

INTERNET AND CULTURAL RELATIONS  
EUROPE - BALKANS

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**ABSTRACT:** INTERCULTURALISM AT REGIONAL, NATIONAL AND GLOBAL LEVELS CAN BE IDENTIFIED AS A POST-MODERN PHENOMENON THAT TAKES PLACE IN A SPECIFIC SOCIO-CULTURAL SPACE AND PLAYS A DIFFERENT ROLE DEPENDING ON THE LEVEL AND NATURE OF DEVELOPMENT OF INDIVIDUAL SOCIETIES. PARTICULARLY COMPLEX AND COLORFUL IS THE SITUATION IN TRANSIENT COMMUNITIES, ESPECIALLY THOSE IN EASTERN EUROPE, WHERE CULTURE HAS A CONTROVERSIAL LIFE AND MANIFESTS ITSELF IN A SPECIFIC WAY

THE SPECIFICS OF THE TRANSITION BALKAN COUNTRIES GO THROUGH PARTICULAR VICISSITUDES OF CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT. INSUFFICIENT AND INCOMPLETE MODERNIZATION OF BALKAN POST-COMMUNIST SOCIETIES BLOCKED BY TOTALITARIAN COMMUNISM PRESERVES ARCHAIC CULTURAL PATTERNS OF TRADITIONAL SOCIETY WHO RECEIVE NEW LIFE IN TRANSITION'S PHASE.

**KEY WORDS:** CULTURAL SYSTEM, CULTURAL TRANSFORMATIONS, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES, MODERN SOCIETY, PUBLIC DEBATE, INNOVATIVE FACTOR, TOTALITARIAN COMMUNISM, INTERNET CULTURE, INTERNET USAGE, INTERNET AUDIENCE

**THE** aim of this paper is to outline the specific role of the Internet and digital culture in the process of cultural integration of current and future EU members from the Balkans. The process of European integration runs in the specific context of three types of cultural transformations – the transition from totalitarian to democratic societies, the EU accession and the overall transformation of culture and communication from the application of information technologies.

**INTERCULTURALISM** at regional, national and global levels can be identified as a post-modern phenomenon that takes place in a specific socio-cultural space and plays a different role depending on the level and nature of development of individual societies. Particularly complex and colorful is the situation in transient communities, especially those in Eastern Europe, where culture has a controversial life and manifests itself in a specific way. Since the processes of modernization in these countries exhibit qualitatively different at different levels of cultural system and the "speed" of transformation and character formation of instrumental rationality, lifestyle, mind and behavior do not develop in accordance with the general logic of the modernizing process, but depending on the specific action of historical, socio-economic and cultural factors. In accordance with the general logic of development, they should be a manifestation of a certain state of maturity and culmination of modern society, the phase of reflection and social criticism, celebrated the transition to a postmodern, but that does not happen in real life.

**THE** specifics of the transition Balkan countries go through particular vicissitudes of cultural development. Firstly, it is a heritage of the Balkan region, with specific socio-cultural norms and values, which reanimate in the modern phase in the form of socio-psychological resentments, national, ideological, ethnic and religious differences being at the heart of the complex cross-cultural relationships various in a new global context. Second, insufficient and incomplete modernization of Balkan post-communist societies blocked by totalitarian Communism preserves archaic cultural patterns of traditional society who receive new life in transition's phase.

**THIRD**, despite the collapse of the communist system, totalitarian legacy in the form of complex unreformed structures and vicious social practices continues to be actuality and an important segment of socio-cultural space. In this context we should note that the nature of Eastern Europe's totalitarian regimes in the twentieth century also determines specific cultural model of societies in transition phase.

**IT** is controversial and incomplete nature of modernization in societies that fail to achieve its principal features and advantages, but it fully consumes the negative consequences of its development (environmental pollution, increase in crime, drug abuse, unemployment and poverty as the product of inefficient and insufficiently modernized economic system), creates conditions for the formation of various outbreaks of social activity and problems of different groups in society. Full participation of these groups in public debate, the protection of their rights and the formation of the elements of civil society are important prerequisites for high quality social change.

**BECAUSE** of the effect of these factors, cross-cultural communication within the EU has crucial role in the effective implementation of the European integration process as a carrier of modernization processes and innovative factor for harmonization of cultural development at local, regional and global levels. In this respect Internet plays special role as far as it is on one hand, sociocultural innovation on a large scale, on the other – it provides the environment and the communication channels through which global cultural sociodynamics covers not only regional and local levels, but also group and individual consciousness and behavior.

