

Engaging Digital Natives

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<p>Abstract</p> <p>Digital natives, the generation grown up surrounded by digital technology and the Internet, are tomorrow's stakeholders and will affect organizations and their environments greatly. It is vital for organizations to get to know the new stakeholders and acknowledge their needs and expectations. At the same time the importance of a good reputation has increased. The new media has empowered consumers in a new way as sharing one's opinion and emotions is just a few clicks away. To manage their consumer relations, organizations need to take a new, more involving and a dialogue-based approach. The study suggests engaging the digital native consumers is a vital asset for organizations to manage their reputation and thus, survive.</p> <p>The aim of the research was to map the relationship of the Finnish digital natives with media and the motivational factors behind engagement with media and with organizations via social media. Also expectations were researched, as they are an important part of engagement. Through understanding the antecedents of digital natives' engaged behaviour, organizations can attempt to engage them as consumers.</p> <p>According to the results, the digital native generation is not as eager to engage as the earlier research suggested. However, this might be due to the perceptions they have of organizations. Companies were seen as cold and distant with no interest in hearing their opinions and engaging into a dialogue with them. Engagement is based on a dialogue and a mutual relationship and also requires engagement from the organizations side. In the case of digital natives, if organizations want to engage them, they need to clearly invite them to participate in an honest dialogue, where they feel their opinions and needs are heard and valued.</p>	
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<p>Tiivistelmä</p> <p>Diginatiivit, digiteknologian ja internetin ympäröimänä kasvanut sukupolvi, tulevat olemaan osa kaikkia sidosryhmiä ja näin ollen vaikuttamaan suuresti organisaatioihin ja niiden ympäristöihin. On tärkeää, että organisaatiot oppivat tuntemaan tulevaisuuden sidosryhmät sekä tunnistamaan näiden tarpeet ja odotukset. Samaan aikaan myös hyvän maineen tärkeys on kasvanut. Uusi media on voimaannuttanut kuluttajat uudella tavalla, sillä mielipiteiden ja tunteiden jakaminen on vain muutaman klikkauksen päässä. Organisaatioiden täytyy omaksua uusi, osallistavampi ja dialogiin perustuva lähestymistapa hoitaakseen kuluttajasuhteitaan. Tutkimus ehdottaa, että diginatiivien sitouttaminen on tärkeä apu organisaatioille maineidensa hoitamiseen ja siten selviytymiseen.</p> <p>Tämän tutkimuksen tavoitteena oli kartoittaa suomalaisten diginatiivien suhdetta mediaan ja motivaatiotekijöitä sitoutuneen käyttäytymisen takana sekä mediasitoutumisessa että sitoutumisessa organisaatioihin sosiaalisen median kautta. Myös odotuksia tutkittiin, sillä ne ovat tärkeä osa sitoutumista. Ymmärtämällä sitoutumisen taustoja organisaatiot voivat yrittää sitouttaa diginatiiveja kuluttajina.</p> <p>Tutkimustulosten mukaan diginatiivisukupolvi ei ole yhtä innokas sitoutumaan, kuin aiempi tutkimus antaa ymmärtää. Syynä voivat kuitenkin olla diginatiivien käsitykset organisaatioista. Yritykset nähtiin kylminä ja kaukaisina ilman kiinnostusta kuulemaan diginatiivien mielipiteitä tai sitoutumaan dialogiin heidän kanssaan. Sitoutuminen perustuu dialogiin ja kaksipuoliseen suhteeseen ja siten vaatii sitoutumista myös organisaatioilta. Jos organisaatiot haluavat sitouttaa diginatiiveja, niiden täytyy selvästi kutsua heidät rehelliseen dialogiin, jossa diginatiivit tuntevat että heidän mielipiteitään ja tarpeitaan kuunnellaan ja arvostetaan.</p>	
<p>Asiasanat</p> <p>Diginatiivit, kuluttajien sitouttaminen</p>	
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1 INTRODUCTION

The new "digital savvy" generation born approximately between 1980 and 2000 has been defined as Generation Y, Millennials, Digital Natives, Generation C and the Net Generation, among others. Most of the definitions describe a generation of young people who have lived their lives (or most of it) surrounded by diverse technologies and the Internet, which has shaped their personalities, behavior, thinking patterns and information processing (see e.g. Prensky 2001a, Tapscott 2009). The generation has been described as multitasking, content creating groupers, who are used to getting the information they want when and where they want it (see e.g. Bardhi et al. 2010, 317; Tapscott 2009; Prensky 2001). Instead of being passive consumers, the new generation wants to take part in content creation and have an influence on the products and services they consume (Sharp 2000 in Vodanovich et al. 2010, 712).

The generation sets challenges to marketers and organizations. As they are stepping into adulthood, they are becoming a part of all stakeholder groups. However, their principles, habits and values differ from the earlier generations as employees and consumers, for instance. To meet the needs and expectations of the generation in the future, organizations need to understand them first. Especially media organizations are facing a big change as digitalization has recently changed the whole media field. For the media users of the future, however, digital technologies, networking, sharing content and social media already are a part of their daily lives, and even their personalities (Vodanovich et al. 2010, 712 & 720).

The new kind of consumer behavior of the digital generation and the digitalization of media channels can also create opportunities for media organizations. The generation's eagerness of being an active consumer (Sharp 2000 in Vodanovich et al. 2010, 712) for customization of consuming goods (Tapscott 2009, 78-79) and content creation and *produsing* (Bruns 2007), can be used in engaging this disloyal and fickle generation in a new way. Consumers are becoming louder and more empowered with the new communication technologies that enable sharing and finding information quickly with high volume (Hennig-Thurau et al. 2010, 311) and therefore the importance of good consumer relations are on the rise.

In today's reputation society trust and good reputation have become vital assets, making stakeholder relations even more important than before (Luoma-aho 2009, 323). Positively engaged behavior, such as Word-of-Mouth, is an increasingly important factor in managing one's reputation, as consumers are getting tired of bias marketing communications (Roberts & Alpert 2010, 199-200). Engaged consumers are social capital for an organization as they spread the trust and good reputation among other consumers by free willingly bringing visibility to a product or brand and by sharing their good experiences (Luoma-aho 2005, 306; 2009, 326). Engaged consumers can also bring value by giving ideas and participating in the process of producing and thus improving the products (Kumar et al. 2010, 298; van Doorn et al. 2010, 260).

The new generation, its universality and shared qualities have also been questioned. It has been claimed that there is little empirical proof over the digital generation, and more than on research, the definitions are based on common beliefs (Selwyn 2009, 371). It has also been suggested that a lot of the concepts and definitions of the new generation are invented and used by marketing machines, as the affluent, young generation is also a big consuming power (Purhonen 2007, 72). The generation seems to awake lot of emotion and feelings, in good and in bad, and lure to easy and quick generalizations. Therefore, it should not be read or written about without at least some reserve.

It is also evident that not everyone in the age cohort globally has the same access or skills regarding to digital technology. Socioeconomic factors influence on the access and use of technology (Hargittai & Hinnant 2008, 615; Livingstone & Helsper 2007, 690) and it has been pointed out that sufficient technological skills are not a collective set of skills but individual characteristics (Thinyane et al. 2010, 407) and therefore not everyone in the age group are “native speakers of the digital language” (Prensky 2001a, 1) and too broad or careless generalizations should not be made.

This study explores digital natives’ relationship with media and their reasons and motivations behind engaging themselves with media and organizations via social media. As expectations are a vital part of engagement, also they are researched to some level. Understanding digital natives’ expectations and what motivates them to engage is vital for anyone who wishes to engage them. The study aims to examine what digital natives’ relationship with media is like and what kind of expectations they have towards media. It also asks what makes digital natives to engage with media and with organizations via social media.

The theoretical part of the study will cover different definitions of the new generation; digital natives, the net generation and generation C as the most important ones. Digital natives is a concept created by Mark Prensky (2001a; 2001b), and describes people who have learned to use digital technology while growing up as opposed to earlier generations of digital immigrants who have adopted digital technology in adulthood. The net generation (Tapscott 2009) refers to a generation that has grown up during the Internet era, which shows in their personalities. In the concept of the generation C the C stands for Content Creation and also for Creativity, Casual Collapse, Control, and Celebrity, which describe the essence of the whole generation (Bruns 2007). The theory will map the characteristics and habits that make the new generation unique and different in comparison to earlier generations – especially when it comes to their media use and relationships with media. These include for instance multitasking (Bardhi et al. 2010), shared privacy (Vodanovich et al. 2010, 712), and content co-creation (Bruns 2007). Whether the whole generation, globally or within nations, can even be defined as digital natives, and if the digital divide is sensible at all, is also being discussed with some critical viewpoints.

The role of engagement in organizational relations forms another big part of the theory. Theory suggests that the digital natives want to consume by taking an active role and influencing (Sharp in Vodanovich 2008, 712), which can be helpful for organization wishing to engage them as consumers. New digital devices and social media also provide ways and platforms for engagement in a new way. Engaged consumers are extremely valuable for companies as they work as free advocates for companies building up their reputation. In addition to WOM, engaged consumers also bring value in giving their ideas and feedback for the organizations use as they willingly engage in a dialogue with the organizations. (Kumar et al. 2010, 298.)

Engagement can, however, also be negative and consumers can disengage, as well. Negatively engaged consumers express their opinions loudly and try to harm the organization by their actions (van Doorn 2010, 254). Negative engagement is dangerous for organizations' reputation and should be taken seriously (Luoma-aho 2009, 327-328). Consumers may also disengage with an organization (Kumar et al. 2010, 298), which leaves to ignorance from the consumer's side. Disengagement is less paid attention to, but a very important aspect of engagement as it can lead to a void where no-one talks about the organization at all.

First a pre-study is being conducted to research the use of the concept of digital natives. The empirical part of the actual study consists of essays and group interviews of Finnish digital natives collected from students of a media oriented upper secondary school. With the data, the research seeks to understand digital natives' relationship with media, expectations towards the media and the motivational factors behind their engaged behaviour. This master's thesis is a part of the research project "What Is Expected of the Media in a Reputation Society?" (WEM) conducted at the department of Communication in the University of Jyväskylä.

2 DIGITAL NATIVES AS STAKEHOLDERS

Digital natives will increasingly become a part of different stakeholder groups as they move into adulthood. Therefore, it is important to realize that the digital natives will influence the whole environment organizations operate in. Digital natives will be the future customers, employees, investors, and members of pressure groups. As they expect different things from companies and are driven by different motivators than the earlier generations, it is important for companies to recognize and acknowledge the different expectations. This chapter aims to explain how stakeholder relations have changed with the change in society and communications technology and map the characteristics of the new generation as stakeholders and consumers through different definitions.

2.1. Stakeholder relations in a changing society

Stakeholders are “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization’s objectives” (Freeman 1984 in Mitchell et al. 1997, 856; in Paloviita & Luoma-aho 2010, 307; in Hutt 2010, 182), such as customers, employees, competitors, pressure groups and investors. Good stakeholder relations are vital for the success of any organization and at the heart of stakeholder relations is communication. The key components of managing stakeholder relations are creating, maintaining and improving existing stakeholder relationships. (Smudde 2011, 137-138.) In order to

maintain and improve the relations organizations should be both reactive and proactive (Smudde 2011, 142).

As Smudde (2011, 142-143) notes that trust and trustworthiness are important to stakeholder relations, it has also been suggested that we live in a reputation society where intangible assets, such as social networks, trust and reputation, have become vital for organizations' success, as "participants estimate each other on basis of past behaviour and anticipation of future behaviour" (Pizzorno 2004 in Luoma-aho 2005, 169). The importance of reputation and trust are on a rise, as organizations need to earn stakeholders' partnership by being worthy of it. At the same time new communications technology has challenged organizations in keeping up the good reputation as rumours, emotions and ugly truths are shared with large audiences within few clicks. (Luoma-aho 2009.)

With the change of the communications environment, also stakeholder relations have changed. It is not enough anymore to just maintain them, but organizations should constantly monitor their environment in order to map new stakeholders and trends that might influence the organization (Luoma-aho 2009, 328). With the new communications technologies stakeholder communication has become more uncontrollable, as stakeholders are communicating to and about organizations on new platforms (Luoma-aho & Vos 2010, 315-316). It has been suggested that emotions play a vital part in stakeholder relations of today and should not be ignored. In a reputation society emotions are strongly targeted towards organizations and with the aid of the online environment also shared efficiently. Stakeholders with strong emotions, whether love or hate, can easily reach each other and start movements online. These hate and love groups give more power to the stakeholders and force organizations to change their communications towards them. It has been suggested that understanding stakeholders and their emotional reactions better is crucial for organization's survival in the reputation society. (Luoma-aho 2009.)

As stakeholder communication has become more uncontrollable, instead of identifying only stakeholders, organizations should find issue arenas where different stakeholders talk about topics and issues concerning the organization. By participating in the discussions on issue arenas, organizations can bring out their views, try to influence on the public

opinion and manage their reputation. (Luoma-aho & Vos 2010.) Managing stakeholder relations has earlier been mainly about communication from an organization to its stakeholders (Smudde 2011, 140) but with the changes described above it should now be considered more as a dialogue and two-way interaction with different stakeholders.

2.2. Defining generations

Before talking about a specific generation it is essential to define what is meant by the concept of generation in general. In a societal sense a generation consists of people who in addition to being born within a limited timeline, share a mutual experience. Usually this combining experience is shared in their youth. If mutual experience is left out the concept is turned simply into an age group. The members of the generation also acknowledge their uniqueness and difference compared especially to the older generations. (Purhonen 2007, 16-17.) In the case of digital natives, by definition, the mutual experience is the digital environment they grew up in.

Purhonen (2007, 72) also argues that the names for the newest generations are widely used and launched for marketing purposes. The concept of generation is being populized as the generation as a whole is a tempting market segment. This trend is especially seen in the media targeted for young people. Indeed, the new generation has been titled in numerous ways. Next few of the most common ones are being introduced and defined.

Generational definitions are naturally tied to cultures. However, often the post World War II generations are divided to baby boomers, generation X and after that to the multiple and unagreed definitions for the latest generations. Baby boomers are born right after the war, approximately between 1945-1964. Their distinctive feature was a boom in the birth rates as getting married and having children was postponed by the war. Generation X are the children of the baby boomers, born approximately 1965-1978. (Tapscott 2009, 11-16; Parment 2012, 17.) In the Finnish literature distinctions like the war generation (1921-1925), the baby boom generation (suuret ikäluokat) born between 1945-1949 and the recession generation 1971-1975

have been raised as meaningful generations (Alestalo 2007, 148). As consensus over the definitions of earlier generations, baby boomers and generation X, somewhat exists, the generation after has produced countless of definitions. Children born now in 2012 already belong to different generation than those born after the generation X and the distinction between the two latest generations is also unclear and varies by definition.

As said, the new generation born around 1980 and after has been defined in multiple ways based on different factors making them differ from the generations before. Often the different definitions are also mixed with each other and used as synonyms when talking about the generation. Next the present study introduces some of the most used definitions as they are listed in the table 1 and also described in more detail later on.

