

## Report on the MyKnet.org and Facebook Online Survey, April-December 2011<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

This report presents and discusses findings of an online survey which aims to contribute to the understanding of First Nation online practices. By looking at two popular web services, MyKnet.org, a regional First Nation homepage environment, and Facebook, the global leader in online social networking, it becomes clear that for the First Nation people of northwestern Ontario the internet is the most important communication medium. These two online services have become ubiquitous media technologies that are used to connect and represent people in this remote region. They are well integrated into people's daily lives and practices; not only as communication tools, but also as subjects of discussion. As participants to this online survey (N=117) indicate, the popularity of MyKnet.org and Facebook is mainly due to the fact that those online services are easy and free to use for keeping in touch with family and friends. Besides maintaining and fostering social connections, people also utilize MyKnet.org and Facebook to share stories about cultural activities as well as music and videos, which is considered an important cultural practice. Survey results suggest further that while Facebook has replaced MyKnet.org in terms of online communicating and connecting, the Aboriginal online service is still being used for creating and designing web presences as well as for local information gathering and sharing.

### 1) Introduction

The main objective of this online survey is to find out how Aboriginal people in northwestern Ontario use the personal homepage service MyKnet.org ([www.myknet.org](http://www.myknet.org)), which is provided by the First Nation organization and internet service program Keewaytinook Okimakanak's Kuhkenah Network (KO-KNET<sup>2</sup>, [www.knet.ca](http://www.knet.ca)), in relation to Facebook ([www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)), the World's largest social networking site.<sup>3</sup>

MyKnet.org was set up between 1998 and 2000 to provide in particular young First Nation people of the Keewaytinook Okimakanak (KO) Tribal Council with an open and commercial-free space on the World Wide Web. Today different age groups all across northwestern Ontario and in some of the neighboring regions of Manitoba use MyKnet.org, which continues to be a dedicated First Nation internet service.<sup>4</sup>

This survey follows an online survey that was conducted in 2007, and to which 1,246 people

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<sup>1</sup> For citation: Budka, P. 2012. Report on the MyKnet.org and Facebook Online Survey, April-December 2011. <http://meeting.knet.ca/mp19/course/view.php?id=7>

<sup>2</sup> KO-KNET is the new name for K-Net, Keewaytinook Okimakanak's internet program. Since this survey was already created in April 2011, the old name K-Net was used in the questionnaire and is hence also being used in discussing the results.

<sup>3</sup> I am grateful to K-Net/KO-KNET and Keewaytinook Okimakanak Research Institute (KORI) representatives for their support and help to generate this survey. For their important feedback on the survey report, I thank Susan O'Donnell from the University of New Brunswick and KO-KNET's Brian Beaton.

<sup>4</sup> The history and development of MyKnet.org is being discussed in Budka, P., Bell, B., Fiser, A. 2009. MyKnet.org: How Northern Ontario's First Nation communities made themselves at home on the World Wide Web. *The Journal of Community Informatics*, 5(2). Accessed: January 23, 2012: <http://ci-journal.net/index.php/ciej/article/view/568/450>

participated.<sup>5</sup> In 2007, the use of Facebook was already on the rise among MyKnet.org users, but it still was only one of several social networking sites such as Bebo, Piczo or MySpace. Since then Facebook has outgrown those other providers to become the global leader in online social networking, with almost 800 million users worldwide in December 2011 (cf. <http://www.internetworldstats.com/facebook.htm>).

## 2) Methods and Questionnaire

This survey was created, tested and evaluated at the beginning of April 2011. Draft versions of the questionnaire were discussed with representatives of KO-KNET and KORI (Keewaytinook Okimakanak Research Institute, <http://research.knet.ca/>).

The survey questionnaire basically builds on the 2007 questionnaire, which then reached a considerably large group of people. The questionnaire is relatively brief to keep participants interested and focused. An introductory statement informs participants:

- a) about the topic of and the motivation for the survey;
- b) that the collected data is handled confidentially and for scientific purpose only;
- c) about the person who set the survey up and how to contact;
- d) participants are also asked to promote the survey among friends and family members.

Open and closed questions are used to keep the questionnaire interesting and dynamic to survey respondents and to cover a wider range of issues. Furthermore, participants are able to skip questions and/or quit the whole survey at any point they choose. This of course results in different total numbers of responses.

The questionnaire is constructed around four main areas of interest:

- 1) personal motivations and reasons for using MyKnet.org and Facebook;
- 2) the meaning of culture and social connections in the usage of MyKnet.org and Facebook;
- 3) the usage of MyKnet.org and Facebook in relation to other communication media and the time people spend using them;
- 4) demographic data of survey participants.

The detailed questions are listed in the following section that discusses the survey's results. The questionnaire was implemented with SurveyMonkey ([www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)), a web-based tool which allows for the creation and processing of online surveys.

To reach as many potential respondents as possible, this online survey has been advertised on the MyKnet.org entry page ([www.myknet.org](http://www.myknet.org)) and it was also promoted in the “Announcements” box of the K-Net/KO-KNET website ([www.knet.ca](http://www.knet.ca)). In addition, the survey was promoted by sending out personal e-mails to participants of the 2007 survey who left their e-mail addresses for participating to possible follow-up surveys and questions.<sup>6</sup> The link of the survey was furthermore posted on the Facebook pages of the First Nation communities of Sandy Lake and Lac Seul.

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<sup>5</sup> Budka, P. 2008. Report on the MyKnet.org Online Survey, August-November 2007. <http://meeting.knet.ca/mp19/course/view.php?id=7>

Considering that the Kenora District, to which most First Nation communities in northwestern Ontario belong, has an overall Aboriginal population of about 26,000, the total number of participants to this first online survey is particularly impressive (Statistics Canada. 2007. *Kenora, Ontario (Code3560) (table). 2006 Community Profiles. 2006 Census*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 92-591-XWE. Ottawa. Released March 13, 2007: <http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/prof/92-591/index.cfm?Lang=E>)

<sup>6</sup> 60 of the 213 people who were contacted could not be reached due to wrong or non-existing e-mail addresses.

### 3) Findings

117 people participated in the survey between 15 April and 23 December 2011.<sup>7</sup> 78% of respondents completed the whole survey by clicking the button “done” at the end. Since participants have been able to skip questions or to quit the survey, not all of the questions have been answered. The *total number of respondents*, therefore, varies from question to question, which is indicated in brackets at the end of each question ( $N^1=...$ ). Questions with multiple possible answers also indicate the *total number of answers* ( $N^2=...$ ).

This report presents, and briefly discusses, rounded results and not all data collected through the online survey. Data has been selected that is of particular relevance and importance for answering the main questions of this survey (see section 2). The charts, which are added to most sections and questions respectively, contain the detailed information.

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<sup>7</sup> Since participation has been comparatively low, the online survey is still open and it is still being promoted on the MyKnet.org website.

*3.1) Personal motivations and reasons for using MyKnet.org and Facebook.*

3.1.1) Do you have a K-Net e-mail address? (N<sup>1</sup>=114)

94% of survey participants state that they have a K-Net e-mail address, which was necessary to sign up for a MyKnet.org homepage till 2011. Since then it is possible to get a MyKnet.org homepage without having a K-Net/KO-KNET e-mail address. The K-Net e-mail address used to contributed to the verification of a user's identity. Only people who's identity is verified by a K-Net/KO-KNET service employee are allowed to sign up for a personal homepage. 6% report that they do not have a K-Net e-mail address. This is mainly because people have forgotten their passwords and hence cannot access their accounts.

3.1.2) Do you have other e-mail addresses? (N<sup>1</sup>=114)

25% of respondents say they do not have another e-mail address. 75% have e-mail addresses with other providers. Most popular are the two commercial e-mail providers Yahoo! Mail and Microsoft Hotmail.

3.1.3) Do you have your own MyKnet.org homepage? (N<sup>1</sup>=115)

95% of survey participants have their own homepage with MyKnet.org. 5% of participants report that they do not have a MyKnet.org homepage, mainly because they lost their password to access and edit it.