**IN** this sense, socio-cultural dynamics occurs on several levels: local (regional) in the scale of individual societies outlined by nation states and globally. These levels do not exist in isolation from one another, but are in a complex relationship. Interpenetration of the local and the global levels is the essence of post-modern culture and new information technologies are the substantial carrier of this process. In the present study Internet usage is seen in two aspects: as an information medium for interaction of different layers of culture in a global sociodynamics the one hand, and on the other - as a cultural activity of a new type, which is characterized by the transformation of values and attitudes and causes profound social change in all areas and activities in the community.

**THE** empirical research was focused on several key features of Internet culture:  
Socio-demographic profile  
Dimensions of cultural activity  
Values and attitudes  
Glocalization - the ratio between local and global.

**THE** essence of our choice of approach is that we are looking for the occurrence of global cultural processes on the local and regional level, in the practices of everyday life and social attitudes of specific subjects. The analysis starts from the study of a particular region, then the results are compared with data from studies at national level and in various countries in the Balkans and the European Union.

**CONDUCTED** in July 2012 in the Blagoevgrad region the study was designed not only to establish extensive parameters of the Internet – consumption, duration, purpose, subject, scope and quality of functioning cultural content, but also to characterize the existence, degree of integration, direction of development and cultural activity of any Internet communities. For us it was important to establish if we can consider the Internet audience for as compact socio-cultural community, subject to social action and carrier of the specific behaviors that play a leading role in the process of cultural integration within the European Union.

**IT** is the study of this complex process, which mediates the process of integration of our country and cross-cultural communications on global and regional level, a central aim of the study conducted by the Regional Research Centre "Balkans-Europe" at SWU West University in Blagoevgrad.<sup>1</sup>

**WE** analyze empirical parameters of cultural identity of new Internet users and Internet communities. The main emphasis is made on the role of Internet in the modernization of social relations in the process of social change. The analysis, based on empirical data has concluded that Internet communications substantially change the impact of media on cultural sociodynamics of modern societies.

**CROSS-CULTURAL** interactions at regional, national and global levels can be identified as a post-modern phenomenon that takes place in a specific socio-cultural space and plays a different role depending on the level and nature of development of particular societies. The main questions we ask are:

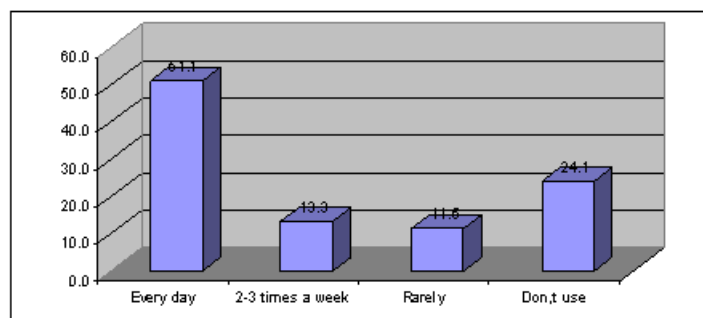
- Is the group internet users qualitatively new sociocultural subject?
- Can they initiate a social change and create a new culture reality?
- Are the communities created by Internet users to initiate social change and form a new reality of culture?

## 1. INTERNET USAGE

**INTERNET** usage incorporates extensive parameters and meaningful, qualitative characteristics that describe the behavior of individual and group participants in the social network as a new and distinct form of social activity. The most popular extensive parameter is the frequency of use of the Internet. In our study it was presented with the question "How often do you use the Internet?" The results for the Blagoevgrad region are shown in Chart 1:

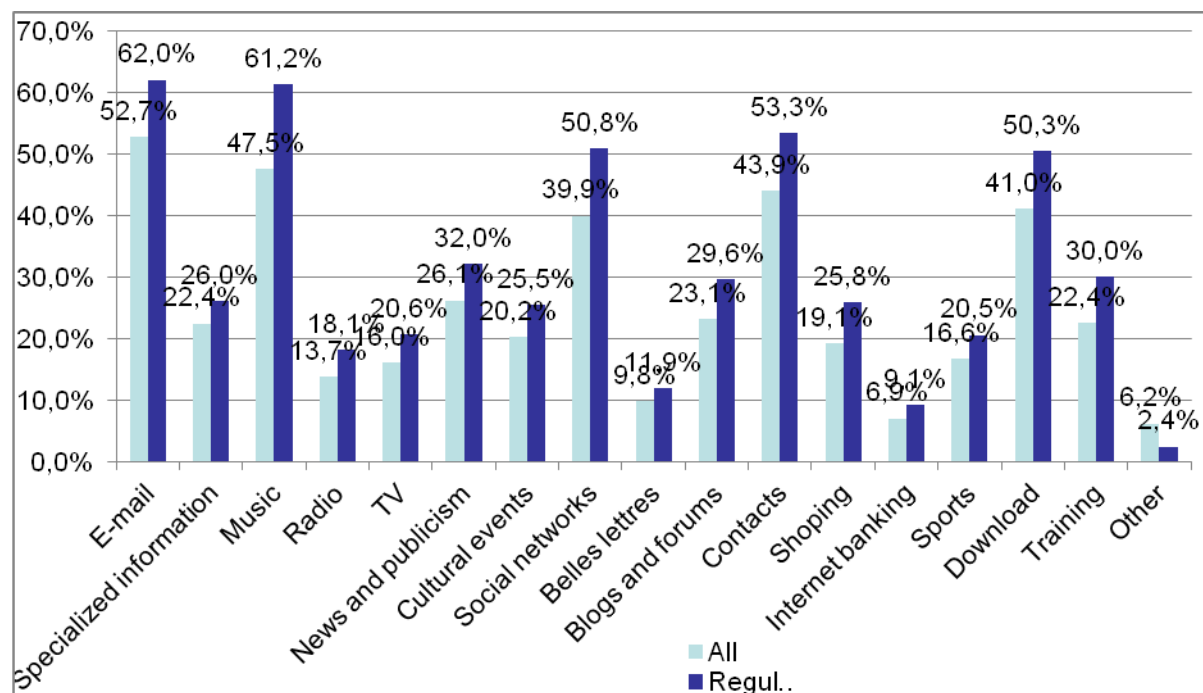
<sup>1</sup> <http://balkanseurope.com/home>

## How often do you use the Internet?

**Chart 1.** *Frequency of Internet consumption*

The results show that among respondents there is two compact groups with specific socio-cultural characteristics: one is composed of permanent members who use the Internet every day and the other includes those who do not enjoy it at all. The remaining two groups: "2 -3 times a week" and "rarely" occupy an intermediate position and is characterized by typical features, in some cases they demonstrate behavior similar to that of active users, while in others they indicate attitudes that are not differ from the average distributions of attributes to the overall response. Regular Internet users in the Blagoevgrad region represent 51.1% of the sample, while the group of respondents who do not use the Internet amounted to 24.1%. Intermediate groups: "2-3 times a week" and "less" are respectively 13.3% and 11.5%. Through preliminary research, we tried to differentiate extensive index "every day" by parameters characterizing the intensity levels of Internet usage, but the results did not show any specific differences in other socio-cultural indicators. The main characteristics of certain socio-cultural attitudes are clearly manifested namely in the division of the population on regular users and people who have never used the Internet.

Comparisons with statistical data for the country as a whole gives a clear idea of the relative penetration of digital culture in Blagoevgrad region. According to the National Statistics Institute for the country as a whole, the share of regular Internet users is 50.3%, while those who have never used the internet - 42%. This means that the intermediate group in the country is extremely low - 7.7%, but in contrast, the proportion of people who don't use Internet in the country as a whole is much higher than in the Blagoevgrad region. As to the content of Internet usage, results obtained in the survey are summarized in Chart 2:



**Chart 2.** *Structure of Internet usage*

**FROM** the data presented it appears that the most common uses of the Internet is e-mail – 52.7% of respondents. The second distribution is listening to music – 47.5%, followed by direct communication with other people – 43.9%, downloading files – 41%, participation in social networks – 39.9%, keeping track of news and publicistics – 26.1%, reading blogs and forums – 23.1%. Searching for specialized information related with the respondents' work holds its special place – 22.4 percent. We have to pay attention to the fact that 22.4% of respondents use Internet for education, 22.7% receive information about cultural events, i.e. Internet usage is directly related to the culture functions.

