementioned questions as basis, we can distinguish 4 types of attitudes towards informal circulations of digital content. The first one is called **"Everybody's doing it,"** and is typical for people who think that informal distribution is the norm. People exhibiting this attitude are more likely to claim that the majority of their friends download music and movies from the Internet and that downloading is the only way to accumulate a sizable music collection, otherwise they could never afford it. They also admit that the Internet is their basic source of movies and music, simultaneously complaining about the high prices and delayed releases of content available from formal distributors. They also claim that physical media is impractical. This attitude is exhibited by people who heavily engage with informal circulations, often completely bypassing the use of formal circulations. 8% of the respondents agree or definitely agree with all the following theses – they represent a group characterized by heavy usage of informal circulations and negative attitude towards the formal circulations. This attitude correlates with the age of the respondents – more likely to be exhibited by people under 29 years of age.

Fig. 34. The "Everyone's doing it" attitude (n=1283)

THE PRICE OF MUSIC AND MOVIES IN POLAND IS SO HIGH THAT IT'S NO WONDER
THAT PEOPLE GET THEM FROM THE INTERNET FOR FREE

| 5% | 6% | 13% | 13% | 13% |

NOWADAYS USING CDS AND DVDS IS JUST IMPRACTICAL

| 22% | 17% | 30% | 16% | 15% |

THE MAJORITY OF MY FRIENDS DOWNLOAD MUSIC AND MOVIES FROM THE INTERNET

| 7% | 11% | 25% | 26% | 30% |

FREE ACCESS TO MUSIC ON THE INTERNET ALLOWS ME TO ACCUMULATE A COLLECTION
I COULD NEVER OTHERWISE AFFORD

| 15% | 14% | 24% | 19% | 27% |

MOVIES ARE RELEASED ON DVD WITH A SIGNIFICANT DELAY, YOU HAVE TO DOWNLOAD
MOVIES TO KEEP UP WITH THE CURRENT RELEASES

| 15% | 14% | 30% | 20% | 20% |

THE INTERNET IS MY BASIC SOURCE OF MOVIES AND MUSIC

| 16% | 15% | 23% | 21% | 25% |

DEFINITELY DISAGREE   DISAGREE   NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE   AGREE   DEFINITELY AGREE

People who exhibit the second attitude, which we call **"The Internet provides me with culture news,"** emphasize that the Internet is their primary source of information on new trends and that without it they would know less about books, movies, and music. What's interesting is that belief did not necessarily make them feel as if they were opinion leaders or a source of recommendations for their friends. It's a common attitude, 50% of respondents agree or definitely agree with both of these statements.

Fig. 35. The „Internet provides me with culture news" attitude (n=1283)

WITHOUT THE INTERNET I WOULD KNOW MUCH LESS ABOUT BOOKS, MOVIES AND MUSIC

| 8% | 11% | 21% | 24% | 36% |

THE INTERNET IS MY PRIMARY SOURCE OF NEWS ON NEW ARTISTS AND TRENDS IN THE MUSIC WORLD

| 10% | 10% | 22% | 26% | 32% |

DEFINITELY DISAGREE — DISAGREE — NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE — AGREE — DEFINITELY AGREE
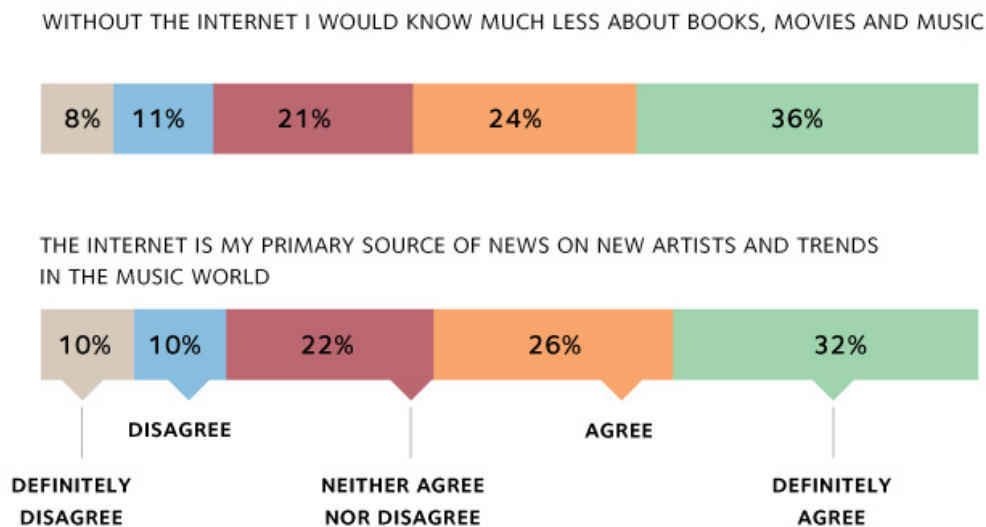
The third attitude, which we call **"Downloading is easier,"** is exhibited by Internet users who were discouraged by inconveniences of purchasing from official distribution channels (like paying with a debit card or by wire transfer). Simultaneously, these people claim that downloading is just the first stage of the process which ends in purchase – they download content to "try it out." Thus, it's an attitude that acknowledges the advantages of the informal circulation and reconciles them with formal circulations. 13% of the respondents agree or definitely agree with these statements.