3.1.4) Do you have your own Facebook profile? (N<sup>1</sup>=113)

95% of participants state that they have a Facebook profile. That leaves 5% without a Facebook profile.

3.1.5) Do you have other homepages and/or profiles? (N<sup>1</sup>=113)

70% of participants have no other homepages or profiles. 30% say that they also have an online presence with another service provider; Bebo (<http://www.bebo.com/>) and Piczo (<http://www.piczo.com/>) are the most popular alternatives.

3.1.6) How did you hear about MyKnet.org? (N<sup>1</sup>=113)

36% of survey respondents did hear about MyKnet.org from their friends. Family members and relatives (26%) as well as the K-Net website (20%, [www.knet.ca](http://www.knet.ca)) were other important sources to learn about the homepage service.

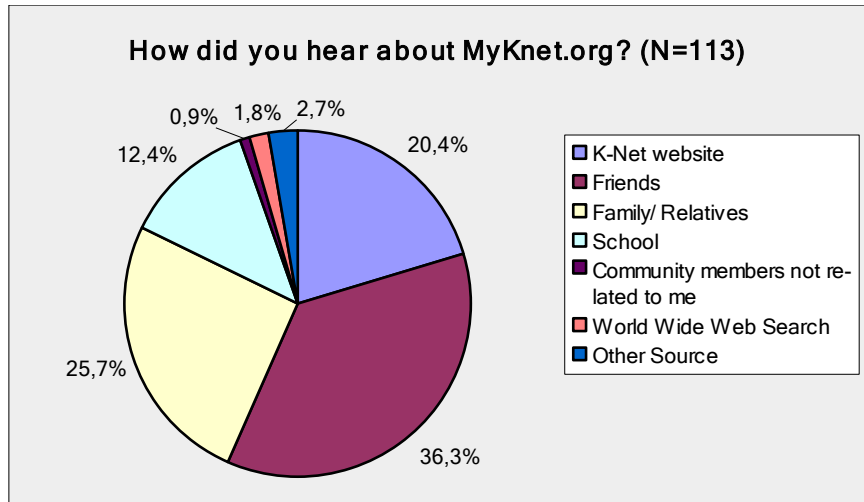


Fig. 1. Learn about MyKnet.org

3.1.7) How did you hear about Facebook? (N<sup>1</sup>=113)

A majority of 63% of respondents report that they heard about Facebook from their friends. Family members and relatives (23%) were the next important sources to learn about the social networking site.

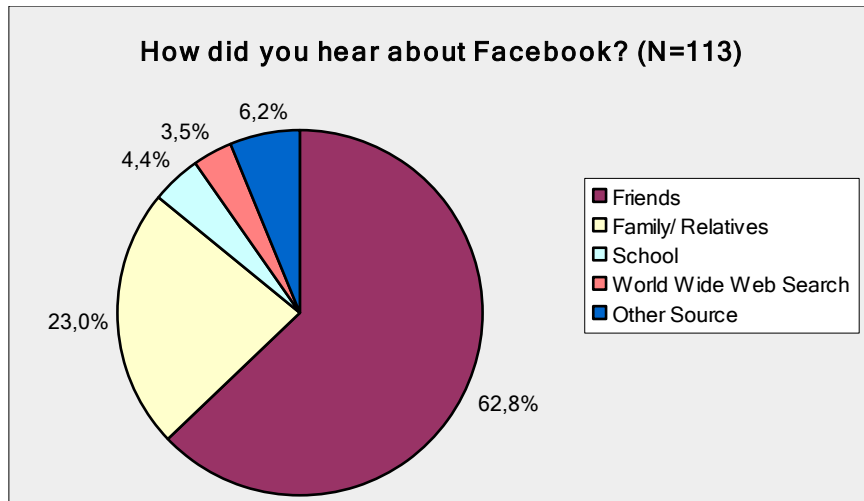


Fig. 2. Learn about Facebook

3.1.8) How long do you have your MyKnet.org homepage? (N<sup>1</sup>=114)

47% of survey participants got their MyKnet.org homepage between 2003 and 2006. 28% even have had their homepage for more than eight years; whereas 16% signed up for their page within the last five years.

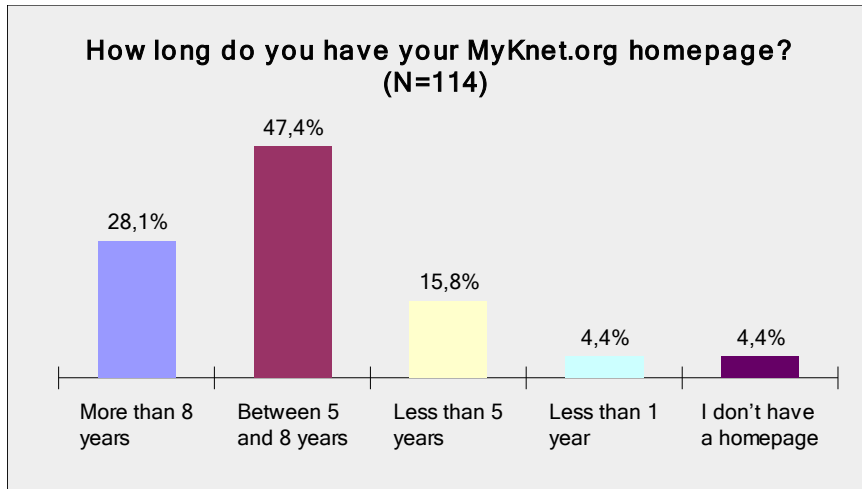


Fig. 3. Age of MyKnet.org homepages

3.1.9) How long do you have your Facebook profile? (N<sup>1</sup>=114)

A majority of 56% of participants report that they got their Facebook profile between 2007 and 2009. 14% have had their profile for more than four years; the same percentage of respondents (14%) signed up within the last two years.

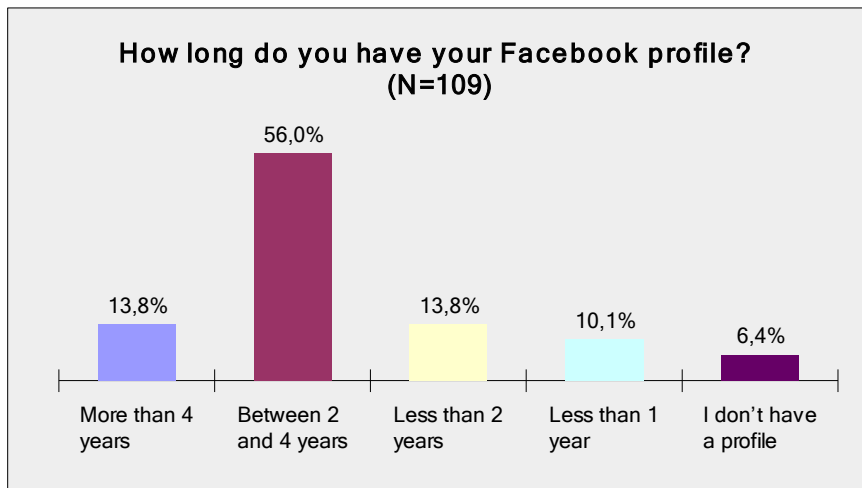


Fig. 4. Age of Facebook profiles

3.1.10) Why are you using MyKnet.org? (N<sup>1</sup>=114; multiple answers possible, N<sup>2</sup>=246)

Most survey participants use MyKnet.org to keep in contact with family and friends (30% of answers). This is followed by browsing through MyKnet.org homepages (20%) and improving HTML and homepage design skills (17%). To have a personal homepage on the World Wide Web is another popular reason why people use MyKnet.org (14%). Since users have to sign up for the service with their real names, which then are displayed in the domain name of their MyKnet.org homepage (firstname.lastname.myknet.org), it is easy to locate other people's pages.

Respondents could choose from answers that reflect the technical possibilities and features of MyKnet.org, such as coding and designing homepages.