Table 1. The most common definitions of the new generation.

	Definitions	Definition used by	Focus on
Generation Y	Born between 1978 and 1994	Parment 2012, Morton 2002	Consuming culture, important events, influence on personal traits
Millennials	Born between 1980 and 2000. "Special, sheltered, confident, team-oriented, achieving, pressured and conventional"	Howe & Strauss 2000	Socio-economic factors, influence on personal traits
Digital Natives	"Native speakers of the digital language". Brains and information processing altered by the digital environment.	Prensky 2001; Vodanovich et al. 2010	Digital environment, influence on information processing
Generation C	Not defined by years of birth. "Participants who are able to use the systems and processes of produsage effectively and efficiently, and especially those who are active contributors to these collaborative projects" C stands for "Content creation Creativity, Casual Collapse, Control, and Celebrity"	Trendwatcher.com, Bruns 2007	Digitalization, Initiative content creation
Net Gen	Born between 1977-1997. "Born digital", defining characteristics: freedom, customizing, scrutiny, integrity, collaboration, entertainment, speed, and innovations.	Tapscott 2009	Digital environment and the Internet, influence on personal traits

2.2.1. Generation Y

Generation Y is defined as being born between the late 1970's and the early 1990's (Ferguson 2011, 266). Unlike so many names given to the generation in question, the concept of Generation Y itself doesn't label them as an extraordinary or somehow special, but simply as a continuum for generation X. It is also probably the most established of all the definitions.

Generation Y is often defined and described by their habits and values which have been shaped by the meaningful events and societal changes during their childhood and youth. These naturally differ by cultures and countries, but often the strong consuming and branding culture, end of the cold war, 9/11 attacks and the rise of the Internet are mentioned (see e.g. Parment 2012, 1-6; Morton 2002, 2). In a study of Swedish Generation Yers the most important events shaping the Swedish generation were found to be the 9/11 terrorist attacks (with all age groups), sinking of the Estonia (those born in early 1980's), Tsunami in Thailand 2004 (those born in 1980's) and for many the end of the Cold War, especially the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the re-uniting of Germany and Europe (Söderqvist 2010 in Parment 2012, 20). As Sweden and Finland share a border, part of their history, cultural heritage and what is often referred to as the Scandinavian or Nordic values and norms, it is quite safe to assume the events have also touched and shaped the generation in Finland.

The generation Y has been studied a lot by several fields including the marketing perspective. Their power and importance as consumers has not been left unnoticed, as they are more affluent than the generations before them and the consuming and branding culture has shaped them to be fickle and demanding but spending consumers (Morton 2002, 46-47). They are used to having a lot of choice in life, in consuming as well as in other aspects of life. The freedom of choice is seen as good and liberating. As consumers they are not very loyal, but tend to choose the best deal available. The generation Yers believe in self-realisation and development and value them in building their careers. (Parment 2012, 1 & 27.)

The definition of generation Y doesn't cover children born after 1994, in the year 2012 people under 18 years old. As digital technology and the Internet

have taken huge steps after that, the children under 18 are the ones who have been born into the broadband time and surrounded by digital technology since a very young age. Therefore in the present study the generation Y is seen as too old as the study wants to focus on teenagers, who have really grown up during the revolution of digital technology.

2.2.2 Millennials

Millennials and generation Y are often described with the same adjectives and sometimes perceived as synonyms, even though millennials are mostly defined to cover also the children born in the 90's.

Millennials are generally defined as a generation born between 1980 and 2000. In addition to the birth years, they are also defined by their unique characteristics that separate them from the earlier generations, the most used one being from Howe and Strauss (2000) where they define millennials as special, sheltered, confident, team-oriented, achieving, pressured and conventional. The Millennial generation is also more diverse due to globalization and increased number of immigrants all over the world (Atkinson 2004 in Sha et al. 2008, 5).

The enormous attention, nurturing, achievement opportunities and expectations have also resulted in millennials feeling highly pressured and in fear of failure. Unlike the generations before them, millennials are used to praise and rewards and they perceive the lack of them as a punishment. This makes millennials to constantly drive to achieve something worth rewarding and scared of failure. (Sha et al. 2008, 8.)

The concept of millennials concentrates more on the generation's characteristics caused by the social and economical environment, rather than global trends like the digital revolution. It is noteworthy that the concept of millennials in most cases is used to describe the generation in the United States and thus is not completely applicable worldwide. Some features stem from wider global trends such as increased immigration and change in family sizes and values, which then apply also internationally, but there are

also a lot of socio-economic factors that differ enough to make the use of the concept as it is presented above questionable in broader geographical use.

2.2.3 Digital natives

Prensky (2001a) drew a difference between those who were born into the digital world (called digital natives) and those of digital immigrants, who had to learn and adopt the new technology as adults. According to Prensky (2001a, 2001b), digital natives' brains have been altered by the digital environment they grew up in and thus they are native speakers of the "digital language". Due to the digital environment their thinking patterns and information processing differ radically from the generations before them (Prensky 2001a, 2001b). Compared to the earlier generations, also resistance for accepting new technologies among digital natives is quite low, and instead they are keen on adopting new digital devices and information systems (Vodanovich et al. 2010, 716).

It is not only the existence of the digital technology, but also the ubiquitousness of it and information that dominates the world where digital natives grew up in. Information systems have intertwined into young people's daily lives in a way that telling apart private and professional use has become more challenging, as laptops, mobile phones, and social media are platitudes in both personal and professional life. Digital natives increasingly spend their time online and being connected has become an inseparable part of their lives and even who they are. (Vodanovich et al. 2010, 712, 714 & 720.)

Digital natives are not a global phenomenon, as young people around the world have not had the same access to technology. Furthermore there are big differences between the individuals with wide access to technology in terms of the way and amount they can or choose to use it (Thinyane 2010, 412-413; Hargittai & Hinnant 2008, 615; Livingstone & Helsper 2007, 690). Palfrey and Gasser (2008, 14) come to the conclusion that instead of generation, digital natives should be referred to as a population, as only one sixth of the world's population even has access to digital technologies. To what extend the

Finnish generation can be called digital natives and if the digital divide is even sensible is discussed later on.

2.2.4 Generation C

Generation C is not defined by the years of birth, but behaviour. C stands for Content Creation, Creativity, Casual Collapse, Control and Celebrity (Bruns 2007). The concept was first introduced by trendwatcher.com, a global consumer trends firm, but Axel Bruns (2007) brought it to academic use.

Generation C consist of creative people who want to create content themselves. At the same time laws, values, habits and requirements that use to be in the core of societies are collapsing without any dramatic consequences, which is referred by casual collapse. Also as this generation takes part in content creation, their control increases. They remain in control of their lives as they can choose and contribute to what and when they consume. Celebrity comes from the sharing of created content. Generation C can easily reach their 15 minutes of fame by just uploading their content in some of various content sharing platforms, like YouTube. (Trendwatcher.com; Bruns 2007.)

Even though generation C is not defined by age, it is quite natural that young people form a big part of this generation, as 64% of young people online participate in content creation at some level (Lenhart et al. 2007, 2). As stated earlier, content creation is also a characteristic shared by digital natives, who share the need to share their lives and ideas through online platforms (Vodanovich et al. 2010, 712). In addition to content creation, the Generation C also takes part in produsing. The core idea of produsing is that all participants are able to use and produce the information and knowledge and share the common goal of improving it further in opposed to an old model where some produce and others use a product, service or information. Examples of produsing are for instance Wikipedia and numerous online news sites. (Bruns 2006, 2-4.)

2.2.5 Net Gen

Tapscott (2009) defines the young adults of today as net generation. The net gen is born between 1977-1997 and like digital natives the most important distinctive quality is that they are born and grown up in a digital world (Tapscott 2009, 16-17). There are eight core characteristics that define the net gen; freedom, customization, scrutiny, integrity, collaboration, entertainment, speed and innovations, which stem from the use of Internet and digital devices from an early age (Tapscott 2009, 73-96). The same eight attributes apply to net gen's consuming habits. These attributes are based on Tapscott's "The Net Generation: a strategic Investigation" research project, in which a total of 7685 representatives of the American net generation were interviewed.

Even though the research was implemented among the net generation in the United States, the focus of the divide is in the use of technology and the Internet, which makes it more applicable in international context than the concept of millennials, for instance. The idea of the net gen comes quite close to the one of digital natives but whereas the concept of digital natives emphasizes the changes in brain and information processing, the concept of net gen focuses more on the personal traits common to the generation.

2.3 *Finnish digital natives*

Finland can be considered as a country with wide access to digital technology. At the end of 2010 Finland reached 3,2 million broadband connections with a population of 5,3 million. 86% of Finnish households had an Internet connection at the end of 2010 and the percentage of 15-49 years old with Internet connection was over 95%. (Viestintävirasto 2011, 6 & 9.) In the year 2010, 97% of Finnish 9-16 year olds had access to the Internet at home and 58% of them could use it in their bedroom or in some other private location at home. 79 % of the age group used the Internet daily and 98% at least once or twice a week, the average figures in Europe being 60 % and

93%. (Livingstone et al. 2011, 21 & 25.) Of young adults in Finland (15-29 years) 92% were online daily or nearly daily in the year 2009 (Myllyniemi 2009, 88-89). Finnish children start using the Internet relatively young and the average age for being online for the first time for the children in the age group of 9-16 was 8. Also 67% of the age group had a profile in at least one social networking site in 2010. (Livingstone et al. 2011, 24 & 37.) Also the use of mobile phones has always been relatively high in Finland and already in 2001 93 per cent of Finnish young people aged 15-24 used a mobile phone regularly (Wilska 2003, 444).

Building on all these statistics, it is safe to assume that the young adults of today have indeed grown up surrounded by diverse technology and the Internet and therefore can be called digital natives. Even though it has also been claimed that the concept of digital natives is merely a generalization with little empirical proof (Selwyn 2009, 371), it seems that it cannot be ignored that the young adults in the western countries of today have grown up with digital technology and the existence of the Internet as opposed to their parents, for example. The effects of the digital environment on the generation and the reliability of the research done can of course be put under debate but the concept itself stands on sound reasoning. Thus the present study will use the concept of digital natives to describe the generation studied. The study also assumes that some of the digital natives are, to some extend, members of the generation C.

As the personal traits of the net gen stem from the use of Internet from an early age as well, it can be assumed that also the Finnish digital natives may possess some traits of freedom, customization, scrutiny, integrity, collaboration, entertainment, speed and innovations and also expect and value these qualities in companies.

2.4 Digital natives as consumers and media users

As said before, digital natives differ from the earlier generations also as consumers and media users. One of the most distinctive characteristics of the digital natives is media multitasking. Media multitasking refers to the use of

more than one medium at the same time, which can include traditional, new, social, online and entertainment media or a mix of them and be concentrated either around one or more media devices (Bardhi et al. 2010, 318). Multitasking has increased with the development of technology in all age groups, but is especially common within young adults. Multitasking has been seen as a negative phenomenon in earlier research and people's capability to receive and process information from multiple channels has been questioned. (Bardhi et al. 2010, 317-318.)

However, Bardhi et al. (2010) argue that multitasking has its negative and positive sides. When multitasking people may feel distracted and concentrating on a single message and decoding its meaning can become more difficult, leading to inefficiency. At the same time multitasking gives the feeling of saving time and thus being efficient in a sense. Similarly multitasking can result as feeling of uncontrolled chaos as decreased abilities to decode messages are also often recognized and felt guilt and stress about, but it can also lead to the feeling of control as a consumer can more freely choose the messages that are simply filtered out. The feeling of control doesn't come from managing all the messages but from the power of choosing to which medium or message one wants to pay attention to. (Bardhi et al. 2010, 321-325.)

That means that even though engaging to a message or a medium is less likely by multitasking due to inefficient decoding and split attention, multitaskers feel as they are more engaged with the process of media consumption and have more control over it. This can also lead to *increased* level of engagement as consumers tend to engage better in information processes when they feel they are in control. (Bardhi et al. 2010, 323-324.) This is crucial for anyone wanting to catch the attention of a digital native, as well. A message needs to be interesting enough to be filtered in in the multitasking process, and when that happens, engagement to it is already higher.

Digital natives do not only cope with the ubiquitousness of the information, but they rather enjoy it. Vodanovich et al. (2010, 718) suggest that there are five elements in ubiquitous information systems that attract digital natives; personalised, interactive, social, intuitive and attractive. As other terms are quite self-explanatory, intuitiveness means that digital natives want to use

technology without having to use manuals. Vodanovich et al. (2010) use the icons as an example. The icon itself tells the user what it is used for, like the B button in Microsoft Word, which bolds written text. The information system should be fun to use, not too simple nor too easy, and “cool”. In order to add the constantly changing element of coolness, digital natives should be given a chance to contribute to and design the systems (or parts of them) themselves. (Vodanovich et al. 2010, 719.) This goes hand in hand with the digital natives desire to create and co-create content themselves, which could be thus benefitted by companies.

Also Tapscott (2009) refers to the generations need for personalised, entertaining and innovative products and services. The generation wants to customize the products they use to be their own and to represent who they are. Smartphones, iPods and mp3 -players, personal laptops and tablets are all examples of tailored devices. (Tapscott 2009, 78-79.) Need for customizing supports the idea of communications technology and being connected being a part of oneself (Vodanovich et al. 2010, 712 & 720). It seems that digital technology is not a tool anymore; it's a continuum of self, representing its owners. Livingstone (2008, 394) argues that “creating and networking online content is becoming an integral means of managing one's identity, lifestyle and social relations”. This implies that young people are attracted to the cost-efficient way of sharing and creating content online as it enables them to construct their identity through customizing and networking. Tapscott (2009, 74-77) also adds freedom to the list of features that attract the digital natives in the ubiquitous information society. Digital technology has opened up new possibilities for both work life and free time and people are less depended on the physical places and boundaries. As consumers the generation is not overwhelmed by the near endless variety of choices, but they rather enjoy it. Also the boundaries between professional and personal use of various communication channels have become less strict and rather blurry to digital natives (Vodanovich et al. 2010, 722).

Digital natives also share personal information more willingly than earlier generations (Leung 2003 in Vodanovich et al. 2010, 712) and use the digital environment to share and being connected with others. Instead of being passive users they actively take part in online content creation, which makes them “active participants in the new digital media culture” (Sharp 2000 in Vodanovich et al. 2010, 712). Nonetheless, even if the digital natives can use

technology and social media better than the earlier generations, it does not automatically mean that they have the understanding and abilities to use it more sensibly. As sharing and networking is natural for digital natives, there is a risk that it is done to a limit where it harms one's security and privacy. Content shared online cannot be taken back and in this sense the generation of digital natives may take more risks compared to older generations who are more careful in online sharing. (Vodanovich et al. 2010, 720.) It must also be taken into account that in addition to being digital natives, they are also young people and are still somewhat inexperienced and less careful than older generations in life in general.