**COMPARING** the structure of Internet consumption in Blagoevgrad and the country as a whole leads to some interesting conclusions concerning the penetration of the Internet in everyday communications. The significant differences in the relative shares of individuals using the Internet in one way or another are impressive. If email usage in Blagoevgrad region is 52.7%, the national average is 80.5%. 76.5% of respondents have video conversations (via webcam) over the Internet, 57.2% participate in social networks and chats, 68.7% read news and newspapers (It should be noted, however, that there is differences in the methodology of compiling the questionnaire in our study and that of the National Institute of Statistics). The same applies to all other forms of Internet use, i.e. structure of Internet consumption in the country is much denser, each of the respondents use the Internet at the same time in many ways.

INDIVIDUALS USING THE INTERNET FOR PERSONAL PURPOSES (%)	
Type of purposes	2012
<b>Communication</b>	
Sending/receiving e-mails	80.5
Telephoning over the Internet / video calls (via webcam) over the Internet	76.3
Posting messages to chat sites, social networking sites, blogs, newsgroups or online discussion forum, use of instant messaging	57.2
<b>Access to information</b>	
Reading or downloading on-line newspapers/ news magazines	68.7
Information search or on-line service	68.9
<b>Use of entertainment</b>	
Listening to radios and/or watching television	50.6
Playing or downloading games, images, films or music	57.2
<b>Creativity</b>	
Uploading self-created content (text, photos, music, videos, software etc.) to websites	30.6
Creating websites or blogs	7.4
<b>Other online services</b>	
Using services related to travel and accommodation	17.8
Selling goods and services (e.g. via auction)	12.7
Internet banking	7.0

**Table 1.** *Structure of Internet usage according to National Statistical Institute*

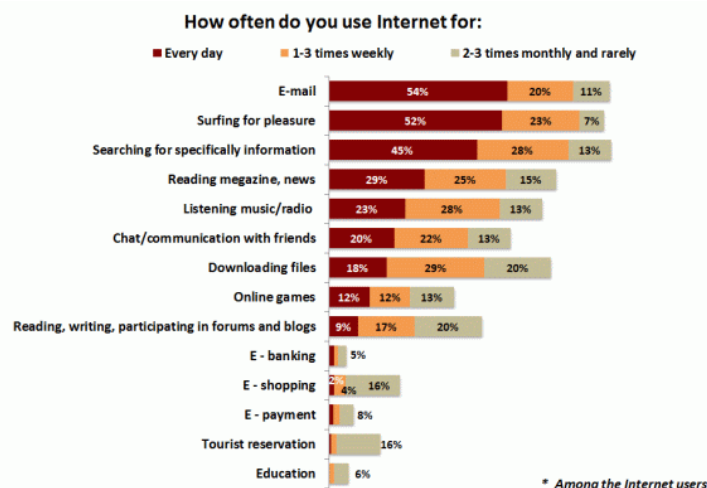
**THE** explanation for this significant difference in Internet consumption can be found in the structure of its extensive parameters. Differences in the structure of the Internet usage is a direct result of varying rates of consumption in the Blagoevgrad region and the country as a whole. As mentioned above, the intermediate group, i.e. respondents who use the Internet less frequently in the study of National Statistical Institute estimated at 7.7%, while in our study it is a group of 24.8%. This segment of the Internet audience is characterized by a narrow mix of internet activities performed by each user, as opposed to regular users using full or close to full capacity of Internet services.

**EVIDENCE** in this direction is the combination of different modes of Internet use and frequency of its use. Shares of regular users using one or another type of Internet applications are comparable with those for the country. Thus, 74.9% of the regular users in the Blagoevgrad region use email against 51.1% nationwide share of this group. In contrast, among respondents using the Internet less frequently, the percentage of email users is much lower in comparison with the general distribution of these types of consumption. Similarly, 75.1% of those who search for specialized information related with their work are regular users, i.e. there is positive deviation of 24%. In line with these values, there is decrease in shares of both groups of sporadic users who indicate that they are using the Internet in their professional practice.

**THE** data for other forms of Internet usage is distributed similarly: music - 82.1%, listening to the radio - 84.4% watching TV - 82.9%, Tracking news and publicistics - 78.1 % information for cultural events - 80.4%, participation in social networks 81.2%, reading fiction - 77.4%, blogs and forums - 81.8%, communication with others 77.3% , shopping



85.9%, sports competitions - 78.4% , downloads - 78.6%. Especially boldly should be emphasized the very high share of regular users, who specify that they are using the Internet for education - 85%. Taking into account the high proportion of those seeking information about cultural events, we get a very solid structure of Internet usage in its substantive aspect of permanent customers. This conclusion is confirmed by the survey of "Alpha Research" agency from November 2011, which is a representative for the whole country and shows strong differentiation of the uses of the Internet, based on frequency of use.