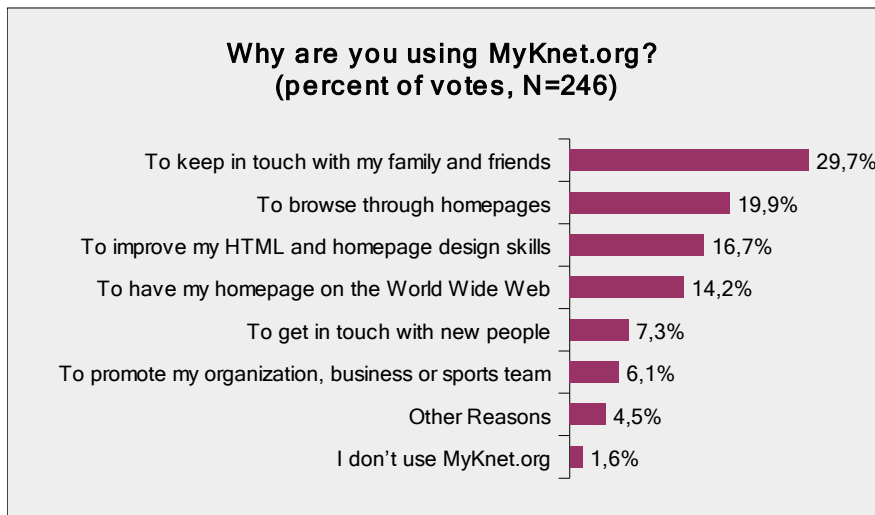


Fig. 5. Reasons for using MyKnet.org

3.1.11) Why are you using Facebook? (N<sup>1</sup>=112; multiple answers possible, N<sup>2</sup>=276)

Facebook is used mainly to keep in touch with family and friends (35% of answers). People report that they also use Facebook for sharing content (17%) and to get in touch with new people (16%). Looking at and browsing through other users profile is the next popular activity in Facebook (13%).

Again, respondents could choose from answers that reflect the technical possibilities and features of Facebook, such as sharing content.

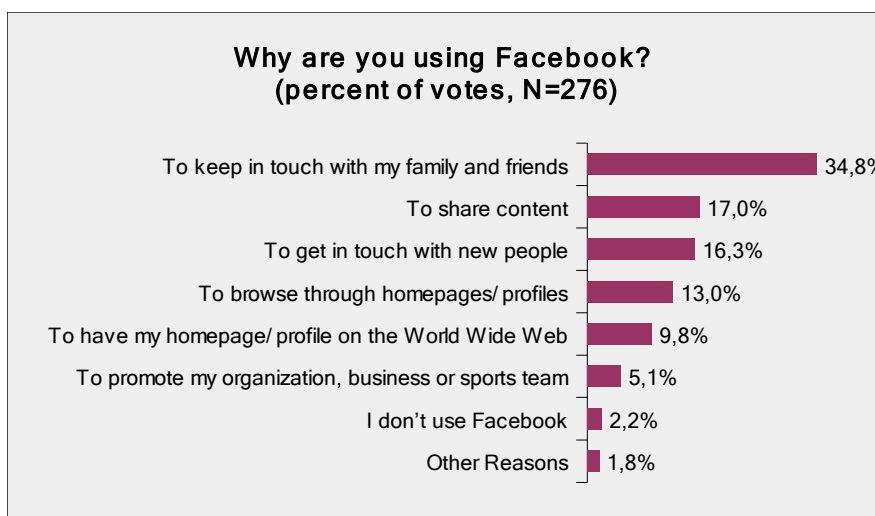


Fig. 6. Reasons for using Facebook

3.1.12) Please name three things you like about MyKnet.org. (N<sup>1</sup>=100)

There are many different things people like about MyKnet.org that can be summarized as follows:

- 1) it is easy to use;
- 2) it is a free and dedicated First Nation service;
- 3) it provides the possibility to express oneself;
- 4) it connects people;
- 5) it allows users to share information with stories and pictures;
- 6) it allows users to learn HTML and to improve their design skills.

And in the words of some survey respondents:

“... it is so close to home communities ...”

“Sharing my thoughts, sharing my feelings, ...”

“Improving my HTML skills, Sharing music, photos and updated notes.”

“... stay connected to family and friends ...”

“... native facebook ...”

“... it's not too complicated for those who haven't used a computer.”

3.1.13) Please name three things you like about Facebook. (N<sup>1</sup>=96)

People like many things about Facebook that can be summarized as follows:

- 1) it is easy to use;
- 2) it is a free service;
- 3) it provides applications to communicate and play;
- 4) it connects people;
- 5) it allows for meeting new people;
- 6) it allows users to share information and content.

In the words of some survey respondents:

“Stay in touch with family, it's free, and it's easy to use.”

“Chat with friend, check my wall to see if someone posted (on) my wall and check other people's walls.”

“Meeting new people, the apps and quizzes ...”

“... it's facebook.”

“... you can have as many friends as you want ...”

“... most people use it.”



3.1.14) Please name three things you don't like about MyKnet.org. (N<sup>1</sup>=88)

When using MyKnet.org people particularly do not like that:

- 1) people leave hate messages and swear in C-Boxes which are used on many homepages<sup>8</sup>;
- 2) people create and post offensive content;
- 3) the provided technical features and tools have their limitations;
- 4) no chat or interactive communication feature is provided.

To quote some survey participants:

“Haters on cboxes...”

“Rude comments, swear words.”

“1. Isolated feeling, 2. Lack of chat, 3. Lack of connections to others.”

“Static layout, ...”

“Some people doesn't use as much as they did before... maybe everyone is on facebook now.”

3.1.15) Please name three things you don't like about Facebook. (N<sup>1</sup>=84)

Survey participants report that they particularly don't like about Facebook that:

- 1) it is very big and privacy is hard to keep;
- 2) it is commercially oriented and advertisements are displayed;
- 3) technical features and applications sometimes don't work.

And to quote some survey participants:

“... everybody reads what you're doing on line ...”

“It is too broad, its not myknet.org, its too commercial.”

“1. nosy people, 2. random adds, 3. moms scary naughty posts ...”

“1. takes tooooo much of your time, 2. can get viruses easily, 3. the chat is kind of broken now.”

“Some of their apps don't work ...”

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<sup>8</sup> “Communication boxes” or “c-boxes” are software applications, which can be integrated into websites and homepages to allow visitors for anonymously posting messages.

3.2) *The meaning of culture and social connections in the usage of MyKnet.org and Facebook.*

3.2.1) How do you celebrate your culture on MyKnet.org? (N<sup>1</sup>=97; multiple answers possible, N<sup>2</sup>=167)

A majority of survey respondents report that they celebrate their culture by sharing stories about social activities such as hunting, fishing as well as family and community events (37% of answers). The sharing of music and videos via MyKnet.org homepages is also considered a popular cultural activity (24%). But some people also say that they do not celebrate their culture on MyKnet.org (17%). One participant, for instance, writes, “I never did. Don't speak Ojibway. :-(-”

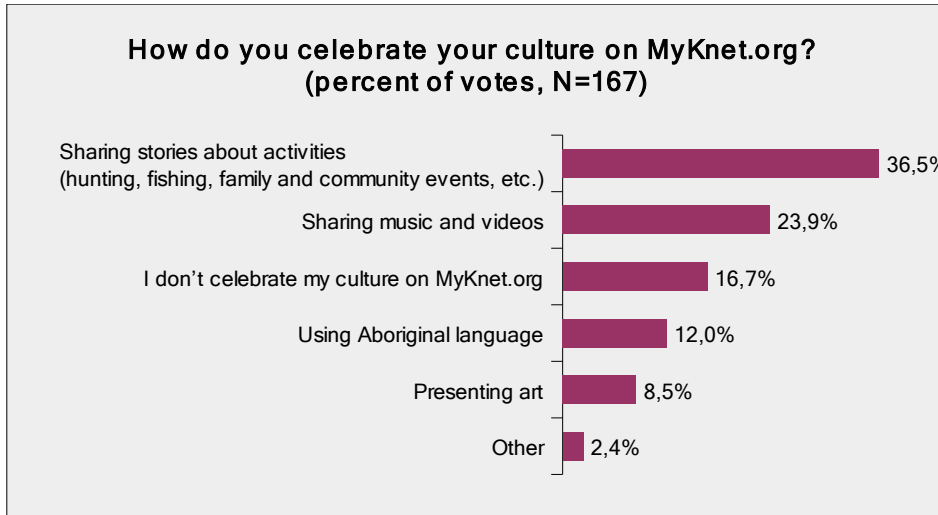


Fig. 7. Culture on MyKnet.org

3.2.2) How do you celebrate your culture on Facebook? (N<sup>1</sup>=95; multiple answers possible, N<sup>2</sup>=163)

Most survey participants celebrate their culture on Facebook by sharing stories about social activities such as hunting, fishing as well as family and community events (34% of answers). Another popular cultural activity is the sharing of music and videos via Facebook (20%). Again, some people report that they do not celebrate their culture on Facebook (21%).