As having grown up surrounded by technology the generation has had to learn to recognize truthful information from false information and become source critical (Tapscott 2009, 80). Even though there are also opinions that despite the ubiquitous information surrounding the generation, they do not actually possess better abilities to filter or process it (see e.g. Selwyn 2009, 368; Thinyane 2010), Tapscott (2009, 80) claims that it has, indeed, made them natural researches, or in his words, scrutinizers. The generation checks the information they get from multiple sources and do not automatically adopt information given to them. They also know how and where to look up information they need. When the young adults consume goods, they do online research on different brands and products before making a decision. 83% of American net gen representatives already know what they are going to buy when they walk into a store. However, even though online reviews are widely read, they are also read with criticism and friends' reviews and recommendations still weigh more also among the net gen. (Tapscott 2009, 80-82&189.)

Tapscott (2009, 189-190) claims that the net gen has high moral values and as consumers they appreciate and demand honesty from companies. Also over marketing and promising quality products lack, annoys the generation and makes them boycott such products and companies. (Tapscott 2009, 96-104, 208.) They also expect speed in getting what they want. They are used to getting information and service quickly and are impatient in waiting. (Tapscott 2009, 93-94; Prensky 2001a, 2.)

2.5 Questioning the digital generation

There has also been criticism towards the digital divide. It is of course obvious that there are great differences in digitalization on a global scale and all people don't have equal access to technology. But even countries with wide and equal access to technology, like Finland, where the young adults have been able to use the technology from an early age, it cannot be taken for granted that they all have, at least to the same extent. There are also big differences in how and to what young adults utilize the technologies available. It has quite rightfully been claimed that proficiency with technology is an individual characteristic, which stems from "experience, exposure, personality, culture and environment" and not a collective set of skills a generation automatically possesses (Thinyane et al. 2010, 407). Also the whole digital generation has been questioned to a level of calling it an exaggeration and even a myth (Selwyn 2009).

Also the broadness and diversity of utilization of the Internet among the digital natives has been put under debate. It has been argued that lower socio-economical status leads to narrow and entertainment based online activities, whereas better educated individuals with more fortunate social backgrounds can utilize the Internet for more informational purposes which enhance their opportunities in life (Hargittai & Hinnant 2008, 615). Social background also affects the level of access to the Internet (Livingstone & Helsper 2007, 690). Selwyn (2009, 372) agrees and adds that young people who are often referred to as the digital natives, don't utilize the Internet in an active and empowering manner but the use is far more passive than generally thought.

As Selwyn (2009) too points out, content creation and advanced use of technology is strongly associated with digital natives and thought of as some kind of a norm for them, as sharing and digital technology are seen as natural parts of their life. Yet it doesn't mean that everyone would be doing so. According to the EU kids online report, the 9-16 year olds Europeans use the Internet the most for school work (85%), playing games (83%), viewing content created by others (76%), and to social purposes (62%). Far behind came content creating and sharing like posting pictures (39%) and messages (31%) to be shared by others, using a file-sharing site (18%) or writing a blog (11%). (Livingstone et al. 2011, 33.) Therefore it might be an exaggeration to

call digital natives a “content creating generation” and content creation cannot be taken as a common or definite characteristic of the digital natives. However, it shouldn’t be ignored altogether either, as 64% of 12-17 year olds online users have participated in one or more content-creating activities on the Internet (Lenhart et al. 2009, 2).

Digital natives shouldn’t be judged or diminished by their entertainment oriented use of the Internet. Even though very narrow utilization may tell about less skills and unfamiliarity of technology, which disagrees with the definition of a digital native, entertainment purposes should not be seen as vain or pointless or as lessening digital natives skills. The core of Prensky’s (2001a; 2001b) idea of digital natives was that they are a generation grown up in the digitalized world and their brains have adapted to it. It doesn’t focus on how digital natives use the online environment, but to the consequences of it. Therefore there is no pointless or less meaningful use of technology in the digital native point of view, but the use itself provides skills unique to the generation. Building on Prensky’s (2001a; 2001b) ideas it is not relevant that a digital native uses the Internet to check sport scores, but that he does so instead of waiting to watch the sports news on the television is. Also their young age makes using media for entertainment purposes quite natural.

3 ROLE OF ENGAGEMENT IN CONSUMER RELATIONS

As it was stated in the chapter 2, digital natives will enter all stakeholder groups in the near future. The present study, however, focuses on their role as consumers. Naturally, with the change of stakeholder relations as presented in the chapter 2, also consumer relations are changing. Next consumer relations are being examined and engagement is suggested to be helpful and even necessary way to keep up with the new type of consumers and to manage consumer relations.

In the present study engagement is seen as an important part of consumer relations. Engagement is often connected to and researched by marketing (see e.g Nyirő et al. 2011, 115), but the present study stresses the importance of public relations in the process. Instead of being perceived as a marketing tool, engagement should be considered more as a part of public relations. As open dialogue, honest, mutual interest and making compromises form the basis of engagement, it is not something to be done *to* consumers to boost sales but to be done *with* consumers for mutual benefits (Foster & Jonker 2005). The process of engagement doesn't only include consumers but also organizations need to be willing to engage themselves in the relationship.

3.1 Consumer relations

The new communications technology has somewhat changed the principles of marketing, consumer behavior and communication with consumers and publics. Consumers have become more empowered, as they are highly active in taking part in buying, recommending and producing. With the help of the online channels consumers have become widely connected to organizations and to other consumers. (Hennig-Thurau et al. 2010, 311-312.)

Modern marketing communication has been compared to a pinball machine; a company sends a marketing message, which bounces poorly controlled all over the online environment. A company can try to bounce it back to its intended course, but where the message ends up is up to the things it happens to bump into on the way. As the marketing environment is less controllable and one-way messages work poorly in this new environment, companies should focus more on managing their consumer relations through dialogues. (Hennig-Thuray et al. 2010, 313.) In the new environment it is essential to think beyond just purchasing behavior when taking care of consumer relations (van Doorn et al. 2010, 253) and to think about consumer relations more as a whole.

Need for involving communications also shows in customer relations. Customer relations are based on mutual experiences of benefitting. As the Social Exchange theory suggests, people stay in a customer relationship as long as the “rewards exceed costs” so as long as a customer feels like she gains more than she has to give. However, if the costs are considered to be higher than the benefits, a customer is likely to end the relationship. (Thomlison 2000, 3.) In order to prevent this from happening, communication from an organization to its public should happen via dialogue and be more personalized. “One size fits all” communication is not effective in the new communication environment. Through dialogue an organization and its publics can better understand each other and to develop. (Bruning et al. 2008, 29.) Through more involving and tailored communication a customer may feel like gaining more and be willing to invest more in the relationship from her side, which benefits both parties. By open dialogue organizations can better understand consumers’ needs and expectations and offer more value.

As stated earlier, the new media offers tools for companies to reach and involve their consumers (Hennig-Thurau et al. 2010, 312). These tools should be utilized and seen as opportunities to interact with consumers. Brands like Dove have done so by engaging consumers to a discussion about their values combining use of traditional and new media with their true beauty campaign, instead of just one-way advertising (Hennig-Thuray et al. 2010, 313). With the help of the new communication technology, engaging consumers becomes a cost-efficient way to maintain and manage consumer relations as engaged consumers bring value to an organization in multiple ways (Kumar et al. 2010; Roberts & Alpert 2010, 198).

3.2. Consumer engagement

Consumer engagement is consumer behavior that goes beyond purchasing interaction, a “customer’s behavioral manifestation” towards a brand, product or an organization (Van Doorn et al. 2010, 254). Engagement is a relationship between an organization and a consumer where the consumer actively and voluntarily interacts with the company or other consumers about the company or its products (Kumar et al. 2010, 297). Engaged consumers are loyal to a brand or product and take actions such as recommending it or giving new ideas to the organization (Kumar et al. 2010, 307). It is clear that such consumers are important for a company’s success and that companies should attempt to engage consumers by building long-lasting relationships with them.

Engagement is often perceived as customer behavior and purchasing transactions are considered as a vital part of engagement (Kumar et al. 2010, 298). However, engagement is also present in other stakeholder groups. Luoma-aho (2005, 2009) defines stakeholders with regular contact and high levels of trust towards an organization as faith-holders. Like engaged consumers, faith-holders are social capital to an organization as they spread the trust and good reputation among other consumers by free willingly bringing visibility to a product or brand and by sharing their good experiences (Luoma-aho 2005, 306; 2009, 326). The frequent contact with the organization creates credibility in the eyes of others, which makes their messages more influential (Luoma-aho 2005, 306).

As opposite to faith-holders, hateholders feel hate or distrust strong enough to harm the organization the feelings are targeted at. Even though hateholders are rarely left unnoticed as negative feelings are usually demonstrated loud and clear, it is dangerous for an organization to do so. Whereas faith-holders bring positive value for an organization, hateholders can cause serious harm by negatively engaged behavior such as spreading negative messages. (Luoma-aho 2009, 327-328.)

Faith-holders and hateholders can be perceived as sub-categories for engaged stakeholders, as high trust or lack of trust leads to engaged behavior. In the era of stakeholder emotions (Luoma-aho 2009) especially negative emotions leading to negative engagement and disengagement often stem from somewhere else than just customer experience. Therefore, defining engagement as purely customer behavior motivated by customer experiences is seen as rather limited. Thus the present study uses the concept of consumer engagement instead of customer engagement but also recognizes that engagement happens in other stakeholder groups as well.

As stated above, engaged consumers create value for a company beyond just purchasing and re-purchasing. Consumers can add, but also detract organization's value by sharing their experiences and opinions on products, brands and organizations, a behavior referred to as Word-of-Mouth (WOM), and by doing so influence on their own and others' consuming behavior and opinions (Kumar et al. 2010, 298). Highly engaged consumers work as free advocates for the company by recommending it to others at every possible turn (Roberts & Alpert 2010, 198).

It has been argued that consumer engagement is even more important now, as consumers are overwhelmed with choices in brands and products and the constant (advertisement) information flow. As consumers grow cynical and get tired of advertisements, peer recommendations become even more important. In addition, consumers have more power than ever before, as with the help of the online environment sharing one's opinion on products, services, companies or brands is only a few clicks away. (Roberts & Alpert 2010, 199-200.) Therefore, it is important for organizations to identify the consumers who produce and share online content, good or bad, concerning the organizations, brands or their products and what drives them to do so. (Hennig-Thurau et al. 2010, 314).

In addition to WOM, engaged consumers also create value by giving feedback and ideas to companies and participating on the process of co-creation, leading to improved or new products and features (Kumar et al. 2010, 298; van Doorn et al. 2010, 260). Some companies, like Lego and Apple, have realized the value and actively utilize ideas and feedback from highly engaged consumers (van Doorn 2010, 260). The value of an engaged consumer is defined by the level of engagement. Highly engaged consumers can create significant value as their involvement in co-creation and dialogue with a company is deeper and they are willing to share more insight. (Kumar et al. 2010, 298.)

Consumer engagement can be both positive and negative. Whereas positively engaged consumers act as free advocates recommending the organization and engaging in a dialogue with it, negatively engaged consumers engage themselves in negative behavioral manifestations such as protests and sharing negative information about the organization. (van Doorn et al. 2010, 254.) If, for instance, the costs of engagement become too high or a consumer has a bad, disappointing experience, he might also exit the relationship and *disengage* (van Doorn et al. 2010, 254; Kumar et al. 2010, 298). In the present study disengagement is seen as leading to ignorance, discontinuity of buying behavior and occasional negative opinion sharing, but it is differentiated from negative engagement, where a consumer actively seeks to spread negative messages or harm a company.

Disengagement has not been studied to the extend of engagement, but is just as important, as through disengagement companies lose some of their most valuable assets, the value brought by engaged customers. It can also be argued that in some cases disengagement is worse than negative engagement, as it leads to a void where no-one talks about the organization at all. With negative engagement an organization at least gets attention and publicity. Figure 1 represents the continuum of engagement. Engagement is two-dimensional as both tone (positive or negative) and degree (disengagement or engagement) have to be taken into consideration. Engaged behavior can settle anywhere on the continuum, depending on the factors mentioned.

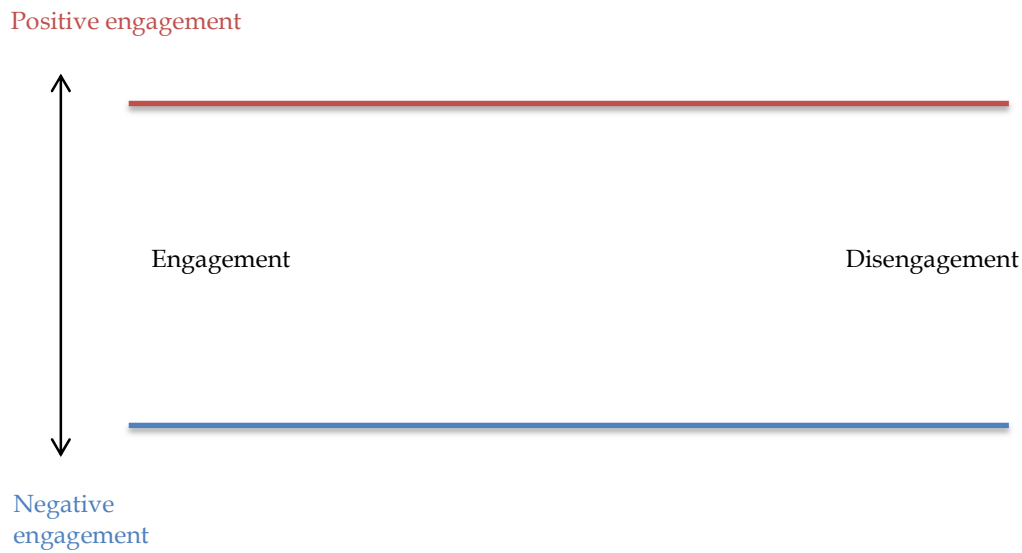


Figure 1. The continuum of engagement.

3.2.1 Expectations at the heart of engagement

According to Roberts and Alpert (2010) the key components for successfully engaging consumers are value proposition, brand, internal culture elements and customer experience, and specifically the coherence of the four elements. In short this means that a company needs to communicate its values through the brand. Brand is supposed to express the values and the very core of the company, so that consumers can relate to it emotionally and also recognize the value they will get by purchasing the brand. Internal culture of the company needs to support these values and employees should be engaged to them as well. As engagement is generated via customer experience, the experience should be made satisfactory, which is done by meeting expectations. Therefore, it is crucial to deliver what has been promised via communication towards the consumer and also to recognize consumers' expectations. (Roberts & Alpert 2010, 199-201.)

As it is suggested that consumers' engaged behavior is generated by satisfying consumer experiences (Roberts & Alpert 2010, 199-201) and

reputation (Hong & Yang 2009, 398-399) and it is agreed that satisfaction is based on prior expectations that are met with perceived performance (Zeithaml et al. 1993, 8-9), it suggests expectations lie at the very heart of consumer engagement. Expectations a consumer has prior to purchasing set a standard that is compared to the perceived value and performance. If the expectations end up being higher than the performance it leads to dissatisfaction but if they are met it leads to satisfaction. (Zeithaml et al. 1993.) Therefore an organization has to recognize, acknowledge, meet and exceed consumers' expectations to create a positive experience leading to satisfaction, which may eventually lead to engagement and good reputation.