**Chart 3.** Internet usage by different user groups based on the frequency of consumption, a study of "Alpha Research", November 2011<sup>2</sup>

**NEEDS** to be noted that the structure of Internet usage from regular users in Blagoevgrad region is considerably denser than that shown by the data of the Agency for the country - e-mail ratio is 74, 9% versus 54%, searching of specialized information is 75.1% versus 45%, listening to music 82.1% vs. 23%, etc.

**ANOTHER** important conclusion that can be drawn, is that the constant users in the Blagoevgrad region largely shifted to listening to the radio, reading the news and watching TV on the Internet, which shows tendency of qualitative restructuring of media consumption and it results in maintaining constant contact with the global network.

## 2. MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INTERNET AUDIENCE

### 2.1. ETHNICITY

**BY** ethnicity, the group of permanent Internet users is dominated by the Bulgarian ethnos. In contrast, among respondents who do not use the Internet there is high proportion of Turks and Roma. The other ethnic groups refer to the constant Internet users more often than the other groups of users, but we don't have valid statistics about the attitudes of small, specific ethnic or national groups.

**WE** cannot talk about a causal relationship between internet usage and certain ethnicity, although the data shows a differentiation that does not reach very high values, and definitely cannot be elevated to the rank of a pattern. The group of permanent Internet users

<sup>2</sup> [http://alpharesearch.bg/bg/marketingovi\\_izsledvania/danni\\_i\\_publicacii/internet/internet-potreblenie.765.html](http://alpharesearch.bg/bg/marketingovi_izsledvania/danni_i_publicacii/internet/internet-potreblenie.765.html)

demonstrated increased presence of representatives of the Bulgarian ethnoses with positive deviation from the general distribution amounting to 4.9% (89.1% average allocation to 84, 2%). Similarly, in the group of Bulgarian respondents the permanent users are 54.4%, i.e. 3% more than the average distribution. Meanwhile, the group of people using the Internet in general, the proportion of Bulgarians is 76%, i.e. 8.2% lower than their overall share. Accordingly, the share of regular users among Turkish ethnicity is 30.9%, i.e. with 21.4% lower than the average share of permanent users. Characteristic is the fact that the share of people from Roma origin is higher - 38.9%, i.e. the negative deviation is significantly lower. Share of the regular users among the Pomaks is also low - they are only 30.7%, i.e. there is a negative deviation of 20.7%.

**HOWEVER**, among the respondents of the Turkish ethnic group 36.8% don't use the Internet, i.e. 12.8% higher than the average percentage distribution of persons who do not use the Internet. Among respondents of Roma origin 34.7% are not Internet users and there is a positive deviation of 20.7%, while among this group the percentage of Muslims is higher by 16.9%.

**AS** for the other, smaller ethnic groups, the proportion of regular users of the Internet among them is higher than other groups of users, but we have no valid and statistically significant data on their attitudes.

K67 Do you use Internet? * 28. What ethnic group do you belong to? K74 Crosstabulation								
			28. What ethnic group do you belong to? K74					
			1	2 Turk	3 Roma	4 Other	5 Pomaks	Total
K67 Do you use Internet?	01 Every day	Count	770	21	37	9	27	864
		% within K67 Do you	89,1%	2,4%	4,3%	1,0%	3,1%	100,0%
		% within 28. What	54,4%	30,9%	38,9%	60,0%	30,7%	51,4%
		% of Total	45,8%	1,2%	2,2%	,5%	1,6%	51,4%
	02 2-3 times in a week	Count	185	11	15	3	9	223
		% within K67 Do you	83,0%	4,9%	6,7%	1,3%	4,0%	100,0%
		% within 28. What	13,1%	16,2%	15,8%	20,0%	10,2%	13,3%
		% of Total	11,0%	,7%	,9%	,2%	,5%	13,3%
	03 More rarely	Count	153	11	10	0	16	190
		% within K67 Do you	80,5%	5,8%	5,3%	0,0%	8,4%	100,0%
		% within 28. What	10,8%	16,2%	10,5%	0,0%	18,2%	11,3%
		% of Total	9,1%	,7%	,6%	0,0%	1,0%	11,3%
	04 I don't use Internet	Count	307	25	33	3	36	404
		% within K67 Do you	76,0%	6,2%	8,2%	,7%	8,9%	100,0%
		% within 28. What	21,7%	36,8%	34,7%	20,0%	40,9%	24,0%
		% of Total	18,3%	1,5%	2,0%	,2%	2,1%	24,0%
Total	Count	1415	68	95	15	88	1681	
	% within K67 Do you	84,2%	4,0%	5,7%	,9%	5,2%	100,0%	
	% within 28. What	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	
	% of Total	84,2%	4,0%	5,7%	,9%	5,2%	100,0%	