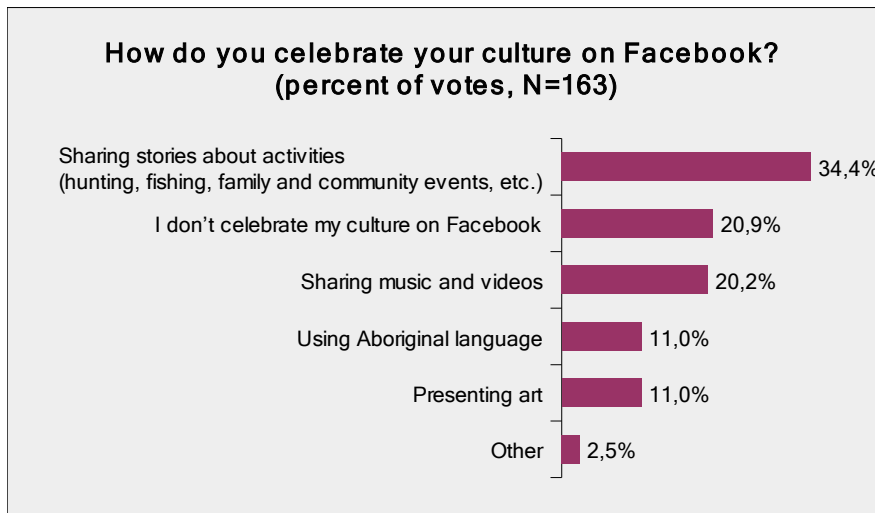


Fig. 8. Culture on Facebook

3.2.3) Who do you link your MyKnet.org homepage to? (N<sup>1</sup>=97; multiple answers possible, N<sup>2</sup>=186)

The vast majority of survey participants state that they link their MyKnet.org homepage to friends (31% of answers) and members of their families (30%). There are also people who say that they do not link their homepage to anyone else's (12%).

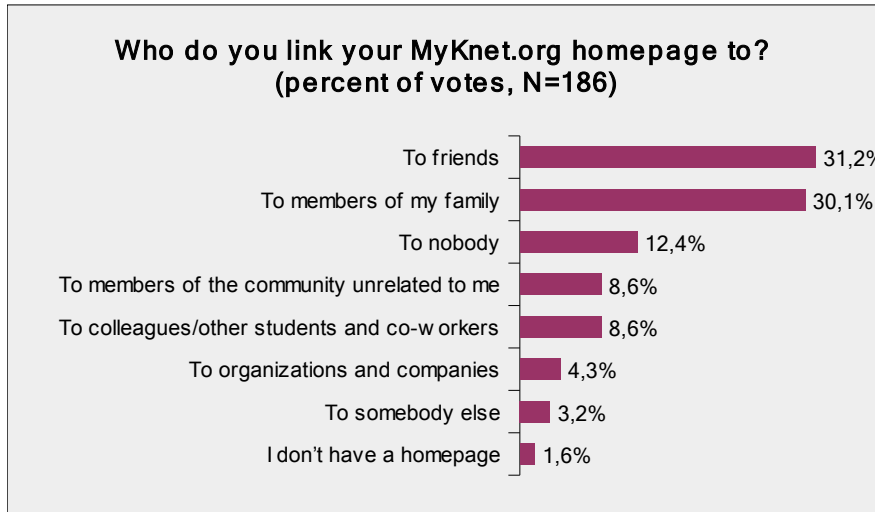


Fig. 9. Connections on MyKnet.org

3.2.4) Who are your “friends” on Facebook? (N<sup>1</sup>=95; multiple answers possible, N<sup>2</sup>=298)

Respondents report that most of their “friends” on Facebook are friends (27% of answers), family members (26%), unrelated community members (20%) and colleagues in school and at work (15%). There is hardly anybody with no friends on Facebook (1%).

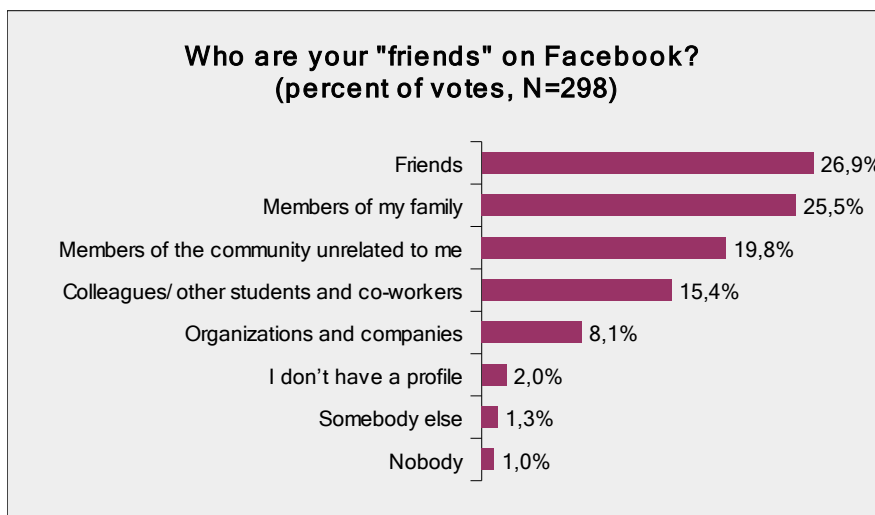


Fig. 10. Connections on Facebook

3.2.5) Who do you talk with about MyKnet.org? (N<sup>1</sup>=96; multiple answers possible, N<sup>2</sup>=160)

MyKnet.org is a subject that is discussed between friends (33% of answers) and family members (26%). While some survey participants prefer not to talk about MyKnet.org at all (19%).

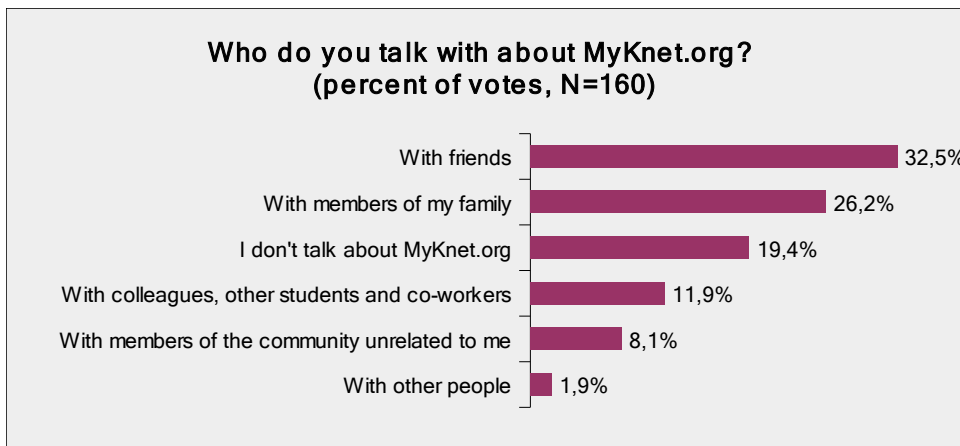


Fig. 11. People to talk about MyKnet.org

3.2.6) Who do you talk with about Facebook? (N<sup>1</sup>=94; multiple answers possible, N<sup>2</sup>=207)

People talk about Facebook with their friends (36% of answers) and family members (28%). Facebook is also an issue that is being discussed with unrelated community members (16%) and with colleagues at school and work (12%). One participant comments, “What kind of stupid question is that? Facebook is the new world ... everyone is connected to Facebook.” Nevertheless, several respondents state that they do not talk about Facebook (9%).

