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Youth in Labyrinths of Information Search and Decision-Making

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Summary

Since 2003 noncommercial organization «Youth Institute» (Ryazan, Russia) trains young men of 18-25 years in technologies of work with the information and decision-making. Within the limits of courses with young men experts in information literacy and social psychologists, teachers and library workers work. At seminars young men assort questions of quality of the information and its reliability, critical judgement and ethics of its use, access to the information and its transparency, laws of public relations and propagation.

In the course of training students analyze traditional and newest sources of the information, in particular the Web 2.0. Development by youth of technologies the Web 2.0 allows it to create the

extensive, constantly growing information field. Today young men take active part in construction and filling of information channels which become referential for different social groups.

Recent events show that social networks influence level of civil activity of youth. On the other hand, the youth faces in social networks "adult" technologies of use of information for the purpose of a manipulation public opinion. It can lead to decrease in activity of youth in social networks for search of reliable information and acceptance of responsible elections. For this reason «Youth Institute» sees the purpose further advance of courses on training of youth of work with information in social networks for development of civil literacy, adoption of intelligent decisions and elections.

In 2000, the Initiative Group - specialists in information literacy and social psychologists, teachers and librarians - has begun to implement innovative educational program "SPIKE: School of Designing, Research and Leadership" (hereinafter - the program "SPIKE"). This program further education has quickly become popular among high school students in Ryazan. It was developed by a group of experts under the control of Ryazan Viacheslav Zaychikov (the author of this article and speaker satellite conference "Information and Civic Literacy" World Library and Information Congress - 2012 (Riga, Latvia). One of the reasons for the popularity of the "SPIKE" - lack of host relations and an excess of biased estimates, which, unfortunately, full of modern schools.

Most students come to a regular school for socializing with peers. And teachers are sure that students have to come to the knowledge "on the subject". Many teachers are willing to "fight to the death" against the widespread use of computer in learning activities and Internet, mobile phone and interactive whiteboards, video camera and projector. The widespread introduction of digital devices requires great personal contribution to the teachers and leads to profound changes in pedagogy: the teacher is "behind the backs of students", not routinely oppose them. And this "pedagogy over the shoulder" is not afraid of only the most optimistic and believe in the benefits of individualized learning system.

Today conservative teachers and teachers-innovators can be reconciled one phrase: "Computers don't work wonders, teachers create them". And who would argue with the fact that now there is a vast difference between the frontal pedagogy with the use of e-learning pedagogy and the front without them. While teachers do not learn to use digital tools in the classroom and to prepare for the lesson, they will not change his professional position and will talk about the dangers of the Internet. They will continue to be afraid of the Internet as a rival for influence in the minds of the pupils and their parents. What is it? It's simple - the Internet requires, as a web search is not possible without a systematic and purposeful training. Without it, the teacher discovers his incompetence to the students, and they laugh at the weaknesses of the teacher.

The leaders of the "SPIKE" recognize that young people today are in information overload and often limited to just copying what he saw on the Internet without understanding. To teach teens how to

determine the exact purpose of searching, sorting information, analyze and interpret it to be found a critical attitude - this is the task of every professional program "SPIKE." To solve this problem a specialist must approve the authority. And this authority must be based on the courage of free travel on the sea of information, skillful work with search engines and the best of the proposed sites.

Main goals of the "SPIKE" program – mastering by school students of the senior classes by skills of understanding of the bends and abilities (1), research of possibilities of preprofessional tests and professional education (2) at transition design "school – a profession" (3), mastering by qualities of the leader taking responsibility for decisions made on the basis of researches and for planning of implementation of the project (4). This work was conducted with school students individually and in small groups, systematically and with variable success, sometimes without finding understanding at parents and the pedagogical public. It should be noted that parents and teachers often act for the children as the walls covering reality, and should help to transfer, interpret and adapt it.

Implementation of the SPIKE program allowed her authors to find the following phenomena: on the one hand – a great interest of pupils to not formalized information and informal training (1), on the other hand – inability of pupils to make decisions on the basis of this information and unavailability to assume responsibility for these decisions (2). Authors of the program and pupils many times at seminars and in small groups discussed these phenomena as possibilities and restrictions young which don't enter into the sphere of interests of traditional school education. Experts came to a conclusion that in system of traditional education from pupils it is not required acceptances on itself to responsibility for the received knowledge. For reliability and firmness of this knowledge full responsibility is born by the teacher who traditionally was for pupils a categorical source of information, once long ago – the only thing, later – together with textbooks. And here, when thanks to new educational means it had a possibility to divide responsibility for results of training with pupils, the teacher mixed up, became puzzled and frightened. And here experience of the "SPIKE" program allows to draw one more conclusion – young teachers change the professional position for that which demands from them time easier.