Fig 36. The „Downloading is easier" attitude (n=1283)

I SOMETIMES DOWNLOAD MUSIC FROM THE INTERNET TO CHECK IT OUT
AND LATER BUY IF I HAPPEN TO LIKE IT

| 28% | 17% | 24% | 17% | 15% |

THE MOST DISCOURAGING THING ABUT BUYING MOVIES AND MUSIC ON THE INTERNET
ISN'T THE PRICE, IT'S THE HASSLE OF SUPPLYING YOUR CREDIT CARD INFO OR MAKING WIRE TRANSFERS

| 22% | 17% | 26% | 16% | 19% |

DEFINITELY DISAGREE — DISAGREE — NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE — AGREE — DEFINITELY AGREE

We called the fourth group **"the critics of the informal circulation."** People who belong to that group think that using the informal distribution is theft and that the law should be stricter with people who engage in such practices. 11% of respondents agree or definitely agree with these statements – in comparison with the entire surveyed population, people who are against the informal circulation and who treat them as criminal make up a relatively small group.

Fig. 37. The „Critic of the informal circulation" attitude (n=1283)

I THINK THE LAW SHOULD PUNISH PEOPLE WHO ILLEGALLY SHARE MOVIES
AND MUSIC MORE SEVERELY

| 28% | 25% | 26% | 7% | 7% |

USING PIRATED MOVIES AND MUSIC IS THEFT

| 22% | 25% | 25% | 14% | 14% |

DEFINITELY DISAGREE — DISAGREE — NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE — AGREE — DEFINITELY AGREE
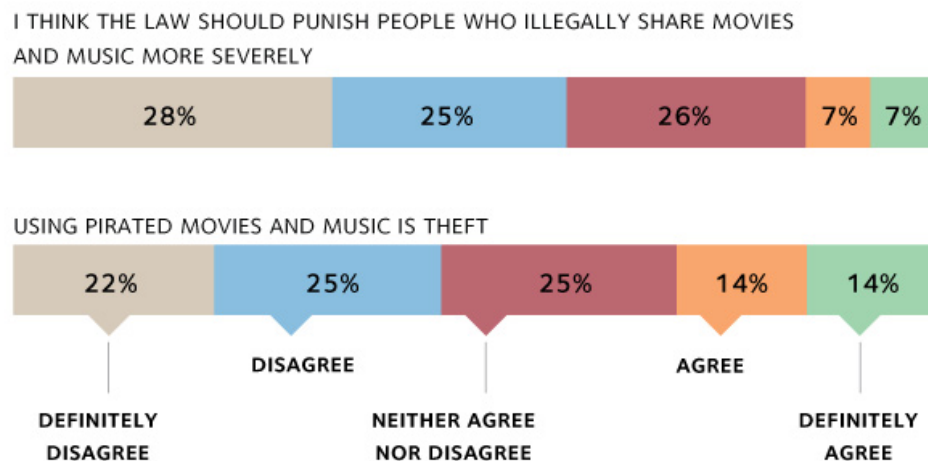
We can see that two extreme attitudes (no. 1 and no. 4) determine where the generation gap lies. The older respondents tend to perceive informal content sharing as theft and a felony (even though that attitude doesn't rise above 20% in any age group).

Among younger people, a larger group of people exhibits the attitude that the informal circulation is something quite normal (although no more than 15%).