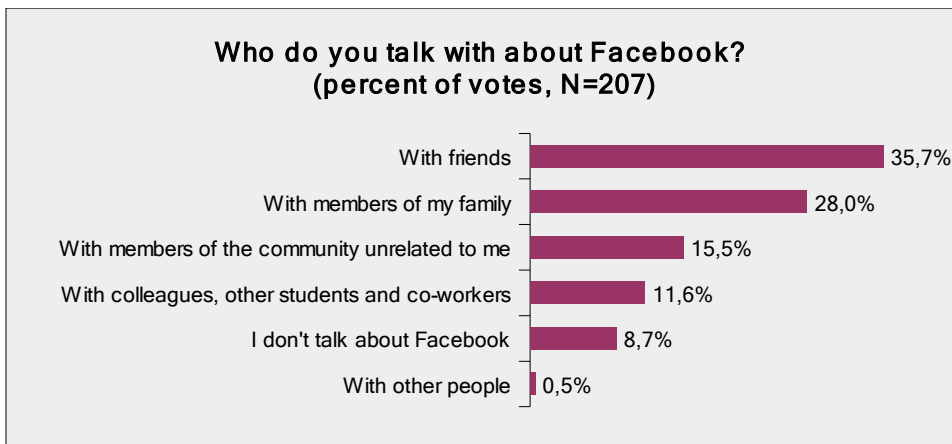


Fig. 12. People to talk about Facebook

3.2.7) Where do you talk about MyKnet.org? (N<sup>1</sup>=93; multiple answers possible, N<sup>2</sup>=203)

Survey respondents say that they talk about MyKnet.org primarily at home (23% of answers) and on, respectively through, the internet (20%). MyKnet.org related issues are also being talked about at work (14%) and at school (11%). The telephone is another communication medium to discuss MyKnet.org (9%). Again, a couple of participants state that they do not talk about MyKnet.org (16%).

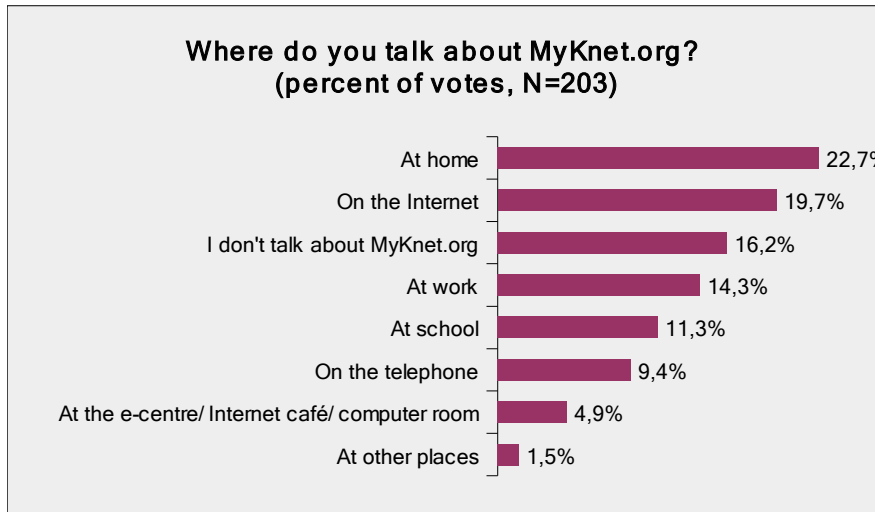


Fig. 13. Places to talk about MyKnet.org

3.2.8) Where do you talk about Facebook? (N<sup>1</sup>=94; multiple answers possible, N<sup>2</sup>=283)

Survey participants report that they talk about Facebook primarily at home (22% of answers) and on, respectively through, the internet (19%). Facebook is furthermore being discussed at work (15%) and at school (11%). The telephone is also used to discuss Facebook related topics (16%). Relatively few participants say that they do not talk about Facebook at all (7%). One respondent explains, “The first rule about Knet/Facebook, you don't talk about Knet/Facebook. The second rule about Knet/Facebook, you don't talk about Knet/Facebook.”<sup>9</sup>

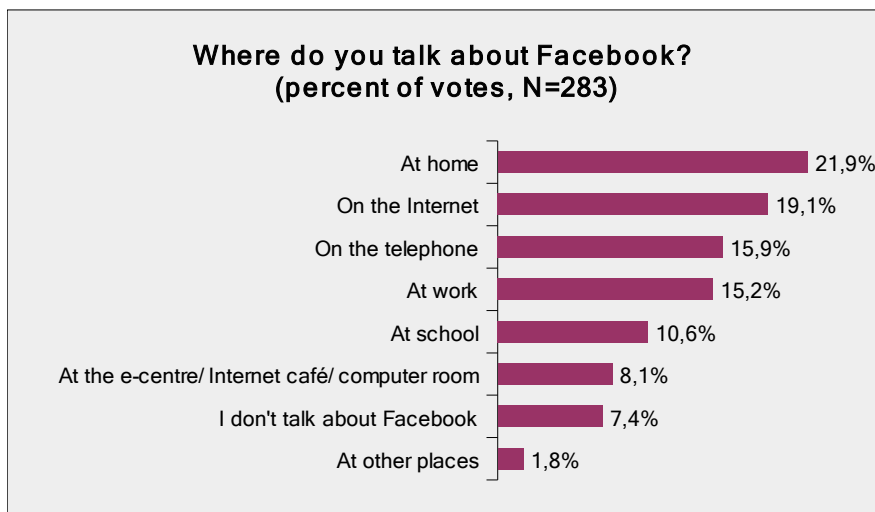


Fig. 14. Places to talk about Facebook

<sup>9</sup> The survey respondent probably means MyKnet.org, the homepage service provided by K-Net/KO-KNET.

3.2.9) Where is the computer from which you usually up-date your MyKnet.org homepage / Facebook profile? (N<sup>1</sup>=96)

MyKnet.org homepages and Facebook profiles are predominantly up-dated from computers situated in the homes of survey participants (80%). 7% says that they up-date their personal pages and profiles at the work place. Only 2% use public access points, such as e-centers or public libraries, to maintain their online presence.

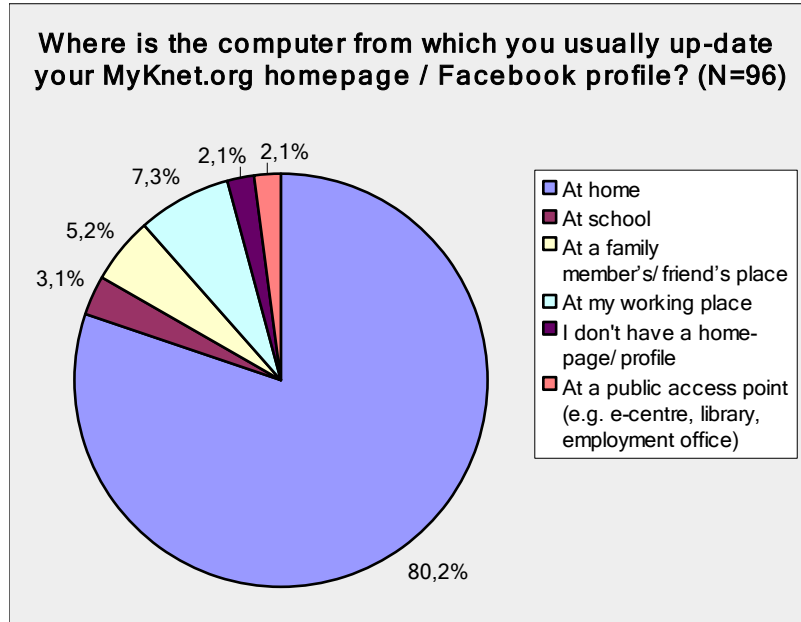


Fig. 15. Location of computer to up-date MyKnet.org homepage / Facebook profile

3.2.10) Who is helping you to up-date your MyKnet.org homepage / Facebook profile? (N<sup>1</sup>=95; multiple answers possible, N<sup>2</sup>=100)

The great majority of respondents state that they do not need help for up-dating their homepages and profiles (83% of answers). Only few get help from family members (8%) and friends (4%) to maintain their web presence.