The group of graduates of the program "SPIKE" feels the value of the newly acquired competences, the desire to preserve and develop them. And this group came to a conclusion about the need to create for themselves and other young people to a certain institution, which would help them gain new social and civic competence. As a result, in 2003 in Ryazan (Russia) operates a registered non-profit organization "Youth Institute", in which experts on information literacy and social psychologists, teachers and librarians teach young people 18-25 years of work with information technology and decision making. In the framework of modular programs young people dismantle access to information and transparency, the quality of information and its reliability, critical thinking and ethics of its use, patterns of public relations and propaganda.

The first students of the "Youth Institute" are graduates of the program "SPIKE". They have learned from experience that the choice of forms for the solution of certain problems defined meanings, underlying, and that the optimum shape for efficient operation - a community that should be

understood as a group of people who are actively communicating with each other. The rapid development of digital technologies has led to the fact that a large proportion of communication of the community moved to the Internet, which became independent from the location of its members, the distance between them and the time of day. The past years have led to the conclusion that the community has created its primordial psychological attitudes and hardware was comfortable for the acquisition of new competencies.

To form a community "Youth Institute" was the determining the value of communication, which occurred during training and acquiring new competencies. For the training were: learning resources and referral system, helping to find those resources, role models and a system that supported the sharing of skills and abilities; partners, peers with whom one can argue, compete and cooperate, the experts who can assess the results of operations. As a result, within the legal security community "Youth Institute" to create new communities that were formed without the orders and had an informal structure. The teaching took place not only through the assimilation of the course, but through participation in joint activities. One becomes a member of the community already had a knowledge of a particular area and would like to share knowledge with others. Many students become members of several communities that came to each of them for a short period, they spent long periods of time or remain to this day. A member of the community, starting with the so-called legitimate peripheral participation, could maintain its position at the periphery and gradually move toward the center of the community, to develop joint activities in the context of new knowledge, facilities and resources, change the path of personal growth within the community, to pass, so the learning process and receive at the same time more and more rights to determine how community development.

For community formation "Youth Institute" communication in the course of which there was a training and acquisition of new competences became defining value. For the organization of training were available: educational resources and the help system, helping to find these resources; examples for imitation and system which supported an exchange of skills and abilities; partner contemporaries with whom it is possible to argue, compete and cooperate; experts who could estimate results of activity. As a result of inside legally fixed community "Youth Institute" the new communities which were formed without orders and having informal structure were created. The network communities including simple actions of his participants, an exchange of messages and social services, were filled with objects, agents and situations which helped to think in a new way and to bring up tolerance, critical and ecological thinking. The beginners getting in community, had an opportunity to participate in its real activity. Participating in this activity, they master new knowledge in a context of this community. The doctrine occurred not so much through assimilation of a training course, how many through participation in joint activity. Everyone becoming the associate already owned knowledge in this or that area and wanted to exchange knowledge with other people. Many students became members of several communities, coming to each of them for the short period, carrying out there long terms or remaining till today. The associate, since so-called legitimate peripheral participation, could keep the situation on the periphery or gradually move to the community center, mastering in a

context of joint activity new knowledge, objects and means, changing a trajectory of personal growth in community, passing, thus, process of training and receiving thus more and more the rights to definition of ways of development of community.

Students' "Youth Institute" the most difficult to learn the skills of critical thinking. Most likely, this is because the values of traditional education - focusing on the authority of the teacher, student unwillingness to "disturb" the teacher "wrong" questions, focusing on an assessment exam. Meanwhile, the ability to reflect on the possibility of new technologies and their applications, strengths and weaknesses of digital tools of the information society is one of five groups of key competences. These competences are concrete, clear and objectively diagnosed. Traditional schools still do not find meaning and opportunities to equip students critical thinking skills. A higher education institutions to determine the "need to ensure such education students, which fosters in them a well-informed and deeply motivated citizens, who can think critically, analyze problems of society, and use the search for solutions to problems facing society, as well as to what to take on social responsibility".

I must say that in Russian to the concept of "critical" are treated as rejecting, presupposing a dispute or conflict, and in the professional language teachers and practitioners is the concept began to be used recently. According to Irina Voznesenskaia (co-author of this article and developer of the framework of the "Youth Institute"), critical thinking - thinking it is reflexive, media is trying to figure out what to believe and what to do to understand and realize his "I" to be objective and logical to understand other points of view, to rely on common sense, to abandon their own prejudices, to put forward new ideas and see new possibilities. We have to reckon with the fact that critical thinking skills, receiving the greatest development in 14-16 years, people have formed in very different degrees, and many students can't perform the tasks that require them to intellectual effort by using critical thinking skills.