This comparison also shows us that the least popular attitudes – with 8% and 11% of active Internet users exhibiting them, respectively – are the extreme ones, uncritically accepting or wholly condemning the informal circulations. The group which considers engaging with informal distribution a rational choice and an answer to the formal distributors' unwillingness to satisfy their needs is slightly bigger, with 13%. But the dominating attitude, exhibited by more than half of the respondents, which is more than all the previous attitudes combined, is the one that reconciles the formal circulation with the informal, and emphasizes that the Internet is just a source of cultural content, acquired via multiple means.

Przemysław Zieliński: On circulations of cultural content: votum separatum

Przemysław Zieliński: sociologist, co-author of multiple research and applied research projects on the sociology of youth cultures and lifestyles. As a member of a research team and a consultant, he has been collaborating with the Live Culture Observatory.

Was technology behind the establishment of the circulations, which the report describes? This one-sided interpretation is very easy to demolish. There's still man, who is the *de facto* subject and creator of sense not only in these types of circulations, but in culture in general. Using technology is always a result of complex processes stemming from needs and systems (or more carefully, arrangements) of values. In this case – when researchers are just starting to create a specific perspective of exploration – we should search the analyses for roots or sources of the given states of affairs or processes; notice motivations; consider lifestyles that generate certain behaviors.

The *autonomy of the user* didn't come from nowhere and is not solely the result of using new technologies. In my opinion, that autonomy is rooted in "close" – and maybe that's why it's barely remembered – tradition of contemporary culture. It's about, e.g. the ideas that appeared when major and minor socio-cultural movements came along; especially those from the second half of the 20th century. I'd also insist on – and this is extremely important – including the processes of transformation that value systems related to both social life and the sphere of ideas, processes that persist long after the social movements they accompanied disappear. One issue that might be debatable is the question of how we can determine when these phenomena and processes started. Some people argue that the beginning happened in the tail end of the Victorian Era, while some claim that the First World War was the *limes*, and still there are others who say that the changes started only in 1968.

Nevertheless, the multiple "debts" we owe to the past – that past we still haven't worked through – are perfectly visible in continuations of various social movements (from pacifism to flash mobs), in subcultures, and even in general transformations of lifestyles. One of the basic characteristics that all; these phenomena exhibit are the drift towards freedom. Despite meandering through multiple offshoots, developing in accordance with the logic of the Deleuzian rhizome, we can see that the entire multidimensional space of freedom is still getting bigger, which in turn leads to the constantly increasing importance of this particular value. Freedom, and I'm talking about individual freedom, despite collective banners and standards on which its name is sometimes written, is the only permanent characteristic of modernity, gaining importance with each generation. That's why multiple circulations of culture are becoming the norm, because only in that multiplicity can cultural content gain new, surprising meanings. We can easily say that this change taking place before our very eyes (and that proximity makes it so difficult to observe it in its complexity) is *de facto* a cultural change. (Technology IS understood here, from the theoretical point of view, as a part of culture!). The linkage between elements and different fields of culture is gracious towards technology that people perceive as autonomous, as well as dominating, only in the beginning. In time, technology will gradually lose its autonomy and become – also in the collective consciousness – once again a part of culture. From

a sociological standpoint, interpreting these phenomena from a specific perspective is especially significant, because it seems that only theoretical triangulation that takes place in the interdisciplinary fields will enable us to define and assess the phenomena we've observed here.

The fact in this particular study that technology was the method that allowed us to single out a very specific community that – according to classical laws of statistics – already makes up a major part of the society, should be analyzed and reflected upon in its own right. It looks like we have two societies in one social system. We can clearly see the abovementioned cultural change in the phenomenon itself. The proposed interpretational approach, in my opinion, enables us to see that sharing cultural content and looking for alternative content circulations is nothing new! Modern technology has only reinforced that behavior; we could even say that it enabled an increasing number of people to adopt a lifestyle based on creativity and freedom.

What constitutes a circulation of cultural content? We might try to quote the – not that new – book *Wildlings From Our Hood. Anthropology of Youth Culture* written by Barbara Fatyga. In her book, the author described the "pretechnological" formation of alternative circulations of cultural content, citing the so-called "third circulation" as an example: "the third circulation – [...] can be described as a fairly autonomous subsystem of culture that exists in the form of fairly autonomous networks of senders and recipients that function in specific, often marginalized contexts. It circulates [...] the content in a different way (one that uses e.g. particular face-to-face contact, as well as modern technologies such as Internet and email). It's based on different value systems and their materialization in the form of cultural patterns and molds. And it's not about emphasizing its novelty or originality, but rather about the originality of the society's fabric – in Rorty's use of the term. A cultural subsystem, understood in this particular way, will realize itself primarily as a »circulation« - a circulation for cultural content. Therefore, it's an immensely dynamic cultural phenomenon. Significant contexts for that circulations are co-created by threads from various ideological frameworks and cultural patterns shaped by:

- entities in communication (their psychological, cultural, and social

characteristics);

- specific situations during which content transmission takes place (especially the rules of private and »public« discourse);

- ideological frameworks that determine what constitutes »hostile«, alien content and what's familiar and intimate

- established aesthetic and formal solutions

The actions that make all of this possible are crucial parts of the third circulation. In extreme cases, the action itself becomes a value – a mold, and more or less »fuzzy«, a cultural pattern.[68]

Thirteen years after the book was published, it's these extreme cases that have grown exponentially, all due to the technology that was available even back then, while the "products" of the described activities are slowly becoming autonomous creations, that enter new circulations and are still – as we can see – subject to that previously described, ever-growing circulation.

7. Final remarks

The research project we conducted was supposed to present, as precisely as possible, the phenomenon of the informal circulation of cultural content in Poland, and most of all – it was supposed to reveal the extent of said phenomenon. The survey corroborated the hypothesis that acquiring content in an informal way is very frequent among culturally active people. What might be surprising, however, is that this practice is nearly universal among active Internet users. What's equally important, the size of that circulation is much larger than the size of the official market – purchasing books, music, or movies is significantly less popular than borrowing books, sharing movies, or downloading files. Only mass broadcast media – television and radio – are

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68 B. Fatyga, Dzicy z naszej ulicy [Wildlings From Our Hood. Anthropology of Youth Culture], op.cit., p. 111-112.

more popular than the informal circulation. This confirms our hypothesis that the non-market circulation of content is a phenomenon that deserves much more attention from researchers, because it is an immensely important element of the cultural practices of Poles.

Secondly, the informal circulation is a phenomenon largely limited to the Internet. Using content in digital format takes place much more often than sharing physical media. Moreover, when compared to the rest of the population, the Internet users turned out to be extremely active consumers of culture. We might surmise, that lack of Internet access, being excluded from the digital society is linked with a generally low level of cultural activity. It turns out that the division into people who use the Internet (especially those who use it heavily) and the digitally excluded overlaps with the more fundamental division into culturally active people and those whose content consumption is limited to the offer of broadcast media. This difference is even more significant for our everyday practices than generational, educational, and residential differences – even though we should remember that to some degree all of them are linked.

Right now we should mention that centralized mass media, like the TV and radio, are basically absent from our survey. We haven't included them in our research, because the access model they offer, still based on watching or listening to a single set of programming, is so different from the models we analyzed – both formal and informal – wherein it's the user who decides what content to consume. We are aware that both TV and radio remain the primary channels of access to content for most of the Polish population. However, as the results of our research indicate, the established theoretical framework of the "informal economy," emphasizing the importance of alternative means of accessing cultural content, seems to be a good choice. We're not claiming that the role of radio and TV is in decline. What we're indicating, instead, is that parallel with the consumption of content mediated by centralized mass media we're seeing the rise of content circulation processes that fall outside of the reach of professional producers and distributors.

The universal character of informal practices among active Internet users is another

important conclusion drawn from our survey. While looking for people heavily involved with the informal circulation we have reached a group that actively participates in culture, simultaneously involved with a wide range of circulations. Active, regular Internet users are very interested in cultural content, and compared to the rest of the Polish population, engage with that content quite frequently. Once again, we'd like to emphasize the methodology issue – reaching this particular group was a result of using a web panel during the second stage of the project that made it mandatory for the interviewees to be active Internet users. We're convinced that this linkage should be explored further in subsequent research projects.

Another conclusion that we arrived at in our report might have some importance to the public debate on how Poles acquire cultural content – it's the observation that in most cases, the formal and informal circulations are not mutually exclusive alternative, but they complement each other. That's in accord with the theoretical concepts of cultural circulations that were formulated earlier, but differs significantly from the theses that are currently promoted in many published reports, which seem to suggest that both circulations are locked in a devastating struggle. Our research indicates that people interested in cultural content access that content and use it via multiple channels – both official and unofficial. There is a large group of people, however, whose members engage only with the informal circulation. We don't think that this group consists of people who decided against participating in the market distribution of content. According to us, the opposite process takes place – the informal circulations help to broaden the scale of cultural activity and content consumption.