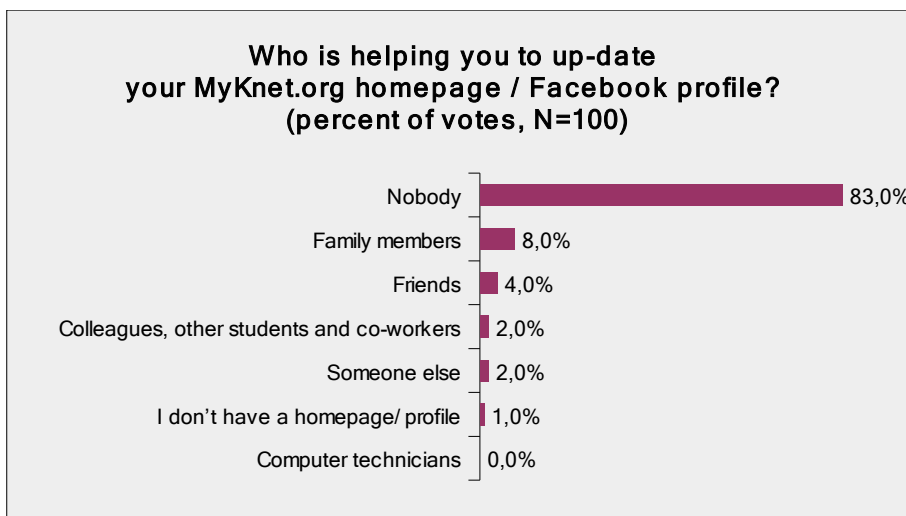


Fig. 16. Help to up-date MyKnet.org homepage / Facebook profile

3.2.11) How many people in your community do you know who have their own MyKnet.org page? (N=95)

56% of survey participants know more than 100 people in their community who have their own MyKnet.org homepages. Only few know no one with a MyKnet.org page in their community (1%).

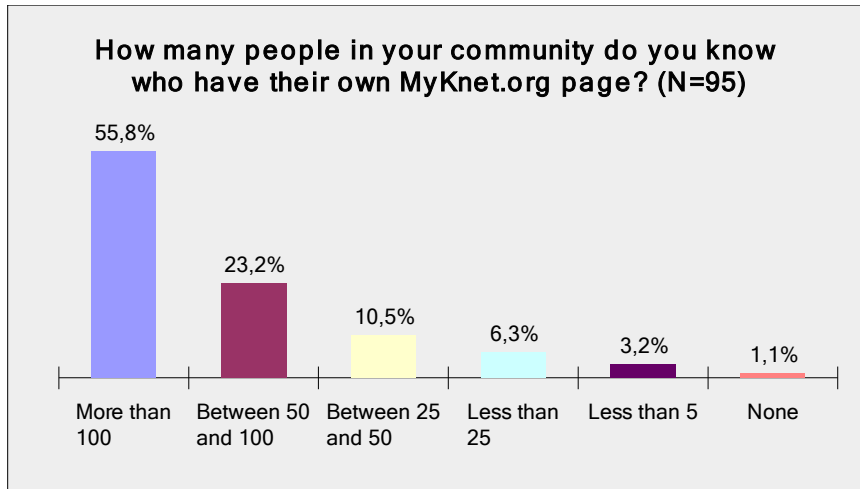


Fig. 17. MyKnet.org homepages in communities

3.2.12) How many people in your community do you know who have their own Facebook profile? (N=95)

A vast majority of respondents know more than 100 people in their community who have their own Facebook profiles (86%); and there is nobody who doesn't know somebody with a Facebook profile.

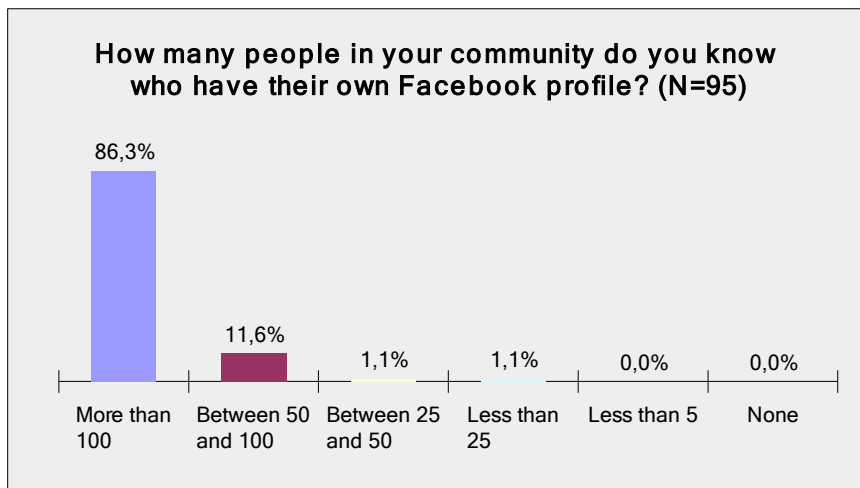


Fig. 18. Facebook profiles in communities

3.3) *MyKnet.org and Facebook in relation to other communication media and usage time.*

3.3.1) Please rank the following media according to their importance to you! (N<sup>1</sup>=88; from 1-very important to 10-not important)

The internet is the most important (communication) medium for survey respondents (median ranking of 2.7), followed by community radio (4.4), cable and satellite television (4.9) and the telephone (5). Cell phones (6.2) and video games (6.8) are rated as least important media.

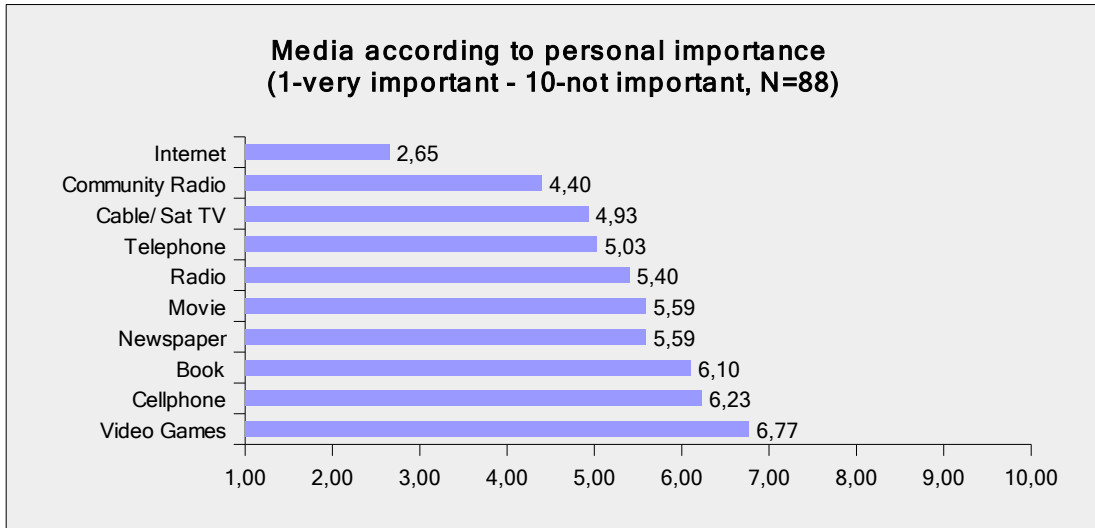


Fig. 19. Importance of media



3.3.2) How often do you up-date your MyKnet.org homepage? (N<sup>1</sup>=91)

MyKnet.org users are up-dating their homepages mainly “several times a month” (22%) or at least “once a month” (22%). 17% of survey respondents report that they up-date “once a week”. While 8% of participants say that they up-date their homepage several times daily, 7% state that they do not up-date at all.