In the process of learning students analyze traditional and emerging sources of information. The development of Web 2.0 technologies allows students to create their vast, ever-growing information space. Today, students are actively involved in the construction and filling of information channels, which become the reference for the various social groups. On the example of one of the online communities of students "Youth Institute" can be traced back some of the steps, challenges and successes of their training. The initiative of creation of "Labyrinth" belonged to the seven students who were the authors of the Rules of its activities. The purpose of the blog preventative "Labyrinth" - to provide adolescents and youth opportunity for informal dialogue on issues of health, education, development, family and other authors have individual accounts and passwords. Each author is preparing a thematic posts for discussion with other authors place them in digital form for personal folders of the project theme "Labyrinth", after discussion in the blog publishes them, met with a comment to any post in the case of the correctness of its content publishing. The responsible group of experts published 4-6 positions every two weeks. Authors are responsible for following project headings: family, social norms, holidays, values, relationships with peers and adults, addiction, self-expression, crisis situations, violence, ecology, health, internet, sports, movies, television, gender

relations, stress, self-education, informal youth movements (range of columns can be added or changed).

The first post was published on September 15, 2009, and two years later the Russian magazine "School Psychologist" published an article entitled "Come on, if you want to find an exit", in which the examination took part today the speaker. We know that among adolescents increasingly subject to smoking and drug addiction, alcoholism and gambling addiction, early sexual activity and pregnancy, abortion and sexually transmitted diseases, decreases motivation for learning, growing intolerance and conflict, homicides, and suicides. And the blame for this landslide, "Fall," according to parents and teachers, they - the computer to the Internet, because it is there, and unnecessary information, and unnecessary contact. What should I do? Maybe disable computers, the Internet, with its social networks? Because the Internet is full of information and the truth of antisocial and anti-human content, and the teenager is almost nothing to prevent it is interested in this information and get access to them ... Hooray! Come on! Ban, or at least drastically limit!.. And again we see that, and this "gin" does not want to return to his "bottle". But teenagers do not touch adult lecturers and speakers, filling the cool hours of meetings and school beliefs and persuasion, warnings and ultimatums.

Work well with teenagers, responding to their immediate needs. But then the question-and especially not! Once there, it means that all is well? No, not good, no complaints is not the same lack of problems. Just teens looking for answers to their questions are not at home, where adult children have less time, understanding and love, and not at school, where teaching loads are large and surpasses the intensity of relationships, and networking communities where a lot more room for creativity and partnerships.

Today's teachers and class teachers barely remember that years ago in the 100-150 arsenal of educational tools were categorical prohibitions schoolboys go to the theater and reading novels. These days, adults curse on the rap and hip-hop, on video and cable television, as well as "cross swords" on "how to make a diligent boy, and a grateful listener, reader, the viewer"? And he actually did not stop and be. Here are just listening, reading and watching it is not only or not at all what his high school teacher. And the use of educational methods prohibitively time pioneer and Komsomol tie lines modern teenager does not accept: just that - sniff in your personally-networked world! And look for him there on the blogs and groups, posts and tweets. The most advanced teachers find them there, often late into the night and this morning again meet in the school of the carotid and scattered.

Internet is rapidly burst into our lives, has become an integral part of civilization, has created new forms of communication and learning. The Internet has made it possible to interact in unknown to the village of formats - from networking game to video seminars, and provided endless opportunities for self-expression and social adaptation - from the author's blog to the online consultation of teachers and doctors. We have long been interested in the possibility of creating a positive and safe Internet space, in which a young user will find information about health and disease, smoking and alcoholism, drug addiction and AIDS. We know that teenagers, by including age differences, have formed a stable

position with regard to health issues, building relationships, education, etc., they are more interested in online games and music, video and shopping. Today, students of "Youth Institute" on the Internet are willing to help adolescents and young adults in the formation of such a position.

A wide range of teenage issues are regularly discussed interagency roundtable participants for the prevention of socially dangerous diseases, which is led by deputy chief of staff of the Social Affairs Committee meets every three months. Having secured the interest and support of their colleagues from the education, health, law and order, the students decided to take advantage of Web 2.0 as a tool for informing and educating adolescents and young adults, and created its own Internet site <http://labirint-rzn.blogspot.com/> - a collective blog, "The Labyrinth: come in, if you want to find a way out", the first message which was posted on September 15, 2009. First, it was not easy: students who are accustomed to working with young people in interactive forms, had difficulty seeing in front of those to whom paid their texts without hearing their requests and not getting any feedback at first. Regular meetings have helped the project team, within which they discussed the problems that arose, elaborated approaches to solving them, were set specific targets for the development and promotion of the resource. So, gradually has been built and developed the principles of logic to select, structure, and the amount of text, illustrating the feasibility of their positions and support hyperlinks.