Olkkonen et al. (2012) specify the influence of expectations on behavior and thus engagement. As shown in figure 2, expectations are based on mental models, leading to assessments of whether the perceived quality exceeds the expectations prior to the interaction. The assessments lead to emotions, such as satisfaction or dissatisfaction, which eventually show in behavior. (Olkkonen et al. 2012.) Behavioral effects can simply be continuing or discontinuing (disengagement) of the consumer relationship, but if the emotions are strong enough it can also result in negatively or positively engaged behavior, such as WOM.

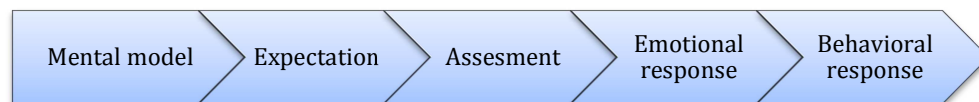


Figure 2. The process from mental models to behavioral responses (Olkkonen et al. 2012)

High expectations and high brand equity may actually lead to greater negative engagement if a consumer feels disappointed as compared to lower brand equity products (Roehm and Brady in van Doorn et al. 2010, 258). Also high dependency on a product or a service is likely to engage consumers in negative behavior if something goes wrong, as a consumer might feel the

urge to share his or her disappointment or anger. On the other hand, if everything goes well, strong brand equity leads to higher brand commitment, which can be a motivational factor for higher engagement. (van Doorn et al. 2010, 258 & 261.)

When a customer feels successful in her actions of consumer engagement, such as giving feedback and experiencing that it was welcomed and listened to, it encourages the customer to continue such behavior. (van Doorn et al. 2010, 259.) Also negative engagement can be decreased or even turned into positive engagement by listening to complaints and feedback and taking the right actions such as apologies or refunds (van Doorn et al. 2010, 262). Negatively engaged consumers also provide a valuable learning opportunity for organizations, as they point out the need for improvement if organizations are open for it (Luoma-aho 2009, 328). Therefore it is important that companies are in a genuine dialogue with consumers and treat every interaction situation as a possible engagement situation if they wish to engage consumers.

As expectations play such an important role in consumer engagement, expectations management becomes an important tool for organizations. Olkkonen et al. (2012) define expectations management not as an attempt to manipulate or control expectations but to identifying and knowing one's publics and their expectations. Different publics hold different expectations and through constant monitoring an organization can manage their own knowledge of what is expected from them. In addition to existing expectations also weak signals of emerging and future expectations need to be recognized. It is clear that responding to the expectations and performing in a sufficient level is then easier. (Olkkonen et al. 2012.)

3.2.2 Motivational factors

Even though met and unmet expectations are an important factor in engaged behaviour, there are also other motivational factors, which influence whether a consumer engages himself in engaged behaviour. As the present study

focuses on digital natives' engagement online, next some factors behind engaged behaviour are presented through earlier research.

The motives behind people's media use have been studied already from the 1950's. Uses and gratifications theory focuses on why and how people use media. Instead of media's influence on people it concentrates on why consumers choose to consume specific media. (Katz 1959, 2-3.) U&G research has developed with the development of media and in the last decades it has focused on people's motives to use social media (Muntinga et al. 2011, 18). Muntinga et al. (2011, 19) define the motivations behind social media use to be "entertainment, integration and social interaction, personal identity, information, remuneration and empowerment", based on earlier U&G studies of social media use. Compared to the motivations behind social media use, studies on the incentives of engaged behaviour online are lacking behind and are insufficient (Muntinga 2011, 14-15). Studies done, however, show that the motivations behind social media use and engaged behaviour online somewhat overlap (Muntinga 2011).

Muntinga et al. (2011, 16-17) divide brand-related online activities in three categories: consuming, contributing and creating. Where solely consuming brand-related information on social media (watching YouTube videos of the brand, reading brand related blogs etc.) isn't counted as engaged behaviour as defined in the present study, contributing (following or "liking" a brand on social media, talking about a brand, rating etc.) and creating brand-related content do. In case of contributing and creating the most important motivational factors were found to be personal identity, integration and social interaction and entertainment. With creating there was also an additional motivation found: empowerment. (Muntinga et al. 2011, 29-34.) Also studies of the motivational factors behind eWOM: social benefits, economic benefits, concern for others and self-enhancement, show that the motivations are widely self and socially driven (Hennig-Thurau et al. 2004, 50).

Earlier research implicates that factors relating to one's own identity and social interaction are strong motivational factors behind engaged behavior and also social media use. By engaging with brand related activities individuals try to influence on the image others have of them. It can also be used in gaining social acceptance or self-representation. (Muntinga et al.

2011, 29-30.) In case of the digital natives this can be expected to be found as an important motivational factor as well, as the use of social networking sites and self-representation through them is considered to be a natural and big part of their lives and who they are. (Livingstone 2008, 394; Vodanovich et al. 2010, 720.) According to Tapscott (2009, 189-190) the generation brings their values into consuming, as they demand honesty and integrity from companies. Thus it can be assumed that self-representation through identification with brands and shared values is important in the generations consuming habits and an important part of engagement processes.

Empowerment refers to the power consumers have in the online environment. They can influence and feel empowered and also see others to act according to their published opinions or other content they created. (Muntinga et al. 2011, 33-34.) Also empowerment can be expected to be present among the Digital Natives, as the literature suggests that they are active consumers willing to take part in co-creation (Sharp 2000 in Vodanovich et al. 2010, 712).

3.2.3 Engagement and the New Media

Hennig-Thurau et al. (2010, 312) define new media as “websites and other digital communication and information channels in which active consumers engage in behaviors that can be consumed by others both in real time and long afterwards regardless of their spatial location” The definition is very marketing oriented but describes the value and risks of new media for organizations.

Indeed, online environment offers an easy and cost efficient way for companies to have dialogues with their customers, and to receive feedback and ideas, which makes it an ideal platform for engagement. Also via new media consumers can share their creations freely to a broad audience, pro-actively contribute to companies’ value chains, and be seen and heard real-time. Ubiquitousness of new media enables networking and sharing anytime and anywhere. (Hennig-Thurau et al. 2010, 312.) With the Internet and developed communication technologies, the opportunities, power and

importance of WOM have increased significantly as one's opinion is easily shared with millions of other consumers (Hong & Yang 2009, 382).

It has been argued that consumers' ability to share their opinions freely and instantly has a significant influence on diffusion and products (Hennig-Thurau et al. 2010, 317). According to the Edelman trust barometer 65% of people would trust their peers the most when hearing information from a company leaving the company CEO and employees far behind. Also the importance of social media has rocketed, as it is trusted 75% more than last year as a source of information about a company. (Edelman trust barometer 2012, 7-8.) Therefore, organizations should act proactively and provide an environment that encourages positive eWOM (Hong & Yang 2009, 382).

The impact of engaged behavior on an organization's reputation, such as WOM, can be measured by the immediacy, intensity, breadth and longevity of the impact. The online environment automatically increases the breadth and immediacy, which makes it an influential channel. It also has an impact on longevity in a sense as online content doesn't disappear but can affect in the long run gaining more viewers. (Van Doorn 2010, 255.) In both negative and positive engagement online channels produce quicker effects with wider scope. Instead of trying to control what is said over an organization, they should offer platform for (Hong & Yang 2009, 382) it and monitor the discussions that concern them (Luoma-aho & Vos 2010).

The present study is especially interested in engagement via social media, as in addition to being a great channel for engaging consumers, it is seen as a natural environment for the digital natives.

3.2.4 Engagement as part of public relations

Roberts and Alpert's (2010) model of how to engage customers described earlier is very company oriented and only goes one-way. However, as discussed throughout the chapter, the process of engagement should be thought of as more of a relationship. It should include things such as dialogue (Bruning 2008), offering a platform for it, listening to feedback and

rewarding engaged customers (van Doorn et al. 2010, 258). As consumers tend to be more engaged with information processes when they have the feeling of power and control (Bardhi et al. 2010, 323-324), it is self-evident that engagement cannot be generated by actions from a company to a consumer, but in a dialogue and two-way relationship.

The perception that engagement is a way to control or manipulate stakeholders has been criticized before. The basis of engagement is wrong if it is a one-sided attempt from organizations part to make consumers to act as wanted. Engagement becomes sustainable and mutually benefitting only if both parties' interests are taken into consideration and listened to. (Foster & Jonker 2005, 51.) This means that not only the consumers need to be willing to engage, but the process requires engagement also from the organizations' side.

Consumer engagement has a great influence on organizations' reputation, as engaged consumers share their opinions with other consumers and by doing so influence others' attitudes and behavior (Kumar et al. 2010, 298). As said, WOM is even more influential channel of information on consumer behavior, as consumers get tired of bias marketing information from companies (Roberts & Alpert 2010, 199-200). Therefore engaged consumers don't only affect sales, but also the public opinion and organizations' reputation, which in turn influences engagement. Identification with an organization increases positive WOM and thus engaged behavior. Customers are more likely to identify with an organization with a good reputation, which through their engaged behavior leads to even better reputation. (Hong & Yang 2009, 399.) It is clear that a company should have more positively engaged customers than negatively engaged customers in order to manage their reputation. It can be even suggested that a company with a strong reservoir of positively engaged customers doesn't need such heavy investments in marketing, as they spread the good reputation even better than marketing actions would (Luoma-aho 2009, 326).

As described above, WOM and other engaged behavior is not only important from the marketing and selling point of view, but an important part of public relations. An organization should monitor its environment and what is talked about it constantly to keep up on public's opinions (Luoma-aho & Vos 2010). Like discussed throughout the chapter, as both negatively and

positively engaged consumers spread information on the company and have a huge effect on its reputation, identifying these consumers and keeping up good relations with them is vital for organizations success. Positively engaged consumers are valuable assets that should be taken care of whereas negatively engaged consumers are extremely dangerous as they aim to harm the organization in question.

Still, engagement and other consumer participative concepts are often perceived and defined as marketing concepts or even tools (see e.g. Nyiró et al. 2011). However, as discussed earlier, engagement is based on monitoring the environment and the publics and having a true dialogue with them. As publics and their needs and expectations change and need to be monitored, identified and recognized constantly (Luoma-aho & Vos 2010) and consumer relations in general are shifting towards dialogues (Foster & Jonker 2005; Bruning et al. 2008), it implies that engagement is or should be more part of public relations than marketing. Engagement's relation to marketing should be carefully considered or even questioned as it sets engagement in risk of becoming a marketing tool or a "trick" for boosting sales instead of being true interaction. The same way any guidance in how to engage stakeholders should be given and taken cautiously as there is and should not be a formula for it. Engagement begins with listening to one's publics and fulfilling needs and, therefore, is case sensitive.

4 METHODS

This study aims to map the relationship between the digital natives and the media and the generation's motives behind engaging with media and with organizations via social media. Expectations are also researched, as they are a vital part of engagement. The research questions are the following:

- What is digital natives' relationship with media like?
- What kind of expectations do digital natives have towards the media?
- What makes digital natives engage with media?
- What makes digital natives engage with organizations via social media?

The present study seeks to understand rather than explain digital natives' relationship with media. The study doesn't aim to generalize the findings to the whole generation, but rather to give implications and therefore qualitative methods were chosen.

4.1. Qualitative Research

As the purpose of the present study was to understand digital natives as media consumers and to examine their perceptions, qualitative methods

were seen suitable. Instead of finding statistical generalizations, qualitative research is used to understand and to describe human behaviour and different phenomena (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 85; Eskola & Suoranta 2008, 61) through the meanings people give to them (Denzin & Lincoln 2011, 3; Daymon & Holloway 2002, 7). Therefore, when communication is researched in its social context and how it is experienced by people, the use of qualitative approach is natural (Daymon & Holloway 2002, 6).

Whereas quantitative methods are used to examine causality and to evaluate by measuring, qualitative methods are more flexible and better suited to research more complex relations and social constructions (Daymon & Holloway 2002, 5). As the goal is not to make statistical generalizations, qualitative research usually concentrates on a smaller amount of cases and seeks to examine them thoroughly and in depth (Eskola & Suoranta 2008, 18).

In qualitative research, the researcher is not only a distant investigator but actively takes part in the process of gathering information and interpreting it. The data gathering is a joint process where the researcher and the participants create and interpret data in interaction also being influenced and interpreted by each other (Daymon & Holloway 2002, 8). Qualitative research is interpretation on multiple levels. The participants tell their interpretation of events, behaviour or phenomena to the researcher, who then interprets the data gathered. When the research is being read the reader then interprets the same information for the third time. This and the possibility of misinterpretations should be taken into consideration when talking about qualitative research. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009, 229.)

As stated before, the amount of the data analysed is not as relevant as in quantitative research. More important is the quality and depth of the analysis made of it (Eskola & Suoranta 2008, 67). Therefore, it is also important that the participants are chosen based on their knowledge and capability to provide it. Instead of randomness the choice should be purposeful and based on consideration. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 86.) In the present study consideration was used when choosing the sample of the digital natives. A media oriented upper secondary school was chosen, as the students there were assumed to have better abilities to reflect and discuss the themes given. For the purpose of the study, it was important that the participants had

sufficient abilities to talk about media related behaviour, expectations and relationship with media and it was considered to be more purposeful to take a sample from students who had more dealt with the rather vague concepts related to media. Especially taken into consideration the age of the participants and their possible unfamiliarity with interview situations.

4.1.1 Interviews

Usually the data for qualitative research is gathered from one or more of the following sources: interviews, observations and documents (Patton 2002, 4). In the present study interviews were considered to be a suitable way for data gathering. When researching people's perceptions, thoughts and opinions interview is a natural way to gather information as it is a flexible method and allows the researcher to discuss with the participants, ask more defining questions and to correct misunderstandings (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 72-73). Through interviews researchers "enter into the other person's perspective" and gather their stories, which in qualitative research are seen valuable and meaningful (Patton 2002, 341).

Interviews are especially useful when researching a topic with little earlier research or the topic will generate complex answers (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, 35). Semi-structured interview was chosen for the present study, as there is little research over engaged behaviour of Finnish digital natives and the answers were expected to be complex. The research wanted to generate information widely on the participants' media use, relationship with media and their willingness and motivations for engaged behaviour to be able to understand the behaviour and reasons behind it. Also because of the vagueness of the concepts used and the participants' age, a possibility for defining questions and correcting misunderstandings was seen essential.

4.1.2 Group Interviews

Group interviews can be used when it is assumed that the participants will be nervous about the interview situation. In group interviews the participants can get support from each other and thus be less nervous about the situation. It might also help for getting more information as the participants can get ideas from each other, discuss, think back and encourage each other. Usually a group includes 4-8 people, depending on the purpose of the study. (Eskola & Suoranta 2008, 94-96.) In group interviews the participants can more freely discuss about the themes given, which can lead to more diverse data (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, 61).

Group interviews also have down sides, which the interviewer needs to acknowledge. Group dynamics is an important issue and the interviewer needs to have control over the situation. The interviewer has to keep the discussion-like situation on the right track and the focus of the participants on the themes given. The interviewer has to make sure that some of the participants don't overrule others and dominate the situation at the expense of other participants (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, 63).