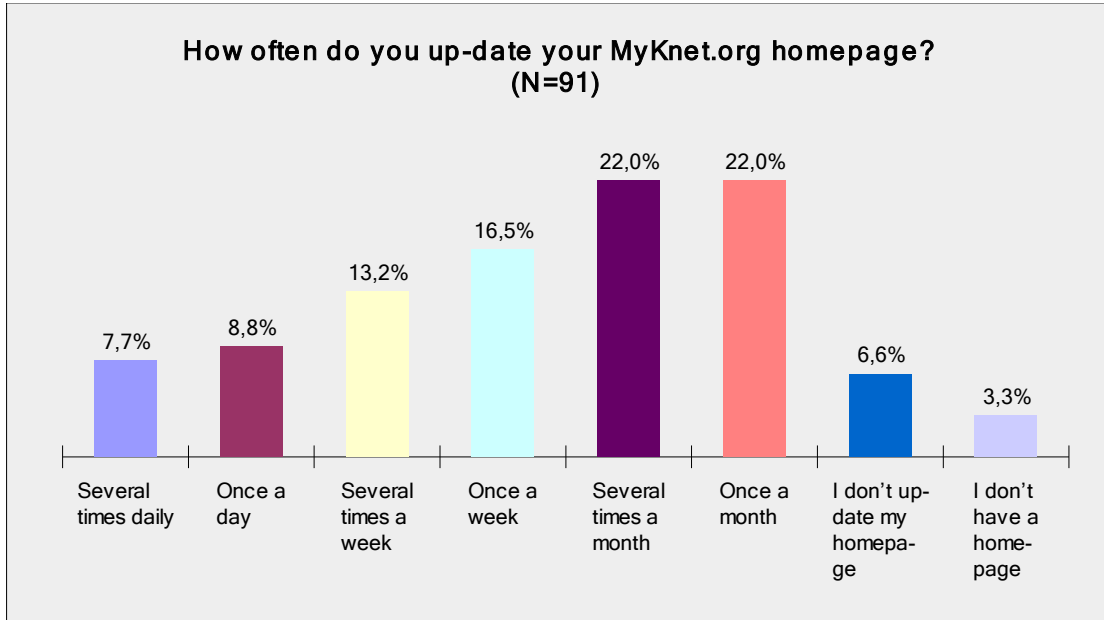


Fig. 20. Updating MyKnet.org

3.3.3) How often do you up-date your Facebook profile? (N<sup>1</sup>=91)

42% of survey participants say that they up-date their Facebook profile several times a day; and 25% up-date it at least “once a day”. Only 1% do not up-date at all.

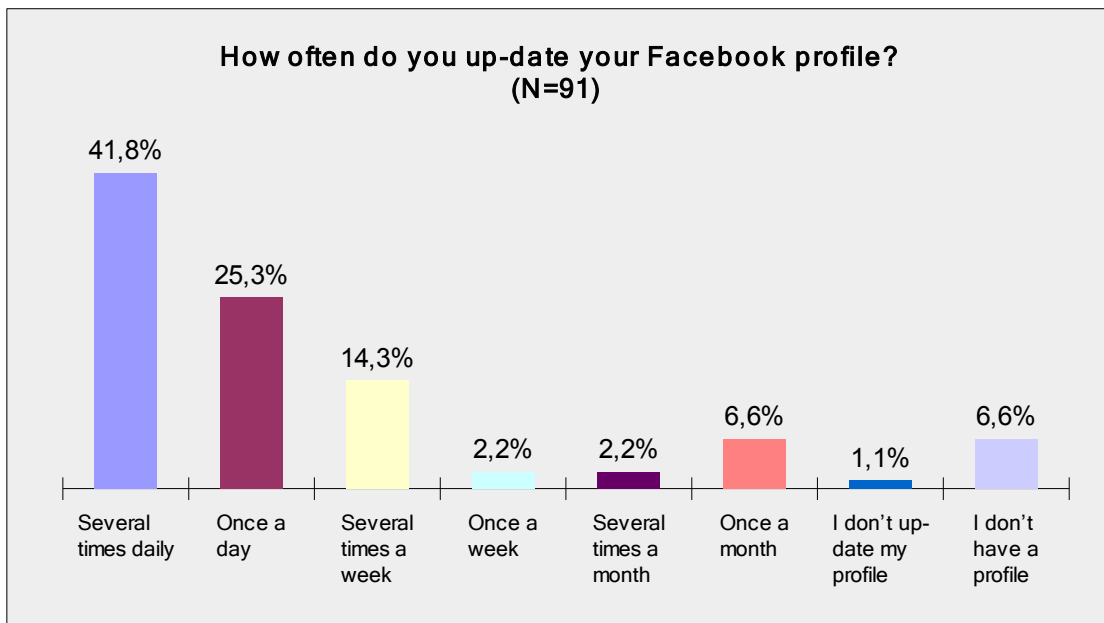


Fig. 21. Updating Facebook

### 3.3.4) How much time per day do you spend watching TV? (N=90)

33% of survey respondents report that they spend “between 2 and 4 hours” watching television; followed by 28% spending “between 1 and 2 hours” in front of the TV. 6% say that they do not watch TV at all.

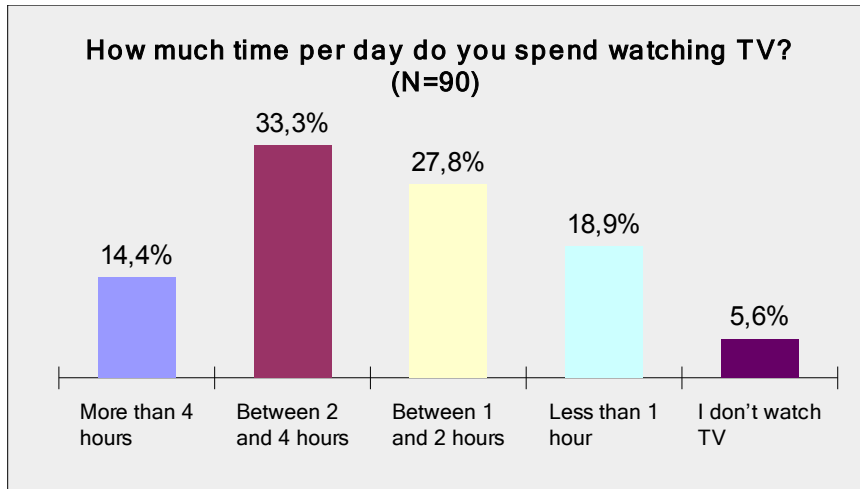


Fig. 22. Watching TV

3.4) *Demography of survey participants.*

3.4.1) How old are you? (N<sup>1</sup>=86)

The majority of survey participants are in the “between 15 and 25” (47%) and “between 25 and 35” (30%) age groups. 21% are older than 35 years of age and 2% are younger than 15 years.

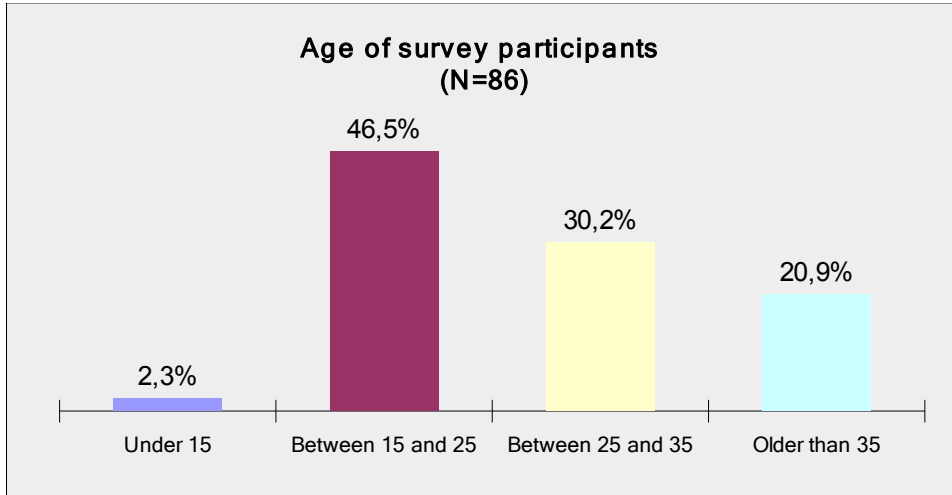


Fig. 23. Age of survey participants

3.4.2) Sex of survey participants (N<sup>1</sup>=85)