To build capacity and promote interactive "Labyrinth" to the teenage audience the students began to conduct thematic surveys, add video files, and created a representation of "Labyrinth" in social networks ("VKontakte", "Twitter"). In addition, our readers can virtually subscribe to the blog, "Labyrinth" and to get information about any of its updates. To facilitate visitors "Labyrinth" search for information, students have active gadgets such as "search box", "Popular Posts", "recent comments", "blog archive". For this purpose, we are celebrating our posts tagged tags ("communication", "my places," "my health", "expression", "security", "feedback", "holiday", "training", "strategy" "Internet", "drugs", "self," "movies", "he and she," "self," "idols", "holidays", "faith-hope-love", "alcohol", "career", "consumption", "labyrinth", "heroism", "speed").

Today, a collective blog "Labyrinth," which continues to 7 young psychologists and social workers, firmly takes place in the top ten in the leading search engines - in Yandex, Google, Rambler, Yahoo. According to the analytical apparatus of the blogger, published in its nearly 300 visitors read posts more than 30,000 times, they left more than 1,600 comments, many of whom became an occasion for discussion and new topics. Filling the "Labyrinth" thematic information, the experts did not give his readers "smart" advice and do not impose the "correct" solution, but are willing to discuss with the youth community, all of interest to young people's issues. The most popular of which are communication, health (especially the effects of smoking and drug use), Internet security, self-expression. It is hoped that the information provided to adolescents and young people to an informal dialogue on health and education, development and search for meaning will help them protect themselves and protect themselves friends of the ill-considered actions, socially dangerous diseases, and yet something very harmful.

"Labyrinth" is gradually finding its place in the urban educational environment - its capacity to initiate discussions with young professionals are social and psychological services, and cool heads of educational institutions, as well as parents. A group of authors sincerely hopes that they created and continue their lives online resource "Labyrinth" will foster in adolescents and young adults responsible for their own lives, enhance personal resources to ensure the development of life-style dominated by values of a healthy lifestyle and attitudes for responsible behavior.

Since its publication almost a year. During this time, references to "Labyrinth" appeared on the websites of all schools in the city of Ryazan, as well as in the diary of each student's school. High quality posts "Labyrinth" note, and professional journalists and experts on the Russian competition "Positive Content" "Labyrinth," entered the top list of the 2011 contest. During the existence of a network community "Labyrinth" had happened to him everything that could happen: someone out of the number of participants, some stayed on the periphery, some moved from the periphery to the center of the community. Internet resource "Labyrinth", created by students of the "Youth Institute" as a non-system object, not only allowed them to learn to work with information technology (its search and evaluation, interpretation and use), but also taught the decision-making and meaningful elections, the creation of hypertext and its own information space, the reference for thousands of people from different target groups, and demonstrated how a non-system object can change the system seemed unshakable.

Today, in the middle of 2012, existing members of social networks "Labyrinth", conducted among a series of round tables, the following claim: "All that we think and do has value as is stored in digital memory. Each of us with simple services can contribute to the development of digital culture. We constantly learn and operate. It is impossible to find the best lyrics, and write well. With the service you can always look for, notice and watch as others do. Watching the activities of other people in the network, you can learn by copying and modifying the activity. We learn to refrain from seeking to do just much too well. The desire to say too much leads to attempts to use someone else's, gloss it, and confusing others. The practice of blogging, editing, hypertext documents and collective teaches us not to be afraid of their rough recordings. We learn as accurately as possible given the job network services, as they are diligent, but can't correct our mistakes. We learn to cooperate with others in situations of collaborative editing, design and classification. We learn to care about other people and benefit from them. If we create the text for yourself or just to impress others, it benefits neither us nor the other. We can design the content of a variety of digital objects that continuously shapes our literacy and competence. We can use to design objects in a digital environment created by other people. We learn to be proud that our facilities and take other people use. Our reputation is built, including to and from your notes and photos that we pay for the use of other people. Not only are the words that we leave on electronic media, but also the properties of the electronic media are constantly changing. The fact that we have mastered the new services, and learned to make using them a number of useful action, means that we are accustomed to the culture of the beginning of the XXI century. After several years of services and activities will change completely, so we are constantly

learning to learn. One of the main competences of the XXI century - a willingness to change and learning. Our services, our knowledge and our expertise, as well as Web 2.0 services are constantly in a state of beta. We must constantly work hard to meet the changing world. "

We know that we are ourselves, showing others what is in us - especially the creative ability to transfer information that we draw from the surrounding world means at our disposal. Recent events have shown that social networks influence the level of civic engagement of young people. On the other hand, young people face on social networks with the "older" technologies of use to manipulate public opinion. This can lead to reduced activity of young people in social networks to find reliable information and making responsible choices. That is why the "Youth Institute" sees its aim to further promote non-formal education of young people work with information in social networks for the development of civic literacy, making sensible decisions and choices.