Downloading, borrowing, and copying aren't simply an antithesis to purchase. It's also hard to draw a clear line between the sharing of content with friends and sharing it with strangers via the Internet. The Internet circulation and face-to-face sharing of content stored on physical media also aren't mutually exclusive. Although we haven't corroborated our hypothesis on downloaded content being shared via physical media with people who aren't active Internet users, we have, however, observed that Internet users share content in a wide variety of ways, and content circulates inside the household, as well as outside of it.

These observations constitute a challenge for both cultural policy and operations of business entities. Our survey has confirmed the assumption we mentioned at the beginning of the report, that nowadays, Internet users constitute an important part of the extended cultural industries and that they took over some of the capacities of professional broadcasters. Simultaneously, we can see how marginal the formal Internet circulation and the market circulation are in Poland – there's no good commercial selection of digital content available on the Internet, and there's a pronounced lack of public content as well. However, these forms of content distribution are engaged relatively often by active Internet users, which allows us to think that the importance of this particular circulation will rise. The tempo of its growth, however, will depend on the development of the selection aimed at Internet users.

We should also think about the role that technology plays in these phenomena. Although the informal circulation has been with us for a long time, there is no doubt that it was the Internet that enabled it to grow to such – this word might sound ironic in this context – industrial scales. An informal circulation this big allows us to talk about new cultural institutions – intermediaries taking on the form of content sharing networks, supported by social networks or peer-to-peer networks. Of course, the influence of technology is much more extensive, which is perfectly visible in the chapters on music and movies, both of them pointing out the transformations of the way we listen to and accumulate music or create collections.

The data we gathered are simply a starting point for such deliberations. We can only speculate on how the proportions between purchasing and other ways of accessing content would look like under different technological, economic, and legal conditions. Procuring credible data on that subject would be possible only through long-term panel studies, pointing out the trends in the relations between the formal and informal sphere – in relation to factors such as the degree of Internet usage and the development of the market offer, the latter of which was often considered unsatisfactory by many of our respondents. Further research is necessary to describe and understand the mechanisms that govern the choices between various circulations that are made by people who participate in them. Deeper understanding of the Poles'

participation in informal circulation will require qualitative research.

In our project, we have avoided the legal aspect on purpose, as it required branding some of the analyzed practices as illegal. This point of view dominates – at least according to us – the debate on the informal circulation of content and makes it harder to understand the cultural and social dimensions of such phenomena. It stigmatizes popular practices, thus disallowing evaluation of effects other that implied intellectual property theft and profit losses. It spews ready-made diagnoses, often unsupported by facts, when we really should be testing hypotheses. The results of our survey also point out one more reason for excluding the legal aspect from cultural research – assessing the legality of analyzed practices divides users into two separate groups: "good consumers" and "bad thieves." Meanwhile, our research indicates that the "pirates" make up the largest group of users of the formal, commercial circulation. The users' own perspective is also important – less than 10% of them consider practices related with the informal circulation evil, illegal, or immoral. Traditionally, we're supposed to treat people who download and share content as thieves consciously engaging in lawbreaking. Our research indicates, however, that people do not possess that kind of awareness. It's partly due to the fact that the legal status of many forms of engaging with the informal circulation is unclear, as well as due to the changes in value systems and the ethical dimension of circulating cultural content.

This report also avoids formulating judgments or cultural policy recommendations. Its primary goal was to provide data to people and institutions that are involved with drafting cultural policy. But we would like to close the report with one general recommendation: considering the extent of the informal circulation and its coexistence next to the formal circulation, cultural policy cannot be based on a binary separation of the two circulations, the people participating in them and stigmatization of one group. We also cannot base cultural policy on the assumption that one circulation will be replaced by the other and that we can't let that happen. If we do, then we will arrive at the conclusion that this substitution is furthered not only by the negatively-branded Internet phenomena, but also by the commonplace sharing of content in the household, and even the activity of public cultural institutions, the

latter also enabling us to access content via non-market means. And although we're probably not going to make libraries illegal, we're already facing situations where access to content that's allowed from the standpoint of the Polish legal system is hindered by technological instruments. The state, with its instruments that are supposed to regulate that sphere, has to look for balance between the interest of copyright owners and the public good. Favoring either side of the issue is completely unacceptable.