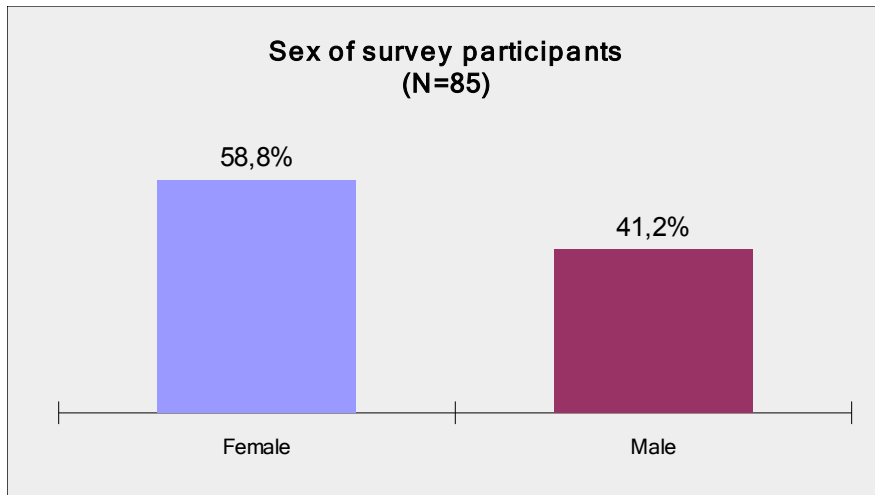


Fig. 24. Sex of survey participants

3.4.3) What community are you from? (N<sup>1</sup>=87)

The 87 survey participants who responded to this question are from 35 distinct First Nation communities in northwestern Ontario and neighboring Manitoba. Most respondents are from the communities of Pikangikum (7), Sachigo Lake (7) and Sandy Lake (6) in northwestern Ontario. From the KO Tribal Council, which runs K-Net/KO-KNET and its services, Deer Lake First Nation contributed most participants (5).

3.4.4) Where do you live at the moment? (N<sup>1</sup>=87)

Most participants (69%) live in their home communities. 31% of respondents currently do not reside in their home community. The majority of those live in the city of Thunder Bay and the town of Sioux Lookout, both in northwestern Ontario.

## 4) Summary and Discussion

### Participation

Considerably less people participated in this online survey (N=117) than in the 2007 survey (N=1,246) that was concentrating on MyKnet.org usage practices. The main reason for this is that this survey was only promoted within the First Nation communities of northwestern Ontario via the MyKnet.org website ([www.myknet.org](http://www.myknet.org)) and the K-Net/KO-KNET announcements ([www.knet.ca](http://www.knet.ca)). Thus, the results should be interpreted carefully.

### Demography

MyKnet.org and Facebook users are mainly female and younger than 35 years. Even though the demographic data collected within the survey reflect pretty much the demography of the MyKnet.org online environment, results of the 2007 survey and fieldwork suggest that there are simply more women (59%) interested in responding to such an online surveys than men. Notably, participants of this survey represent 35 First Nation communities in northwestern Ontario.

### Personal motivations and reasons

People like MyKnet.org and Facebook mainly because they are easy and free to use services for keeping in touch with family and friends. On the other hand, survey participants report that they don't like offensive content and quarrels on MyKnet.org and lack of privacy as well as advertisements on Facebook, respectively. Reasons for using those online services also depend on their technical possibilities and features. That's why MyKnet.org is also used to improve HTML programming and design skills (17% of answers) and Facebook is utilized to share content (17% of answers). Creating and maintaining a HTML webpage, allow MyKnet.org users to learn how to code and to design homepages. Facebook, on the other hand, with its sophisticated interface makes its easier for users to upload and share content.

MyKnet.org – its web-based interface dates back to 1998, which was then overhauled in 2000 – had its largest increase in homepage owners between 2003 and 2006; 47% of survey participants report that they got their MyKnet.org homepage during this time. It is worthwhile mentioning that MyKnet.org also has a loyal base of early users who got their homepage already in the early years between 1998 and 2003 (28%). Facebook, as the younger online service, got the largest share of new users from the First Nation communities of northwestern Ontario between 2007 and 2009 (56%).

While people learned about Facebook mainly through their friends (63%), they got to know MyKnet.org via a variety of sources, such as friends (36%), family members (26%) and the K-Net website (20%). MyKnet.org and Facebook are not the only, but the most popular webpage/online profile services. 30% of survey participants report that they also have a website with other providers, such as Bebo and Piczo. And besides owning a K-Net e-mail address, which users needed to sign up for a MyKnet.org homepage till 2011, 25% of participants say that they also have e-mail addresses with other service providers, such as Hotmail and Yahoo!.

### Social connections and culture

In the First Nation communities of northwestern Ontario, MyKnet.org and Facebook have become ubiquitous communication media that are used to connect family members and friends. While both online services are predominantly used at home (80%), they are also discussed on the internet, via telephone, at work and at school, mainly between family members and friends. There are also some

participants who state that they don't talk about MyKnet.org (19% of answers) and, to a lesser degree, about Facebook (9% of answers). The majority of people (83%) don't need any help or support to utilize those media, even though most people know a lot of other MyKnet.org and Facebook users in their respective communities. 56% of survey participants know more than 100 MyKnet.org homepage owners and 86% say that they know more than 100 persons with Facebook profiles.

The sharing of content is an important cultural practice on MyKnet.org and Facebook. People report that they celebrate their culture by sharing stories about cultural activities as well as music and videos. But there are also some people who say that they don't use MyKnet.org (17% of answers) and Facebook (21% of answers) for culture related purposes.

#### Time and relation to other media

The internet is the most important communication medium for survey participants (median 2.7; 1-very important – 10-not important). Since the survey was conducted online through the internet, this result is not surprising. Video games are rated as least important by survey respondents (median 6.7) although 47% are 25 years of age and younger. This particular, rather surprising, finding corresponds, as does the overall media ranking, to the results of the 2007 MyKnet.org online survey.<sup>10</sup>

Facebook profiles are being up-dated much more frequently than MyKnet.org homepages. While 44% of people state that they up-date their MyKnet.org pages either once a month or several times a month, 42% of participants report that they up-date their Facebook profiles several times a day. Even though the survey didn't ask how much time this up-dating takes, it is probably considerably less time than people spend watching television. 61% of survey respondents report that they spend between 1 and 4 hours a day watching TV. Nevertheless, particularly the frequent utilization of Facebook suggests that online social networking services are embedded well into people's daily practices.

#### Conclusion

Facebook, the world's leading commercial social networking site provider, has also become very popular among First Nation communities in the region of northwestern Ontario. People however keep and maintain their MyKnet.org homepages that are provided and hosted by KO-KNET. This is particularly impressive since KO-KNET, as a non-profit First Nation organization, has neither the financial nor the promotional means to compete with a global player like Facebook. So one important reason why people stick to MyKnet.org is because it is a local service, controlled and maintained by First Nation people, and exclusively provided to First Nation people. It is a kind of “native facebook”, as one survey participant puts it.

As survey results suggest, both services are well integrated into people's daily lives. This is mainly because they cover some of the people's urgent needs: (1) to maintain social ties and personal connections over spatial distance and (2) to express and represent themselves and their communities. The Aboriginal homepage service MyKnet.org is not only able to provide such a space for self-presentation and self-expression, through its “real name” homepage and identity verification policy, it also enables users to search for people and to access as well as share information and content. Facebook, on the other hand, has replaced MyKnet.org as communication tool to stay in touch with family and friends by keeping them up-dated on the personal lives of its users.

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<sup>10</sup> Budka, P. 2008. Report on the MyKnet.org Online Survey, August-November 2007.  
<http://meeting.knet.ca/mp19/course/view.php?id=7>