**Table 2:** Distribution of Internet users by ethnicity

**ON** tables with yellow are colored those rates, which show positive deviation from the overall distribution of the meanings of individual signs; with green – those, that deviate negatively from the general distribution. As a rule, we can't talk about any causal relationships, as we use nominal scales, but the distributions of values for typical signs show features of different types of socio-cultural behavior.



**LET'S** look at another table showing the consumer's age. We can notice the dominance of junior age groups. Conversely, the results show that among the higher age groups, use of the internet is greatly reduced. That fact has a very important role in analyzing the socio-cultural aspect of constant Internet users - they are young people with dynamic behavior consistent with social activism and penchant for learning and application of innovation in all areas of life.

## 2.2. AGE

**LET'S** look at Table 3, which shows the age of the users. It shows clear dominance of junior age groups. Among regular users, the group of 18 years old is 18.3% with total share of 10.7 percent (positive deviation of 7.6%). The group of regular users up to 25 years old is 39.9% with total share of this age - 26.5% (i.e. positive deviation is 13.4%). In contrast, among the group of up to 18 years old the proportion of regular users is 67.7 (vs. 51.2% total share of permanent members) among the group of respondents of up to 25 years this share is 76.9%. In the next group - up to 35 years we observe relatively low numbers, although the proportion of regular users of that age remains above with 3% from the total share. In the group under 45 years, we still observe relatively small negative deviations from general distributions - minus 5.9%. However, in the next age group there is significant negative deviation for regular users, the share of respondents from 46 to 63 years old is already lower by 11.3%, and among the people over 63 years old the negative deviation is 9.1%. If in the age group of up to 45 years the proportion of regular users is 45.3% (negative variation of 5.8%), in the up to 63 group this relative share is already 30% below and above 63 years the negative deviation is 45.9%. On the other hand, the results show that among the respondents who don't use the Internet the higher age groups dominate. This fact plays a very important role in the analysis of the socio-cultural aspects of Internet usage - regular and engaged users are predominantly young people with dynamic behavior, who demonstrate communicative and social activism, and who show increased tendency to study and apply innovation in all areas of life.

K67 Do you use Internet? * 30. How old are you? K76 Crosstabulation									
			30. How old are you? K76						Total
			1 younger	2 18-25	3 26-35	4 36-45	5 46-63	6 older	
K67 Do you use Internet?	01 Every day	Count	159	346	168	117	69	9	868
		% within K67 Do you	18,3%	39,9%	19,4%	13,5%	7,9%	1,0%	100,0%
		% within 30. How old	87,8%	76,9%	54,2%	45,3%	21,2%	5,3%	51,2%
		% of Total	9,4%	20,4%	9,9%	6,9%	4,1%	,5%	51,2%
	02 2-3 times in a week	Count	15	58	63	46	39	3	224
		% within K67 Do you	6,7%	25,9%	28,1%	20,5%	17,4%	1,3%	100,0%
		% within 30. How old	8,3%	12,9%	20,3%	17,8%	12,0%	1,8%	13,2%
		% of Total	,9%	3,4%	3,7%	2,7%	2,3%	,2%	13,2%
	03 More rarely	Count	6	23	56	51	53	5	194
		% within K67 Do you	3,1%	11,9%	28,9%	26,3%	27,3%	2,6%	100,0%
		% within 30. How old	3,3%	5,1%	18,1%	19,8%	16,3%	2,9%	11,4%
		% of Total	,4%	1,4%	3,3%	3,0%	3,1%	,3%	11,4%
	04 I don't use Internet	Count	1	23	23	44	165	154	410
		% within K67 Do you	,2%	5,6%	5,6%	10,7%	40,2%	37,6%	100,0%
		% within 30. How old	,6%	5,1%	7,4%	17,1%	50,6%	90,1%	24,2%
		% of Total	,1%	1,4%	1,4%	2,6%	9,7%	9,1%	24,2%
Total	Count	181	450	310	258	326	171	1696	
	% within K67 Do you	10,7%	26,5%	18,3%	15,2%	19,2%	10,1%	100,0%	
	% within 30. How old	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	
	% of Total	10,7%	26,5%	18,3%	15,2%	19,2%	10,1%	100,0%	