We think that cultural policy should be based on the assumption that multiple content circulations can coexist and might frequently overlap. And the goal of cultural policy should be the establishment of institutions and cultural frameworks that will harness these various circulations to foster creativity, as well as the possibility to use it, while remaining grounded in facts and considering the arguments of all involved parties.

Joe Karaganis: How Circulations of Culture Circulate

Joe Karaganis is Vice President at The American Assembly at Columbia University. His work focuses on digital convergence and cultural production, and has included research on broadband adoption, data policy, and intellectual property law. Most recently, he is the editor Media Piracy in Emerging Economies (2011) and co-author of Copy Culture in the US and Germany (forthcoming). Prior to joining the American Assembly, Karaganis spent 10 years as a program director at the Social Science Research Council.

I learned of the *Circulations of Culture* project in Spring 2011, when the Hungarian economist Bodo Balazs put me in touch with Alek Tarkowski. Coincidentally, I was also involved at the time with a group planning a broad survey on the informal digital media economy—a project that became *Copy Culture in the US and Germany*. Alek, Mirek Filiciak and I discussed the possibility of linking the two projects, but both projects were both too far along to make this feasible.   Given the innumerable choices that inform the preparation of a survey, I expected that, when we were done, we would find some interesting points of comparison between the two projects but not necessarily more. As I have learned in the past year, surveys are complicated to design and difficult to compare.

Reading the completed *Circulations of Culture* report was a bit of a revelation. It is clear that we are working on a fundamentally common project, to a degree I did not fully appreciate. Our engagement with many of the same underlying issues led us toward similar choices about research design and, ultimately, similar conclusions from our data. The Introduction to the *Circulations of Culture* report makes some of these connections explicit. It's gratifying, in particular, to see some of our earlier work—the *Media Piracy in Emerging Economies* report—find resonance with researchers working in other national and cultural contexts.

The larger contribution of the Introduction, however, is its account of the conceptual framework that connects not just our respective projects but those of a growing network of empirical researchers: the recognition that understanding the digital media environment requires understanding the role of informal modes of circulation

and production of cultural goods. That is the intellectual problem that brought many of us to this topic, via different traditions of sociological and anthropological thought. The Introduction ties many of these intellectual threads together. My own list would include the work of researchers like Ravi Sundaram, Brian Larkin, Susan Sell, and Peter Drahos.

As the Introduction also makes clear, this body of work shares, and continues to be motivated by, a related political problem: over the past two decades, the expansion of intellectual property law and enforcement has been built on a very simplistic account of these developments, produced primarily through industry-funded research. From our perspective, the intellectual poverty of this account—its many hidden assumptions, fake numbers, misrepresentation of economic interests, and intense moralizing—made it an irresistible target. The absence of a strong alternative analysis of the role of IP policy and informality, moreover, created an opening for research to be not just interesting but also useful in reframing political debates about the future of the Internet and digital culture.

Under these circumstances, Circulations of Culture makes both local and international contributions. The Polish focus of the work is important in shaping national conversations on IP and related media policies—subjects on which national governments retain important discretionary authority, and on which Poland is emerging as a powerful independent European voice.

The project's wider contribution is to the international body of research that is mapping how the global media economy works—and what happens, in particular, as the globalized trade in cultural goods meets the expanding infrastructure for digital production and consumption.   Poland's middle-income status with respect to the EU provides a valuable window on these dynamics because it requires engagement with issues of inequality in regional and global media markets. In day-to-day life, this inequality takes a very simple form: Poles are now integrated into a global media culture that relatively few can afford. The study's account of the nearly 2/3 of Poles who buy no cultural goods—no books, movie tickets, or music—is stark testimony to that fact. Despite rapidly rising incomes in the past two decades, prices for media

goods, relative to local incomes, remain much higher than in the "core" media markets of the US and western Europe. The resulting sense of cultural exclusion can be very powerful. In an era of cheap digital technology, it can also be easily overcome through informal channels. In our view, much of the phenomenon of "piracy" in middle and low-income countries can be traced to that disparity.