To prevent the potential negative influences of group interview situations, data triangulation was used. In addition to the interviews, each participant also wrote an essay where they had the chance to freely and anonymously express their opinions. Data triangulation is a form of method triangulation and combines data gathered in different ways. However, the use of triangulation should always be considered case by case and only used if it brings added value to the study. (Eskola & Suoranta 2008, 69-70.) In the present study triangulation was seen useful and it brought added value in securing the reliability of the data as both the interviews and the written essays were analysed as part of the data.

4.1.3 Narratives

Narrative inquiry is used to describe human behaviour with stories. Narratives are events and happenings gathered together to form a plotted

whole. The plot gives a story a narrative meaning as it helps to understand the relations between different events and happenings in the storyline and the contributions these happenings give on the outcome. (Polkinghorne 1995, 5-7.; Elliot 2005, 3.)

Polkinghorne (1995, 12) differentiates two main types of narratives in the qualitative research: the analysis of narratives and the narrative analysis. In analysis of narratives the researcher collects stories, which are then further analysed by finding for example common themes and characters from the stories. In the narrative analysis researcher doesn't collect but constructs stories based on collected descriptions of events. In the process the researcher discovers the plot of a constructed story and therefore gives the line of events a narrative meaning. (Polkinghorne 1995, 12.) In the present study the latter approach, narrative analysis, is used. As the narrative analysis helps to understand people and their behaviour, the reasons for different outcomes and relations of events and behaviour (Polkinghorne 1995, 19) it was seen not only suitable but also bringing value to the present study.

Boje (2001, 1-3) differentiates stories and narratives stating that unlike narratives stories don't have plots and he names stories antenarratives, as being something prior to a narrative. Antenarratives don't have coherent plots as they are incomplete and fragmented. Usually the basic requirement for narratives is seen as having a beginning, middle and an end. However, in antenarratives this doesn't happen as they are not coherent stories with clear timelines. Antenarratives can also be stories that don't yet have an ending as they are still unfinished and in the present, speculating what is happening. In narratives the ending is already known and presented. (Boje 2001, 5-6.)

In the postmodern society antenarratives are becoming more common. Coherent narratives are more difficult to find as the environment people operate in has become more complex. There are countless numbers of stories and narratives going on at the same time, overlapping and influencing each others. Narratives are often broken to bits and pieces, fragments of narratives, antenarratives. (Boje 2001, 5.)

Also the present study uses antenarratives. As the Digital Natives' stories of engagement are not yet complete, the narratives are more speculating

antenarratives. Engaged behaviour is not seen as something started, changed and come to a conclusion, but rather as constantly evolving behaviour.

As the data for the narrative analysis is not a story as itself, the data can come from multiple sources, such as interviews, observations and written documents (Polkinghorne 1995, 16). In the present study a mix of interviews and written documents were used. When constructing a narrative story of the data gathered, the context of the happenings and the environment of the characters' need to be taken into consideration. People don't act in a vacuum but other people and the environment they act in influence their behaviour, which needs to be also noted in the constructed story. (Polkinghorne 1995, 16-17.) Also, like in all qualitative research, also in narrative inquiry it needs to be acknowledged that constructed narratives are not free from the constructor's subjectivity and interpretations. Especially in the case of narrative analysis where the researcher constructs the plotted story, it should not be taken as a story of actual events as they happened in real life, but as it is: a constructed story. Also the researchers need to be aware of their contributions to the narratives. (Polkinghorne 1995, 19.)

4.2 Structure of the Empirical study

Empirical study among the Finnish digital natives was conducted in order to give answers to the research questions. First a pre-study was implemented to define whether the participants could be called digital natives after which the actual data was collected by group-interviews and essays. Table 2 presents the structure of the empirical study.

Table 2. The structure of the empirical study.

Phase	Aim	Implementation	Analysis
Pre-Study	To find out whether the concept of digital natives is applicable	By gathering 14 essays from the students of the target school. Essays were part of a media course and based on the students own media diaries	Analysed by content analysis before gathering the actual data. Results presented in the chapter 5.1.
Pre-Assignments	To find out whether the group interviews distorted the data and to give the participants a chance for anonymous opinion sharing	The participants wrote an essay on their media use and relationship with media before the interviews. The topics of the pre-assignment were also covered during the interviews for comparability	First compared to the interview data to find significant differences. After they were not found, added to the data with the interviews and analysed first by thematizing and then by constructing narratives. Results presented in the chapters 5.2 and 5.3.
Group Interviews	To answer the research questions	Group interviews at the target school on 1 st of March 2012. Before the interviews the interview form was tested by interviewing a student belonging to the same age group.	Analysed together with the essays, first the data was thematized, after which narratives were constructed. Results presented in the chapters 5.2 and 5.3.

The data for the present study was gathered among students of a media oriented upper secondary school in Finland. The school in question was chosen, because the students aged 16-18 were perceived as old enough to be able to reflect their relationship with media but also young enough to having grown up surrounded by digital media. In a media oriented school the students were thought to have better abilities to discuss about media and their relationship to it, as the terminology and media in general was more familiar to them. Permission for gathering the data from the school in question was applied from the City of Helsinki Education Department and gained on the 16th of November 2011, after which the school was contacted for co-operation. The interviews were agreed to be held on 1st of March 2012.

Before the actual data gathering, a pre-study was implemented in order to map the media usage and relationships with media of the students to ensure that they could be called digital natives. The pre-study also helped in constructing the interview as it gave a view of the students media habits and also raised some themes that weren't thought of by the researcher. The pre-study was implemented by gathering ready-made essays from the target school. Originally the essays were a part of a media course and in them the students reflected upon their media usage and relationship to it based on a media diary they had made earlier. Students' permission to use the essays in the study was asked and gained. 14 essays were received on 12.12.2011 and analysed with content analysis.

Based on the pre-study and literature a semi-structured interview form (see appendix 1) was constructed. There were four themes in the interview form: media usage, relationship with media, expectations towards media and organizational relations via media. As the participants were young and not necessarily used to interview situations, the researcher prepared questions under every theme to help the discussion. The themes and the interview questions were formed in accordance with the research task and also the pre-study was used. The pre-study helped to form a perception of the concepts the participants were familiar with and thus helped in word choices and forming the questions. It also gave a general glimpse of their media use and formed a basis on which the interview was build as well as raised some themes that were not considered by the researcher earlier, but were then further studied in the interviews.

The interview was tested beforehand by interviewing an upper secondary school student. The same pre-task and letter to guardians were handed out before the test interview. The interview lasted for 23 minutes and didn't cause big changes to the interview form. By testing the interview it was made sure that the themes and questions were comprehensible and relevant to the study. As no major changes were made to the interview form, also the test interview and pre assignment were added to the data.

The group interviews took place on 1st of March 2012 in an empty class room at the target school. Students from four different courses took part in the interviews. The pre-assignments were handed out to the students 5 days before the interview. Also letters to home asking for under aged students' parents' permission for the students to participate in the study were handed out 5 days before. Those students that had handed in their guardian's approval (except for the over 18 years old) and willing to participate in the study were interviewed. Altogether 30 students in 7 groups were interviewed. Group sizes varied from three to six people. The length of the interviews varied from 22 to 58 minutes. After the interviews all interviews (altogether 8, including the test interview) were transcribed carefully. The transcribing produced 115 pages of written text.

The participants were given pre-assignments to do at home before the interview. The pre-assignment (see appendix 2) was an essay about their media use and its goal was to make the participants think about how they used media and their relationship with it in advance and to prepare them for the interview. Another function was to give the participants an opportunity to share their opinions anonymously and without group pressure from other participants. As the interviews were conducted as group interviews and for the participants' young age, it was taken into consideration that the group interviews might have negative impact as well. Some participants might not be able or willing to express their thoughts in front of the group or the group dynamics might alter the participants' responses. The pre-assignment questions were also covered during the interview in the theme one and therefore the answers could be compared to find any inconsistencies caused by the group situation.

The pre-assignments were later on analysed as a part of the data, together with the interviews. First the complete data was read through several times and then thematized using colour coding and analysing themes that occurred repeatedly in the data. The narratives of engagement were then constructed by, also with the help of colour codes, gathering, grouping and analysing patterns in the respondents engaged behaviour. Narratives were then constructed and written based on the patterns found. Also missing narratives and repeating exceptions were looked for in order to understand the data better.

5 RESULTS

In this chapter the results of the study are presented. First the results of the pre-study will be covered and discussed. The pre-study explored the students' media use and tested the rightfulness of the use of the concept of digital natives. The pre-study also offered a glimpse to the generations perceptions of media and their relationships with it.

After the pre-study, the results from the actual data including the group interviews and the pre-assignment essays are presented. The interview was built around four different themes: media usage, relationship with media, expectations towards the media and organizational relations formed via media. As expected, there were also other themes and sub-themes that came up during the interviews. The pre-assignments were analysed as a part of the data, together with the interviews. The main purpose of the pre-assignments was to make the participants think about their relationship to media beforehand and to give the participants a chance to share their opinions anonymously and without group pressure. The questions of the pre-assignment were also covered in theme one during the interview and the interviews were coherent with the essays. The participants did express stronger emotions in the essays than during the interviews, but their views or opinions didn't change.

When reporting the results, first a general view of the participants' media habits, preferences and perceptions was made. Building on that, the motivations behind media and organizational engagement were attempted

to find and explain through narratives. Quotes from the interviews are marked with q and quotes from the essays with e.

5.1. Pre-Study

The pre-study confirmed the use of the term digital natives as it was defined in the earlier chapters. The participants of the pre-study preferred online channels over traditional media and perceived them as a natural part of their daily lives. Also three of Tapscott's (2009) personal traits for the net gen, customization, entertainment and speed, were recognized from their media use and preferences.

Online channels and the computer were the most used media channels and devices among the participants of the pre-study. Traditional media like newspapers, radio and television were used less, if at all. Reasons behind the superiority of the online channels were most often easiness, quickness and the possibility of customization.

The participants of the pre-study liked using the computer as it enabled multitasking. They simultaneously listened to music, read news and chatted with friends and enjoyed the possibility to do so. Some brought up that they actually needed to listen to music or keep the television on while doing something else, as it helped them to concentrate. Being able to multitask online also made media usage easy and quick. With devices like smart phones time consuming was even more efficient as the participants of the pre-study could read news and chat with friends while travelling by bus, for example.

Many traditional media channels were perceived as unnecessary as technology had surpassed them. Instead of radio, many listened to music on YouTube, their phones or mp3-players, which enabled tailored playlists. To some, radio had no use anymore as: *"Why would you listen to radio waiting if they would play a song you like when you can just go listen to it on YouTube?"* Also books were in one case replaced with blogs and talking books as the

participant found books boring and wasn't able to concentrate on them, even though she would have wanted to.

Many of the participants of the pre-study were continuously reachable via phone, Facebook or some other channels. Media had a big meaning in their lives and many described how life would be "boring" without it or that they couldn't survive without it. For them media meant social relationships, entertainment and knowledge.

Going back to Prensky's (2001a) definition of digital natives, the digital environment has altered the way the generation behaves and processes information. Even though the pre-study was relatively small and not to be generalized on the whole generation, it gave hints of behaviour typical for digital natives. Multitasking and need for background noise referred to that the participants needed constant stimuli to concentrate and to keep up their interest. Being connected through online media was an important part of their lives and kept them from not "dying of boredom". Most of the participants wanted their information fast and easy and didn't have time or interest to wait around hearing or seeing something interesting via traditional media.

As described above also some of Tapscott's (2009) personal traits, customization, entertainment and speed could be recognized from the pre-study. The participants of the pre-study appreciated and expected these qualities in the media they used. As expected, not all but some of the pre-study participants also engaged themselves in content creation. Usually content creation meant Facebook, but some also told about blogs and creating games.

Based on the pre-study the concept of digital natives was seen to be suitable for the present study and the group studied can therefore be called digital natives as it was defined earlier in the study.

5.2 General view of the data

From the actual data of the study, consisting of the group interviews and the pre-assignment essays, a general view was first drawn by using content analysis. The general view helped understanding the participants' media use and relations more broadly, which was helpful in making more deep analysis over engagement. Here the results of the general view are presented.

The data collected further supported the use of the concept of digital natives. The media usage of the participants was highly concentrated around online channels and just a few devices, mainly computers and mobile phones. When asked during the interview what was the medium the participants used the most, the Internet was clearly the most mentioned one (19), Facebook came close behind (15), after which YouTube (8) and television (7) followed. Both radio and newspapers were only mentioned by one participant each. A lot of participants couldn't think of a medium they didn't use at all, but among those who did, it was most commonly the newspapers.

Online channels were mostly used because they were perceived as a quick and easy way to find loads of information. The participants were also attracted to the opportunity of doing multiple things at once while being online; checking the news, being on Facebook and listening to music, for instance. Online channels were described as convenient as one can easily consume more than one medium at the same time and choose the information perceived as relevant or interesting. Also cost efficiency was an important factor. The fast updating pace of online channels was also found attractive and a good or an interesting media channel was described as one that has constantly updating and new content.

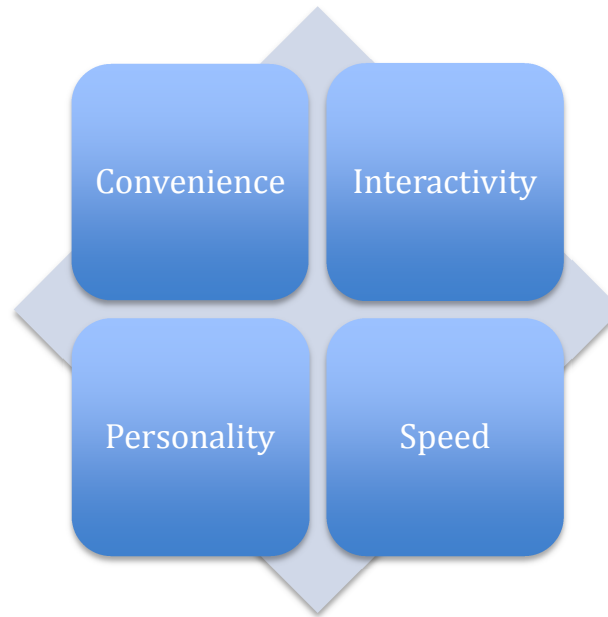


Figure 3. The most attractive media features: convenience, interactivity, personality and speed.

All in all, it can be said that there are four main features that attracted the participants the most: convenience, interactivity, personality and speed, which are presented in the figure 3. For many, newspapers took too much time and effort to read and online news was reached more easily and conveniently while doing other things online. Interactivity and the people behind the content were perceived as the most attractive things in the social media, the most used media type among the participants. In social media the participants shared and expressed their own personas as well as got influence from others and followed other people's lives. In order to be interesting, media content needed to have some personal reference to the digital native consumer. News that didn't have any personal meaning to the participant was often ignored. The participants wanted to be able to easily choose and consume the content that was relevant to them and skip everything else. To keep the interest of the participants, the content needed to update quickly and regularly.