These dynamics are usually obvious to people living in middle and low-income countries. But they are almost completely absent from US and European debates on IP policy and enforcement, and—of recent interest to many Poles—from US and European-led efforts to develop new international mechanisms for IP regulation, such as the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA). Put simply, there are divergent interests in IP policy that need to recognized and integrated into the political conversation—not papered over by industry research and US government assurances that what's good for the Motion Picture Association of America and the Business Software Alliance is good for Poland. The US, for its part, never accepted these assurances when it was on the other end of balance of trade relationships—notably with the UK. To cite one of the better-known examples, the US pursuit of a "cheap books" strategy throughout the 19th century—a key component of the development of public literacy—was built on the refusal to enforce foreign copyrights. A Polish (or Brazilian or Indian) conversation on these issues today would probably reach different conclusions, but it should be informed by an understanding of those structural differences in the global media economy and by the matrix of actual Polish practices and attitudes. The *Circulations of Culture* study is a very valuable contribution to that conversation.

For these reasons, the boundaries between formal and informal media economies have proven to be a very rich terrain of inquiry and, in some respects, a politically consequential one. The large-scale European protests against ACTA that erupted in winter 2012 took up and amplified two elements of this critical perspective. Perhaps most visible was the demand for transparency and democratic accountability in policymaking—a demand juxtaposed to the secretive construction and potentially far-ranging obligations of the Agreement. Anti-ACTA sentiment became a channel, in this respect, for dissatisfaction with the wider democratic deficits of European

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governance.

Less explicit, but no less important in my view, was the use of this secretive process to target a prevalent and largely normalized form of access to culture in Eastern Europe—the copying, sharing, and downloading of media. These are the compensatory strategies that allowed young Poles, especially, to participate in the wider media culture in which they—and everyone else—now grow up. It is no accident, in this context, that the major anti-ACTA protests and first government rejections of the agreement came from Poland, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Romania, and Bulgaria—the economic periphery of Europe. The general call for "hands off the Internet" was inseparable from these demands for both political accountability and cultural participation—and very different from the ways in which the same cry signified in the US debates over the Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA) earlier that winter.

Given the growing body of survey work and independent research on these questions, it may be possible to exorcise some of the misconceptions that have long characterized the debate about IP policy and enforcement. *Circulations of Culture* touches on many of these, but the force of its conclusions are more apparent when read against other reports—our *Copy Culture* report, but also the wider array of recent work coming from academic, government, and industry sources.   I won't attempt an exhaustive list here, but would draw attention to a few important, common, and—I think—generalizable findings.

- Informal copying and downloading is shaped by different dynamics in high and low income groups—often within the same country.
- At the high end, informal copying and downloading is mostly complementary to purchasing—not a substitute for it. Heavy file sharers are among the best customers for *legal* media goods.
- At the low end, informal copying is often the only form of access to many kinds of cultural goods.
- In both contexts, high prices and limited availability are the main drivers of informal copying. Most of the time, the price and scarcity of these goods

reflect business decisions about how to maximize profits across global media markets—not national ones. In middle and low-income countries, this may make for good corporate policy but poor public policy.

- Large numbers of users are ready to pay for access that is cheap and convenient, and that allows them to share experiences with friends. Absent formal, legal means of doing so, users will find informal ones.

- Offline copying and sharing among friends is comparable in scale to online file sharing. Online enforcement, in this context, is limited to slowing the speed of circulation of new material. It does not affect the longer-term availability of copied material.

- Support for penalties for file sharing is lower than mainstream political debates would suggest: 59% in Germany and 51% in the US. Support for strong penalties such as disconnection from the Internet is very low—22% in Germany and 16% in the US.

- Digital culture—in both its formal and informal forms—is youth culture. For a preview of the long term pressures on policymaking, look at the very high rates of participation in copying and sharing among those under 30. In the US, 71%; Germany 72%; Poland 68%.

What would a debate about copyright and enforcement look like if it was organized around these findings? With the surprising reversals of SOPA and ACTA in the past year, perhaps we are beginning to find out.

Mike LInksvayer: With respect to informal cultures: document, understand, predict; policy last

Mike Linksvayer is a contributor to various free/libre/open movements. He was CTO and VP of Creative Commons from 2003-2012. In 2000 he co-founded Bitzi, an early mass collaboration/open data service used by contemporary filesharing clients.

This report is an important contribution to the all too new genre of research treating informal circulations of information as socially interesting phenomena to be accurately described rather than exploited for policy advocacy, whether pejorative or apologia in nature. Such accurate descriptions may help society understand what constitutes good policy, but are still problematic to the extent they are created and consumed for policy reasons rather than as social research.

Even with accurate descriptions, these at best provide indications, but not proof, of extent to which informal circulations substitute for and complement formal circulations. Nor are such questions, the bait of so much writing on the subject of filesharing, the most interesting for either policy or the study of culture. One of the most enjoyable and informative aspects of this study is its focus on the nuances of the culture and market in a particular country, and its historic context. If I may grotesquely exploit this context a bit: would anyone consider the most interesting social and economic aspects of informal circulations during the communist period to be the extent to which these circulations impacted the output and employment prospects of state propagandists?

I submit that the anthropology of informal circulations, in either context, is more interesting and challenging, than conjecture about their effect on "industry". But this anthropology may help build intuitions about what are the first order questions important for policy to consider, even if not providing proofs of effects on entities that deeply influence policy. For example, access and freedom.

It is my hope that the genre of this report will continue to grow rapidly, for informal circulations are changing rapidly. As they are hard to study, every temporal and cultural context not surveyed is a crucial link in the history of human culture that is

lost forever.

Consider three observations made in this report:

- "sharing digital content outside of the Internet is negligible"
- "over the age of 50 the percentage of [active Internet] users in the population drops dramatically and we thus did not include them in the sample"
- "the data collected in our country clearly points out that the development of new communications technologies has not resulted in a radical increase in bottom-up creativity"

Each of these will certainly change in interesting ways, e.g.:

- "All culture on a thumb drive" each day comes closer to reality, with capacities increasing and prices falling quickly enough that differences in cultural context and infrastructure could swamp a 3x or even greater difference in wealth; in other words, physical sharing of digital content may become pertinent again, and it could easily happen first outside of the wealthiest geographies.
- The current generations of active Internet users will continue to use the net as they age; will even younger generations be even more connected? And don't discount slow but steadily increasing use by long-lived older generations. How will each of these effect and create new informal circulations?
- Bottom-up creativity may well increase, but also we have to consider, especially with respect to informal circulations, that curation is a form of creativity. What is the future of peer-produced cultural relevance (popularity) and preservation?

Relatedly, if I may close with questions that may be interpreted as ones of policy: How does and will informality affect bottom-up production, including of relevance and preservation? How does informality affect the ability of researchers to document and understand the development of our culture? For it is impossible to fully escape the underlying social policy question by characterizing an activity with the relatively neutral term of "informal": should this activity be legalized, or crushed?

Information about people involved in the project

Mirosław Filiciak – media expert, works at the Warsaw School of Social Sciences and Humanities. Researches the influence of networked digital media on cultural practices and social relationship. Headed the "Youth and the Media" research project. Editor of the "Popular Culture" quarterly and co-author of the "Culture 2.0" project.

Head of the „Circulations of Culture" research project, creator of its theoretical foundations, co-author of the report.

Justyna Hofmokl – doctor of sociology, works at Digital Center Project: Poland. Author of the book "Internet as the New Commons." Involved for many years in the popularization of openness in culture, science, and education in Poland. Introduced the Creative Commons licenses in Poland in collaboration with Alek Tarkowski. Worked for the European Commission. Interested in the influence of new technologies on social changes.

Involved in preparation and execution of the "Circulations of Culture" research project, co-author of the report.

Agata Jałosińska – anthropologist, student at the Institute of Ethnology and Cultral Anthropology at the University of Warsaw. Researches open model of cooperation and the creative dimensions of applying new technologies. Organizer of the Culture 2.0 camps: Medialab Chrzelice and Medialab Lublin. Collaborated with the New Media Foundation. Trainer and cultural organizer.

In the "Circulations of Culture" project she prepared the analysis of existing literature.

Paweł Stężycki – graduate of the Warsaw School of Economics, where he majored in management and marketing, and project management. While at Millward Brown SMG/KRC, he spent six years running research projects focused on new media and technology.

In the "Circulations of Culture" project, he was tasked with carrying out the Millward Brown SMG/KRC side of the project.

Alek Tarkowski – doctor of sociology, director at Digital Center Project: Poland, co-

founder and coordinator of the Creative Commons Poland project, vice-president of the Informatization Council, from 2008 to 2011 served on the Board of Strategic Advisers, co-author of the "Culture 2.0" project. Involved in the popularization of open model of production and content sharing in Poland, researches the social and cultural impact of digital technologies.

Involved in the preparation and execution of the "Circulations of Culture" research project, co-author of the report.

Przemysław Zieliński – sociologist, co-author of multiple research and applied research projects on the sociology of youth cultures and lifestyles. As a member of a research team and a consultant, he has been collaborating with the Live Culture Observatory.

Involved in the preparation and execution of the "Circulations of Culture" research project.