The data included many implicit hints of the ubiquitousness of media. The participants had trouble talking about and describing their relationship with media and media usage, as it was so integrated into their daily life. They

described their relationship to media as “dependent”, “close” and “hourly”, for instance. The importance of media for the participants was big, even though often taken for granted and not really thought about. Using media wasn’t an “event”, but a natural part of everyday life and therefore often unconscious. For that reason, thinking about life without media was found challenging and in some cases nearly impossible. Also the concept of media itself was somewhat difficult to conceive. The participants weren’t always sure what the concept of media included and sometimes thought only about the online environment when talking about media in general.

Media was mainly used for entertainment and social relations and less for informational purposes. There was also concern for over-use and using media too much for entertainment. Some participants wished they would or thought they should consume media less or use it for more informational purposes. This contradicted with their perception of media being a natural part of their everyday life and the importance and meaning of it. It may be that concerns were more learned externally as the debate over the influences of being online and use of digital media on young people has been going on in the society for long. Some of the participants clearly felt the need to state that they were not addicted, even though they use a lot of media.

The participants also recognized that they were a part of the “Internet generation”. The importance of media and the influences of the online environment were recognized and also thought about by some participants.

“Nowadays the world spins around media. I think my generation could be called the children of the media, as we constantly absorb influences from media like sponges and our identities and perceptions of the world are also unconsciously altered by the influences of the media.” e1

The participants also seemed to have norms for their generation and used phrases like “like everyone my age”, “as all young people” and “our generations is not that interested in...” assuming that as a generation they shared some habits, values and behavioural traits.

The participants expected media to concentrate around few devices and for media devices to become “smarter” and more integrated in the future. Even though print media had its defenders as well, most of the participants thought it would drastically decrease or vanish, as will happen also to other traditional media like radio and television in their current form. The participants wanted media channels to be more targeted according to age groups and/or interests. Targeting was perceived to help filtering messages and information that were relevant to a group. The quality of journalism was also an issue. Some participants expected more quality content and better morals from the media. However, even though the yellow press was widely criticized, it was also widely read and used as entertainment.

The free sharing and content creating in social media were perceived mainly as a good and a necessary thing, but it also raised lots of concerns. The participants realised the complexity of controlling the Internet and freedom of speech but wanted them both. The participants wanted more control on the Internet and were worried about phenomena like online bullying, increased hate speech and illegal Internet content. They were also bothered by “random” and pointless messages that crowded online platforms and felt the need to filter them out. Still restrictions were described as “scary” and content creating and sharing was seen as a right.

Keeping this basis in mind, a more deep analysis was made of the participants’ media and organizational engagement by constructing narratives. The goal was to examine the motivational factors and reasons for positively engaged, negatively engaged and disengaged behaviour, as well as the general tendency to do so.

5.3 Narratives of Engagement

The narratives of engagement were approached from two different perspectives. First the participants’ engagement to different media and media content was explored. Another aspect of engagement studied was the participants’ engagement to organizations via social media. The purpose was to find out whether they used social media to engage with organizations on

different levels: talking about them, talking to them and following the them. Similar to media engagement also here the reasons and motivational factors behind the engaged behaviour were studied. In both cases engagement was researched on three different levels: positive engagement, negative engagement and disengagement and are presented in that order. The narratives brought out specific types of engaged digital native consumers, the characters of the narratives, which are explained in the narratives described.

5.3.1 Positive Engagement

One narrative of positive engagement with media and two narratives of positive engagement with organizations via social media were formed from the data. In the data positive engagement showed for instance as linking, “liking”, recommending and following brands, products or companies. All in all, the motivations behind positive engagement were rather self-centred and are presented next.

Positive Engagement in Social Media: The Narrative of connectivity and co-tailoring

The data formed a strong narrative of positive engagement in social media. In this narrative social media and especially Facebook got a unique and special meaning and place in the participants media use, as they often engaged in recommending, linking, sharing and creating content on Facebook, even if they didn’t anywhere else. Social media responded to their expectations for fast updating pace, personally relevant information, convenience and interactivity and was therefore the most used form of media. The most important elements of this narrative were connectivity and co-tailoring, which were important motivational factors behind the positively engaged behaviour.

Connectivity was closely related to the people behind the content who were at least as important as the content itself. On Facebook the participants felt

like they were connected to their social circle and chatting with friends, “keeping up with what is happening” and “keeping one’s social happenings in order” were the most important functions of Facebook for the participants. Online they felt like being “part of a bigger community” or “one big family”. The participants expressed feelings of anxiety, emptiness and being left out if they for some reason didn’t have access to social media. Facebook was seen as a norm for a young person as “everyone and everything” was there. In order to keep up with the social interaction and to be seen in their social circle, the participants had to engage themselves with sharing and creating content and to react on content created by others. Being connected and getting feedback from others were described as the “addictive” features that kept the participants logging in time after time.

“It’s like, when our Internet connection was cut for a while, I felt like I was living in a box, not knowing anything about anything” q1

“At first I really didn’t want to go to Facebook but then everyone else went there and they were like ‘why don’t you have Facebook?’ ... It is just so much easier to keep your social events organized online” q2

The other core element of the narrative was co-tailoring. The participants didn’t want to waste time on information that wasn’t personally interesting, which can be challenging in the continuous information flow. In social media, however, the whole social circle took part in tailoring by linking and sharing things relevant for them. Through this co-tailoring the members of the social circle were more likely to find the information they were interested in without actually looking for it. For example in Facebook the social circle collectively shares information, recommendations and news to each other. As all the relevant information stores on the same platform, it becomes a manageable stream of interesting information.

Typically for this narrative, Facebook or a platform like it was seen to be a permanent part of the future media use. As it had become a tool to manage and organize one’s social life and information, it had integrated deeply in the participants’ daily life and therefore needed. It was acknowledged that content on the Internet changes quite rapidly and that something might

replace Facebook, but for the participants sharing, connecting and co-filtering were here to stay.

All in all, according to this narrative, the willingness to engage with media originates from the personal relevance of the channel. Being connected to the relevant people and the personal content filtered by co-tailoring enhanced positive engagement. The importance of personal relevance also showed the other way around. When a medium or an organization was perceived as distant and too general it often showed as disengagement.

Positive Engagement as a Tool for Self-representation: Self-branders

The first narrative of engagement with organizations via social media described the use of positive engagement as a tool for self-representation. Typically in this narrative, the participants for instance liked brands, products and companies on Facebook, but never or rarely visited their Facebook page. The participants didn't press "like" for the sake of getting information and benefitting from their liking in a material sense, but to build up their own Facebook profile and to show out their personality through the brands they consumed or liked.

In this narrative Facebook as a personalized media channel was combined with self-branding. As Facebook was a tool for managing social relations, it also became a tool for self-representation. Liking products one admired, used or fancied on Facebook built one's Facebook profile and image on the eyes of the social circle. This was also used consciously as Facebook's value in self-branding was realised.

"Facebook says so much about one's life. It is like your business card to others. They see everything about your life and it is mutual sharing" q3

"When I like an item, Jopo bikes, for instance, I don't go visit the page. It's a bike, I don't need to know more than that." q4

To like a brand, product or company these participants needed to like them in real life. In this case there is only little for the organization to do in order to get more likes, as no “like us and get a discount” tricks work, unless the consumers like the brand itself in real life. On the other hand, as the likings are used to build a preferable image of one self, the consumers don’t necessarily have to consume the products, as long as they would like to.

“If you want to relate to it... (On why one likes an item on Facebook)” q5

“... And tell others that you like the product.” q6

In the narrative of self-branders, the reasons and motivations behind positive engagement didn’t have that much to do with the organizations but the participants themselves. Thus the engaged behaviour wasn’t very sustainable as it often stopped after “liking” and the participants didn’t engage themselves in a dialogue or two-way relationship with the organization. If the participants wanted to get information about new products or the organization, they didn’t look for it from Facebook but advertisements or the official web sites.

Benefitting from Positive Engagement: the Benefitters

The other narrative of positive organizational engagement via social media focused on benefitting from engaged behaviour. As opposed to those who liked brands purely to support their self-branding in social media, in this narrative the participants liked products, brands and companies to get information or material benefits.

Typically for the narrative, getting information was more linked to bands, people and events than companies, brands and products. Liking companies and brands for information was often found useless or pointless, as the information wasn’t found interesting or the participants relied on finding out relevant information through commercials and other channels, if needed. However, following bands and people in social media was described as a

good tool to get entertaining and relevant information quickly and easily. Through social media the participants got updates in real-time from the people and things they followed or liked.

“If you like someone, like someone famous, he puts pictures of him online and then you can follow what he is doing and where he is.” q7

Another form of benefitting was getting material benefits such as discounts and offers through liking. Although in these cases the benefits needed to be big enough and sometimes the participants had doubts about the honesty of the companies using promises of material gain in return for liking their page. The participants believed that organizations would get more “likes” and followers if the consumers would benefit from it more. Easy, light and fun content, offers, discounts and prize draws were seen as attractive features on companies social media sites and to some level, even expected.

“You get to know about new stuff if you like something, for example Nike Finland Football, they always send me offers and things and I can follow them constantly like that” q8

5.3.2 Narratives of negative engagement

One narrative of negative media engagement and three narratives of negative engagement with organizations via social media were formed. Negative engagement was mostly shown as spreading negative information over an organization, product or a brand. However, describing for the narratives of negative engagement was that the engagement wasn't very strong or even actively avoided.

The Lack of Negative Media Engagement: the Ignorers

When it comes to negative media engagement, the participants didn't really show interest or need for it. Quite quickly the data formed a narrative of lack of interest for negative media engagement as it was made unnecessary by the freedom of choice.

Typically for this narrative, the participants had difficulties in thinking about media towards which they had strong negative feelings. As there was so much to choose from on the broad media field, it was also easy to just ignore the media one dislikes. Even when the participants had negative feelings or dislike towards a medium or media content, often they noted that its existence didn't bother them or that they didn't mind if someone else liked the medium in question.

"Maybe if they have exaggerated and have false information it is not nice, but I don't know if it is disgust even then." q23

Even strong negative emotions didn't lead to negative engagement but to disengagement, if anything. Sometimes "ridiculous" media content got shared in social media among friends as a joke if it was found "amusing" or if the content "really annoyed" the sharer. The latter case can be defined as negative engagement, but it was more related to specific media contents and not to a medium itself.

Unethical Actions Leading to Negative Engagement: the Moralists

In organizational engagement via social media the biggest motivation for negative engagement was the unethical actions of companies. In this narrative the participants stated they were ready to spread negative information over a company if it would act against their personal values and for example commit environmental crimes, use child labour or violate human rights.

“Being unethical would (make spread negative information). If they act against my beliefs, I could send them a message about it. But I think the message needs to be appropriately negative, and not just dissing them, no one would pay attention to that.” q24

What was very characterizing for the narrative was that the participants had not actually really engaged themselves in negative engagement, but said they would be willing to. Also, the unethical actions needed to be serious enough and the participants had to be certain the companies were actually doing something wrong. The message they would be willing to share needed to be appropriate and reasoned instead of just a plain hate group or a hate message. They were also more willing to spread negative information to their families and friends face-to-face than on social media. Also, if the participants didn't perceive an issue relevant or close enough, they just didn't make the effort to share their opinion, even if, in principle they were willing to.

Bad Experiences in Negative Engagement: the Hard-feelers

Another reason for negative organizational engagement was bad personal experiences. According to this narrative, the more unfair the participants thought they were treated, the more it resulted in negative engagement. The participants expressed no willingness for negative engagement over small faults in products as “manufacturing mistakes happen” and “one faulty product doesn't mean it's all bad”. However, if the participants felt they were somehow misled or tricked, they were willing to share their bad experiences with others.

“If you think it's bad or you have been treated unfair in something. If they sold you broken products, for example, or something that didn't last even though it should have, that is something you should inform others about.” q25

Also in the narrative of personal bad experiences, the participants were rather careful with the negative engagement. It wasn't necessarily perceived as worth the trouble and also somehow embarrassing or childish without

solid grounds and good reasoning. Again, they were more willing to share their bad experiences face-to-face than online.

Disengagement from Negative Engagement: The opinion hidiers

As seen above, unwillingness to engage with negatively engaged behaviour was a dominating feature in negative organizational engagement. As opposed to the lack of interest to engage or not wanting to make the effort of doing so as described in the narratives before, this narrative describes active refraining from negatively engaged behaviour. Typically for this narrative the participants saw negative engagement as “none of their business”. Spreading negative messages online was seen as rather extreme compared to face-to-face WOM and needed a bigger motivation and trigger.

“I wouldn’t write about it on the Internet, but maybe tell my friends and family if some product was bad or didn’t work. But I don’t think I would share it to be seen by everyone. I don’t have any need to share it.” q26

“I think it is quite childish to be on Facebook like ‘I hate H&M’ or so. If you have an opinion, you don’t need to... Or I don’t know, it looks a bit funny.” q27

According to the narrative, the participants didn’t see a reason for negatively engaged behaviour, as they didn’t think it would change anything. They didn’t think it was their job to spread the word and didn’t show interest in it. It was also perceived as a lot of trouble and having to take an extra step. Interestingly negative engagement was not used for self-representation unlike positive engagement but the participants rather kept their dislike to themselves than shared it publicly. Sharing negative content on platforms like Facebook was seen as difficult or not suitable. In general the participants used Facebook for light and entertaining content and negatively engaged behaviour was seen to draw more negative comments and to cause a mess. Typically for this narrative, social media and especially Facebook wasn’t perceived as the right places to release one’s frustration or anger, even though the participants had understanding for those who did so.

"I'm not that interested that I would start sabotaging anything (when talking about negative WOM)." q28

"If I know about it, I assume that others do too." q29

5.3.3 Narratives of Disengagement

Two narratives of disengagement were formed from both media engagement and engagement with organizations via social media. Disengagement was a rather dominating form of engagement and reasons for it varied. Disengagement was shown as abandoning media or organizations, products and brands or as ignorance.

Replacement in Disengagement: the Upgraders

The first narrative of disengagement concerns media and the role of replacement in media disengagement. The narrative describes how certain media was replaced with something else. Typically, the replaced medium was some form of traditional media, which was replaced with technological innovations. However, also forms of new media had been replaced by something "new" and "better".

Nearly all of the participants preferred online news sites to newspapers. Online news was described as "easier", "quicker" and "more convenient". Even those who preferred printed papers stated that print media needs time, which they didn't always have. Printed newspapers were perceived as difficult, time consuming and one had to go through trouble reading one and finding the interesting stories. It is also noteworthy that due to their age the participants had never necessarily even gotten used to reading newspapers and therefore they had little nostalgic feelings towards them, unlike older generations.

"It's a lot easier to pick the things that are interesting to you (online), on newspapers there is so much stuff that doesn't necessarily interest you." q9

"And you are at the computer anyway, so you can do a lot of things at the same time. On one tab you have Facebook and then on the other you read news and also listen to music at the same time. It is an easier and a nicer way." q10

Also television and radio were being replaced with more "convenient" forms of media. Online television gave freedom to watch what one wanted when one wanted to and also to skip commercials, which were found very annoying. Radio was replaced with tailored playlists on phones, mp3 players or online sites like YouTube. The replacement was seen as inevitable and natural, as all media usage was believed to concentrate even more around just one or a few devices in the future.

"I use more Internet nowadays that we have computers and all. When I was little I used to just watch television. And back then I also used radio more. But now that there are phones you can do things online with, it has changed the way I use media quite a lot." q11

"I don't think I'll use radio that much, already now I rather listen to my own playlists via my iPhone and when I am in the car I connect the iPhone to it. And in general, there are so many opportunities for listening to the music you want so that radio is just left unused." q12

The narrative of replacement also involved social media channels. Actually, in the online environment the span of replacement is even faster, as users follow trends and new platforms are easy and quick to build up. The participants had abandoned services like Messenger and Irc-galleria as Facebook came along and replaced them both. They also believed Facebook could be replaced if people would move to another platform like it. The attractiveness of such channels lies in people and users easily just "follow the mass". In case of social media platforms the reason for replacement is not necessarily convenience and technological superiority, but trends.

"Or if something better comes along. For example there used to be Irc-galleria and then everyone went to Facebook so no one uses it actively anymore. If there is something better where everyone else goes to then you just kind of like follow the mass." q13

Unmet expectations in disengagement: The disappointed

The second narrative of disengagement concerned unmet expectations in media disengagement. This narrative describes how unmet expectations led to feelings of disappointment and often to disengagement.

Typical for this narrative was that the more personal the disappointment was the more it showed as disengagement. If the participants felt that they had been treated unfairly or that actions of the media concerned them directly, it was more likely to affect their behaviour. When they were disappointed more on a general level, or knew something was "wrong in principle" it didn't necessarily have an impact in their behaviour.

In the case of media engagement, the disappointment was mainly directed at the yellow press. The participants were disappointed at the "dishonest" and "scandal seeking" way they used in their headlining and reporting news. The tabloids took "words out of context" and were therefore "misleading". As news media the participants expected more quality and news-like content from the tabloids and showed strong negative emotions towards unimportant celebrity news, like "Johanna Tukiainen doesn't like green eyes".

"Media that I want to avoid are usually the tabloids. The tabloids and their pitiful web pages and ridiculously childish headlining. The journalists aren't the best either." e2

"I read them less. Or at least it is not my first choice." q14

Even though the yellow press was harshly criticized of bad journalism, misleading, pointless content and even lies, it didn't necessarily lead to disengagement. Some of the participants confessed reading tabloids and enjoying it, even though they first criticized them of bad journalism. When the disappointing behaviour was not directed at the participants themselves and therefore not personal, it was more approved and thought of as entertainment. Scandalous reporting style was also perceived as part of the tabloids' business and at some level even expected from them, which made it more acceptable.

"I hate to read... Well I like to read them (gossip magazines), but in principle they are very disgusting. How they write about people with no reason and make everything such an big issue and that is ridiculous" q15

"It is part of what they do, but it is wrong as well. If something like that would be written about me, I would be mad. But on the other hand they make money with it, so it is fine. And they don't write about me." q16

When the disappointing actions had clear consequences on the participants themselves, it also affected their behaviour. Some of the participants were scared for their own privacy in Facebook, which made them more cautious in their actions in Facebook regarding the content they created and decreased their use of Facebook.

"It (the disappointment) decreases the use of the site, I guess. Or at least I use less Facebook because of the new updates..." q17

"Nowadays I'm more cautious when using Facebook. If I have something personal to say, I don't dare to talk about it in Facebook chats, because you never know if it ends up being published somewhere." q18

Facebook's popularity and norm-like status among young people probably stopped the users to disengage altogether, but the risk of losing their own privacy made them to disengage from some actions on the platform.

No Point in Engaging: the Critics

The third narrative of disengagement concerned organizational disengagement via social media. In this narrative, the participants didn't see a point in engaging with companies as they were perceived as cold and distant and the participants believed the companies didn't care for their opinions or didn't want to interact with them.

"Yeah, but I don't know. Somehow I feel like if a person would contact a big company they wouldn't... I don't know. It wouldn't lead to anything. I think they would just ignore it... They have other things to do." q19

As Facebook was a very personal platform where the participants interacted with their friends and social circle, interacting with companies was not seen as being in accordance with the "Facebook world". According to the narrative, the participants didn't see any added value in interacting with companies in social media and they believed they would get all the relevant information from advertisements or websites if needed.

R: What should there be on the Facebook page of a company? What would make it interesting enough for you to visit?

"For me, nothing. It is just a company." q20

The participants didn't believe the companies wanted to engage themselves in a dialogue either. The participants were sceptical if messages sent online were actually read or noticed by the companies. There was necessarily no need for it either, as the companies were believed to test the public's opinion before launching products. The lack of engagement was based on perceived mutual disinterest. Engaging in a dialogue was also seen as too much effort. For example, even when the participants were disappointed with a product, it was just easier to change the brand than contact the company. However, the participants believed they would be more willing to engage themselves if they thought the companies were more open for it and actually wanted them to.

"Sometimes it feels like it makes no difference if you say anything or not, they don't listen or are not interested. Especially if you do it online. Maybe if you go directly to them, but not online. It automatically ends up in the trash bin." q21

As opposed to self-branders, in the narrative of disengagement the participants didn't see a point in liking companies, products or brands in Facebook. The participants didn't want to show loyalty or commit brands, as they wanted to keep their options open and be in control of their consumption.

"I don't like companies or anything (on Facebook). Of course I like some products in general, but I don't have any loyalty towards any companies or products, I choose the one I think is the best and I like the most. I'm not brand loyal." q22

5. 4 Summary of the narrative analysis

The narratives also described nine types of digital natives in their attitudes towards engaged behaviour and motives behind it, to which the narrative analysis can be boiled down to: self-branders, benefitters, upgraders, the disappointed, critics, ignorers, moralists, hard feelers and opinion hidens. The narrative analysis is summed up in the table 4, where the types and their attitudes towards engagement are described together with their motives for engagement.

Table 4. The types of engaged digital natives, their attitudes and motives for engagement.

Type	Attitude towards engagement	Motive for engagement
Self-branders	Positive attitude towards positive engagement	Self-branding
Benefitters	Positive attitude towards positive engagement	Gaining knowledge or material benefits
Upgraders	Disengagement from traditional media is natural and inevitable as technology improves	Fulfilling needs and expectations as a motive for disengagement
The Disappointed	Disengagement is a consequence of disappointment	Disappointment and being treated unfairly as motives for disengagement
Critics	Engagement is pointless	No motives for positive and negative engagement; cold and distant organizations and perceived mutual disinterest motives for disengagement
Ignorers	No need for negative media engagement	No need or motive for negative media engagement
Moralists	Justified negative engagement is ok	Acting against values as a motive for negative engagement
Hard-feelers	Negative Engagement is ok if being treated unfairly	Bad personal experiences as a motive for negative engagement
Opinion hidiers	Negative engagement is inappropriate or embarrassing, active disengagement from negative engagement	No willingness or motive for negative engagement

The types divided into those who were willing to engage either positively or negatively, including self-branders, benefitters, moralists and hard-feelers, and those who didn't see any value in engaging and either disengaged from the media or organizations, or consciously disengaged from the engaged behaviour itself: critics, ignorers and opinion hidens. The disappointed and upgraders were disengagers who either disengaged for practical or emotional reasons that weren't strong enough to lead to negative engagement. It is relevant to notice that the types do not necessarily exclude each other as one person might have different motivations for engagement in different situations and thus might belong to more than one group.

6 CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to explore the engaged behaviour of Finnish digital natives, the motivational factors behind it and their relationship with media. Engagement was researched on three different levels: positive engagement, disengagement and negative engagement and as targeted to both media and organizations via social media. Also expectations were examined to some extent as they were seen as a vital part of engagement.

Table 5. Results of the study summed up in a table of the most important reasons behind engaged behaviour on all three levels of engagement.

	Positive Engagement	Negative Engagement	Disengagement
Media Engagement	Personal relevance, connectivity and co-tailoring	Need to engage negatively over-ruled by freedom of choice	Replacement, unmet expectations
Engagement with organizations via Social Media	Self-representation, benefitting	Unethical actions, bad personal experiences, disengagement from negative engagement	Not being listened to, too much trouble

The motivations behind engaged behaviour are summed up in the table 5. Regarding media engagement social media and especially Facebook were highly engaging channels as they were perceived as personally relevant and they enabled connectivity and co-tailoring. The relevance of personal content and being connected to other people were the main motivational factors behind positively engaged behaviour in social media. Traditional media like newspapers and radio were often replaced with forms of new media because they lacked the opportunities for connectivity and tailored content. Negative media engagement was seen as unnecessary as there was so much choice. Disliked media could easily be replaced with something else and thus there was no need for negative engagement. In the case of media engagement even strong negative emotions didn't lead to negative engagement but to disengagement.

In engaging with organizations via social media the reasons for positive engagement were self-representation or benefitting from the engaged behaviour. Negative engagement was more common regarding organizations than media and stemmed from unethical actions and bad personal experiences. There was also clear disengagement from negative engagement as it was seen unnecessary or even embarrassing or childish. Disengagement from engagement showed throughout the data and was reasoned with stating that it wouldn't change anything or it was too much trouble. Engaged behaviour wasn't perceived as something expected from the organizations' side and the participants thought they would not be listened to.

Next the results are discussed further in the light of the theory and in the order of the research questions. Media engagement and engagement via social media are being discussed together as they are tightly related and partly overlap with each other.

6.1 Digital natives' relationship with media

The participants perceived media as an inseparable and natural part of their lives. For them media represented entertainment, social relations and knowledge. Social interaction through social media had a huge meaning in

their lives and was seen as a norm for all young people. Being cut off the Internet resulted in anxiety and negative feelings, which suggests that as Vodanovich et al. (2010, 720) stated, sharing and being connected is more than just a way of using media, it is part of the digital natives' identities and who they are. This was also visible in the way social media was used for self-representation and self-branding. Instead of just being a tool for getting information, social media was used as a tool to produce favourable information of one self.

The participants also enjoyed the ubiquitousness of media and the freedom of choice they had in consuming it. Media was seen liberating, which was closely connected to the need to be connected. The respondents had some difficulties in perceiving the concept of media and often forgot about traditional media when talking about media in general. This can suggest that only real-time online media was seen as real media. This wasn't of course always the case, but still present in the data.

Even though media was seen as necessary, liberating and a natural part of everyday life, the relation to it wasn't simple. The respondents had a clear need to state that their media relation wasn't problematic or that they acknowledged that they should use media less and see people in real life or use media for more informational purposes. This contradicted with their needs and expectations of media and therefore seemed as coming from external sources. It is likely that the discussion over extensive media use of young people and its influences on them has also affected on the young people's perceptions of right media usage and they felt like justifying their media usage that didn't fit the norms set externally.

6.2 Expectations towards the media

As stated in the results the participants expected convenience, interactivity, personality and speed from the media they used. Some of Tapscott's (2009) characterizing values of the net gen were recognized from these findings. As customization, entertainment and speed were already found in the pre-study, the data implicated that the participants also valued and expected

freedom and integrity from the media and companies. Freedom in the sense that information was available for free and for everyone to use and that the broad media field offered the freedom of choice. Integrity was a clearly stated expectation when talking about tabloids and their ways of reporting. Honesty was a standard for news media and as being part of news media tabloids were strongly criticized for the lack of it. Honesty was also expected from the companies the digital natives engaged with via social media.

The respondents also expected media to become even more concentrated and media devices to become smarter in the future and offline media to decrease and eventually vanish to be completely replaced with online media. Quickly updating new content was a core expectation from a good medium and sharing and creating content was expected to be a permanent part of the media field also in the future. They also wanted and expected media to be more targeted in the future. Targeting responses to the expectation of tailored, personally relevant content. Time spent looking for interesting content was seen as time wasted, and more specific targeting would make media consumption more efficient.

6.3 Engagement

Expectations the participants had towards the media clearly showed in their engaged behaviour. The participants engaged with social media as it responded to their expectations of convenience, interactivity, personality and speed. At the same time media that didn't possess these qualities was disengaged from. The findings of the present study go together with the five elements Vodanovich et al. (2010, 718) suggested attracted the digital natives: personalised, interactive, social, intuitive and attractive. In social media the participants could also be in charge of their media consumption. In Facebook they could choose the information they wanted through choosing their friends and things they "liked" or groups they joined. This also implies that the level of engagement was enhanced by the feeling of being in control of the information process (Bardhi et al. 2010, 323-324). The same thought could be applied to communication and engagement with organizations. As the participants didn't feel they were in control of the communications relationship with organizations but instead the communication was built on

a one-way relationship controlled by the organizations, the lack of the sense of control made the digital natives less willing to engage themselves with the organizations.

The findings seem to support Livingstone's (2008, 394) statement that "creating and networking online content is becoming an integral means of managing one's identity, lifestyle and social relations". The motivational factors behind positive engagement via social media were rather related to oneself than to the brands, products or companies in question. They were also coherent with previous studies of motivations behind engaged behaviour, where identity was found to be the most important motivational factor in the case of contributing and creating brand-related content (Muntinga et al. 2011, 29-34.)

As social media and engagement via it were used as tools for self-representation and self-branding in one's social circle or to benefit from it in a material way, it can be asked how sustainable or even useful engaging the young consumers is from the organizations' side. The participants showed little signs of being brand advocates or promoting brands like highly engaged consumers or willingness to have a dialogue with organizations. They also didn't show brand loyalty or even actively wanted to avoid loyalty and be masters of their own consumption. For organizations this might implicate that efforts in engaging the generation may go in vain instead of resulting in increased reputation, loyal customer base and co-creation.

The lack of willingness to engage oneself might, however, stem from the perceptions the participants had of organizations. The participants didn't believe companies wanted them to engage in a dialogue with them. Instead, companies were perceived as cold and distant and not willing to listen to an ordinary consumer. Companies and their promotional goals weren't seen as being in accordance with the purpose of Facebook, which was considered as a channel for personal interaction. Their existence in Facebook was accepted but they were seen to be there to promote themselves and not to engage with consumers. In order to be encouraged to engage in engaged behaviour consumers need to feel successful in their attempts (van Doorn et al. 2010, 259). Being appreciated and listened to is an important part of engagement, as it is based on mutual interest and dialogue. The participants didn't feel

empowered (Muntinga et al. 2011, 34) as they thought their behavior wouldn't make a difference.

The attitudes towards engagement varied among the digital natives. The narratives described nine types of digital native in respect of the degree and nature of their engaged behaviour. Based on the tone and the level of engagement, in figure 4, the types of digital native engagers were placed on the continuum of engagement presented in the chapter 3.2.

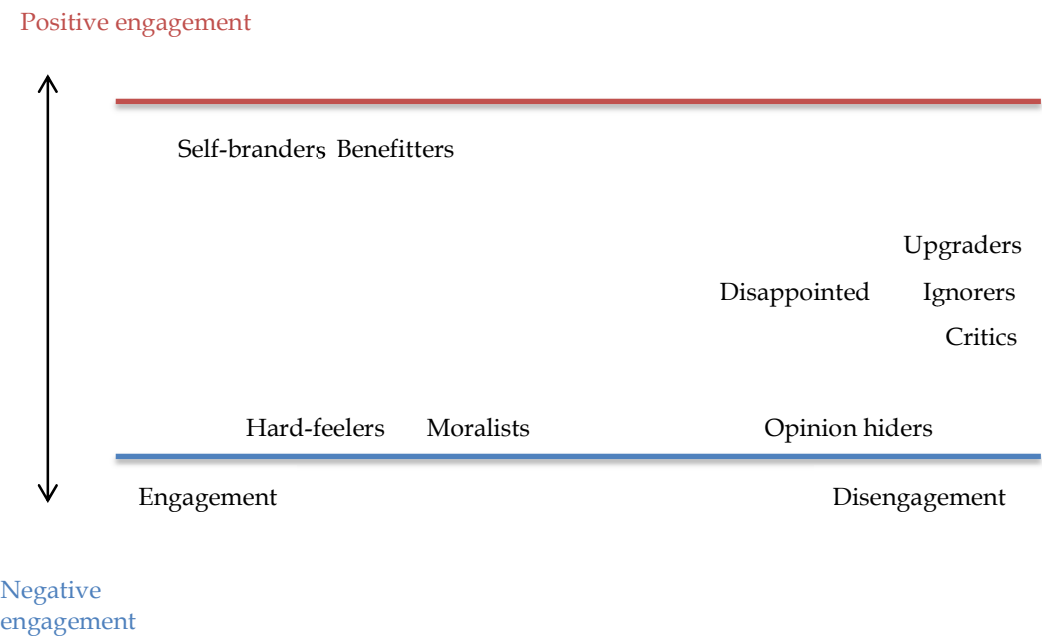


Figure 4. The types of digital native engagers placed on the continuum of engagement.

The missing narratives

Disengagement was the dominating form of engagement throughout the narratives. Positive and negative engagement existed and was clearly shown as well, but especially in the case of negative engagement, the participants rather turned to disengagement than negative engagement and sometimes even consciously chose to do so. Negative engagement was the least

favoured form of engagement, either because of the participants perceived it as too much trouble and weren't willing to take the extra step, or they perceived it as inappropriate or unsuitable behaviour for themselves.

As Luoma-aho (2009) suggests that in the reputation society of today stakeholder emotions play a vital part in organizations' success and that stakeholders are willing and able to easily share their emotion with others, it was assumed that strong emotions like hate would have resulted in negative engagement. However, even though the participants showed even strong negative emotions towards certain media or organizations, it rarely showed in negatively engaged behaviour. Instead, if anything, it led to disengagement. In general, the participants were very careful with negatively engaged behaviour and rarely perceived it as necessary or useful. Even in the case of unethical behaviour by companies the respondents stated they were willing to spread negative information over such companies but had actually never done so. The data lacked a strong narrative of negative engagement, as even strong negative emotions rarely translated into negatively engaged behaviour.

The lack of negative engagement could partly be explained by the vast variety of choices: as there is so much to choose from when consuming, it is easy to just avoid the bad brands or products and move on in case of disappointment. As the participants weren't dependent on a single medium, product, brand or company there was less need for negative engagement (van Doorn 2010, 261). Also the participants didn't believe their actions would necessarily lead to anything and therefore perceived engagement pointless or waste of effort.

However, among the opinion-hiders, there was also active avoidance of negative engagement. The respondents stressed appropriateness online and hategroups were seen as even childish. Many of them referred to the overcrowdedness of the online environment and to useless negative messages. It seems that negative messages without valid and appropriate reasoning have lost their meaning to the participants and are perceived as annoying and as extra noise. As negative messages are easy to create and distribute in the online environment, they have also become those that will be quickly filtered out. This is good news for organizations, as the Digital Natives don't seem to appreciate or engage with negative engagement without cogent reasons. The

digital natives surrounded by emotionally loaded messages online from an early age, might actually be moving away from the era of emotions (Luoma-aho 2009) and be in need of more reasoned less emotional content. The lack of negative engagement could still be studied further as a valid explanation was not sought nor found in the present study.

All in all, the findings of the study didn't give such an active and participatory image of the digital natives as could have been assumed based on the earlier research on their values, characteristics and generational qualities (see e.g Tapscott 2009; Vodanovich et al. 2010). In addition to the lack of strong negative engagement, the data lacked a narrative of eager and initiative engagement. Engagement shown was more based on sharing than creating. The participants also didn't engage themselves in conversations or two-way relationships with organizations. Personal relevance was an important factor behind all engaged behaviour and the participants didn't engage themselves for engagements sake or to feel empowered or influential in general. Instead, engagement was often seen as extra trouble and not really worth it without strong personal relevance. Companies perceived distant and uninterested in the consumers opinions lack in personal relevance as do media channels that don't enable interactivity and tailored content.

6.4 Implications for organizational communication and public relations

The present study implies that public relations is a key factor in engaging the digital natives. As engagement should be based on a relationship (Foster & Jonker 2005) and two-way communication between both parties, also organizations need to be active in engaging digital natives as consumers and engage themselves in the relationship. Through public relations organizations can build long-lasting relationships with their future stakeholders and have a dialogue over their needs and expectations in order to be able to respond to them better. Organizations also need to make the engaged consumers feel rewarded and successful in their attempts of engaged behavior (van Doorn et al. 2010, 259). According to the present

study, digital natives don't have such experiences, which would increase the willingness to engage.

In addition to just paying attention to whether consumers are engaged or not, organizations should differentiate different types of engagers based on their tone and degree of engagement (see figure 4). Motivational factors differ per type: whereas self-branders are motivated by identification with an organization, brand or product and are therefore a fertile base for long-lasting relationships, benefitters who are solely after material gain are not interested in building a relationship and disengage as soon as their material needs are met. Organizations need to assess what kind of engaged behaviour they need or want and whom they want to engage. For instance, benefitters bring value in visibility for example in social media if they gain prizes from sharing brand-related content on their profiles, whereas self-branders, even though their motivation is self-driven as well, are likely to engage more in a long term. As they identify with the brand, it is natural they also want the best for it and engage in behaviour such as positive WOM.

Lack of negative engagement among the digital natives is good news for organizations. However, even though negative engagers, moralists and hard-feelers, are rather careful in their negatively engaged behaviour, it doesn't mean they could be ignored. As their behaviour is based on reasoning and they don't lightly engage negatively, chances are that they are pointing out serious flaws in the organization's actions that need to be paid attention to. Organizations should listen to and learn from moralists and hard-feelers as they can bring value by making organizations to improve (Luoma-aho 2009, 328). Hard-feelers can even be attempted to convert away from negatively engaged behaviour or even to positively engaged consumers through actions like apologies and refunds.

Most attention should be paid, however, to disengagers such as the critics, who feel like they are not listened to and therefore are not motivated to engage. Among critics, there is huge potential for engaged consumers, if organizations take the first step and invite them to a dialogue. The critics are a sceptical, unused resource, whose disengagement is based solely on their perception of organizations not caring about their opinions. If organizations want to engage the critics and the digital native generation in general, the study suggests the first step is to clearly invite them to do so by building

honest dialogues through public relations. As the digital natives need personal relevance in order to engage, that is what organizations should offer through dialogue and sincerely caring about their opinions. Engagement itself adds to personal relevance, once the first step of successfully engaging digital natives as consumers is done. Organizations can also add personal relevance by participating on the discussions on the issues relevant to the digital natives on different issue arenas (Luoma-aho & Vos 2010). When the organizations show they care by taking part in discussions over issues important to their consumers, it is likely that they are perceived less cold and distant.

If organizations are able to engage the digital natives through dialogues, it may lead to a situation where they create significant, both reputational and innovative, value to the organizations. Digital natives can work as effective distributors and creators of organization-related content, as being connected and sharing content is already a natural and big part of their lives, but only if they wish to do so. In the worst case, if the organizations attempts to engage them do not work, it might lead to total disengagement where digital natives are passive consumers solely interested in gaining the most value for themselves and are not bothered by anything that doesn't have instant, significant value for them personally. As Tapscott (2009) suggests that the generations values drive them in all aspects of life, it can also be asked whether the attitudes and motivational factors of different types of engaged digital natives also guide their behaviour besides consuming, for instance in civic engagement or politics.

6.5 Evaluation of the study

According to Eskola & Suoranta (2008, 18), the objectivity of qualitative research comes from "recognizing its' subjectivity". As qualitative research is based on interpretations (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009, 231) it is important to evaluate the research's reliability and the factors that might have influenced it. Often research is evaluated through concepts or validity and reliability. Validity refers to whether the research was able to measure what it was indented to. It evaluates the methods used and their suitability for the research in question. Reliability means the repeatability of the study. This ensures that the results

are not coincidental, but another researcher would end up with the same results when repeating the study. These concepts are sometimes found problematic in qualitative research as they originate from quantitative research. The goal of qualitative study is not to measure, but to understand and describe and interpretations are an accepted part of the method. In qualitative research the reliability of the research can be enhanced for example by careful description of the research process. This enables also the reader to make conclusions over the trustworthiness and quality of the study. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009, 231-232.)

The reliability of the present study was aimed to be enhanced by using triangulation. As the risks of group interviews were recognized also essays were collected from the participants. The questions in the essay assignment were also covered during the interviews, which made them comparable. The goal was to see whether the group situation twisted the participants' answers and opinions. As no relevant differences were discovered between the essays and the interviews, the interviews could be trusted to present the participants true opinions and not been twisted by group dynamics or peer pressure, for instance.

The present study is not large enough to make reliable generalizations to the whole generation. However, it gives implications of Finnish digital natives relationship with media and their engaged behaviour, which was also the purpose of the study. As the goal was to map and to understand engagement among the generation, qualitative methods and a smaller sample were seen suitable. Based on this study and the findings from it, a larger and more generalizable study could be made. It would also be interesting to study Digital Natives role as part of other stakeholder groups besides consumers.

The target school chosen was a media oriented upper secondary school. The choice was seen purposeful, as it was assumed that the students would have better abilities to reflect their relationship with media and their media usage. However, it might have influenced the results in a negative way as well. It is possible that students from non-media oriented school would have had different views and the results would have been different.

Also the age of the participants brings some challenge to the reliability of the study. It must be born in mind that the participants are still at a phase of development that might lead to big changes in their thinking and behaviour later on. Therefore, it should be carefully considered when making conclusions of their behaviour and opinions which of them are due to their young age and which are characteristics due to the generational factors. This was taken into consideration throughout the study and simplified conclusions were tried to be actively avoided. Also the researcher belongs to the generation of Digital Natives, which might have resulted in a prejudice or bias evaluation of the generation and their habits. This was tried to be avoided by constant self-assessment and bearing the dual position in mind.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: The interview frame

Teema 1: Minä median käyttäjänä

- Keskustelua esitehtävästä, mitä medioita käytät eniten ja miksi? Mitä et lainkaan? Miksi? Onko medioita joita inhoat tai joita ilman et selviäisi? Miksi?

- Onko median käyttösi muuttunut viime aikoina? Jos, niin miksi?

- Miten kulutat mediaa? Seuraamalla vai luotko sisältöä? Kulutatko muiden luomaa sisältöä? Jaatko sisältöä? Miksi?

- Mikä saa sinut palaamaan uudestaan jonkun mediakanavan tai -sisällön pariin? (Mikä pitää mielenkiintoa yllä tai koukuttaa)? Mikä saa sinut lopettamaan sen käytön kokonaan?

Teema 2: Suhde mediaan

- Kuinka kuvailisit suhdettasi mediaan (muutamalla adjektiivilla/verbillä esim. Etäinen, läheinen, yksipuolinen, vuorovaikutteinen, riippuvaisuus, tarpeellisuus)? Millaisen haluaisit suhteen olevan?

- Mitä tarkoitusta eri mediat palvelevat? Tiedonhakua, viihtymistä, sosiaalisia suhteita? Mikä media vastaa mihinkin tarpeeseen?

- Oletko ollut tyytyväinen/pettynyt johonkin mediaan? Onko se vaikuttanut sinuun? Miten?

- Kulutatko jotain mediaa (nettisivu, lehti, tv-ohjelma yms.), koska sitä suositeltiin sinulle? Oletko itse suositellut? Mikä sai sinut suosittelemaan?

- Mikä on median merkitys omassa elämässäsi? Millaista elämäsi olisi ilman mediaa?

- Voiko mediaa kuluttaa liikaa? Liittykö (sosiaalisen)median käyttöön riskejä?

Teema 3: Odotukset mediaa kohtaan

- Mitä mediaa luulet käyttäväsi vielä viiden vuoden kuluttua? Mitä taas et?

- Millaista mediaa haluaisit kuluttaa ja miten? Sisällöntuotantoon osallistuen, sisältöä jakaen, kommentoiden, seuraten? Millainen on hyvä media?

- Millainen median pitäisi olla tulevaisuudessa? Pitäisikö sen muuttua jotenkin?

Teema 4: Median kautta muodostettavat organisaatiosuhteet

- Kun haluat ostaa jotain, kuinka hankit tietoa tuotteista, brändeistä, palveluista yms?

- Tykkäätkö yrityksistä/tuotteista/brändeistä Facebookissa tai seuraatko niitä muuten sosiaalisessa mediassa? Miksi tai miksi et? Oletko aktiivinen yritysten sosiaalisen median sivuilla, miksi tai miksi et? Ja miten?

- Pitäisikö yritysten ylipäättään olla esimerkiksi Facebookissa? Miksi ja kuinka? Mitä yritysten sosiaalisen median sivuilla (Facebook, blogit yms.) pitäisi olla? Mitä taas ei?

- Mikä saisi sinut tuottamaan tai jakamaan vahingoittavaa tietoa yrityksestä/tuotteesta yms. (tai esim. Liittymään viha- tai dislikeryhmiin Facebookissa)? Oma huono kokemus (tai useampi huono kokemus)? Kaverin huono kokemus (kokemukset?) Yrityksen epäeettisyys? Jokin muu?

- Oletko ottanut yhteyttä johonkin yritykseen netissä? Onko sinulle vastattu? Millaista kanssakäyminen on ollut (hidasta, nopeaa, jäykkää, helppoa, virallista, rentoa?)

- Haluaisitko olla enemmän yhteydessä yrityksiin ja organisaatioihin ja jakaa mielipiteitä/palautetta ja kehitysehdotuksia? Pitäisikö sen olla helpompaa?

Appendix 2: The pre-assignment

Pohdi omaa mediankäyttöäsi. Mitä medioita käytät eniten ja miksi? Millaiset ominaisuudet tekevät mediakanavasta kiinnostavan? Onko medioita joita esimerkiksi vanhempasi/kaverisi tai muut tuttuasi käyttävät, mutta jotka eivät kiinnosta sinua? Miksi? Inhoatko tai vihaatko jotain mediaa tai siihen liittyviä elementtejä? Esseen ohjepituus 200-400 sanaa.