**Table 3. Distribution of Internet usage by age**

### 2.3. DISTRIBUTION OF INTERNET USAGE BY GENDER

THE study did not show any significant gender differences in Internet usage. There are some variations - positive for men and negative for women, but they are within the stochastic error and can not be considered.

K67 Do you use Internet? * 29. Sex K75 Crosstabulation					
			29. Sex K75		Total
			1 Male	2	
K67 Do you use Internet?	01 Every day	Count	400	457	857
		% within K67 Do you	46,7%	53,3%	100,0%
		% within 29. Sex K75	52,6%	49,7%	51,0%
		% of Total	23,8%	27,2%	51,0%
	02 2-3 times in a week	Count	103	121	224
		% within K67 Do you	46,0%	54,0%	100,0%
		% within 29. Sex K75	13,6%	13,2%	13,3%
		% of Total	6,1%	7,2%	13,3%
	03 More rarely	Count	81	110	191
		% within K67 Do you	42,4%	57,6%	100,0%
		% within 29. Sex K75	10,7%	12,0%	11,4%
		% of Total	4,8%	6,5%	11,4%
	04 I don't use Internet	Count	176	232	408
		% within K67 Do you	43,1%	56,9%	100,0%
		% within 29. Sex K75	23,2%	25,2%	24,3%
		% of Total	10,5%	13,8%	24,3%
Total		Count	760	920	1680
		% within K67 Do you	45,2%	54,8%	100,0%
		% within 29. Sex K75	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	45,2%	54,8%	100,0%

**Table 4.** *Distribution of Internet usage by gender*

### 2.4. EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF THE INTERNET AUDIENCE

As can be assumed, internet usage is correlated with educational attainment. In the group of regular users is observed extremely sharp negative deviation in the shares of low levels of education: no education, primary, elementary and secondary general. However, the group of graduates among regular users shows a positive deviation of 8.6 percent share from the total of graduates. Conversely, among graduates the proportion of permanent users is much higher 75.8 percent share of the total permanent members of 51.2%. Symmetrically the group of respondents who do not use the Internet demonstrate higher relative share of low education levels and strongly reduced presence of persons with higher education.

K67 Do you use Internet? * 31. Your completed educational degree? K77 Crosstabulation										
			31. Your completed educational degree? K77							
			U1 I don't	U2	U3 Junior	U4	U5	U6 Semi	U7 High	Total
K67 Do you use Internet?	01 Every day	Count	3	11	162	204	224	37	225	866
		% within K67 Do you	,3%	1,3%	18,7%	23,6%	25,9%	4,3%	26,0%	100,0%
		% within 31. Your	18,8%	25,0%	49,5%	42,7%	49,7%	47,4%	75,8%	51,2%
		% of Total	,2%	,7%	9,6%	12,1%	13,2%	2,2%	13,3%	51,2%
	02 2-3 times in a week	Count	3	3	27	64	74	14	40	225
		% within K67 Do you	1,3%	1,3%	12,0%	28,4%	32,9%	6,2%	17,8%	100,0%
		% within 31. Your	18,8%	6,8%	8,3%	13,4%	16,4%	17,9%	13,5%	13,3%
		% of Total	,2%	,2%	1,6%	3,8%	4,4%	,8%	2,4%	13,3%
	03 More rarely	Count	1	4	20	72	61	14	20	192
		% within K67 Do you	,5%	2,1%	10,4%	37,5%	31,8%	7,3%	10,4%	100,0%
		% within 31. Your	6,3%	9,1%	6,1%	15,1%	13,5%	17,9%	6,7%	11,4%
		% of Total	,1%	,2%	1,2%	4,3%	3,6%	,8%	1,2%	11,4%
	04 I don't use Internet	Count	9	26	118	138	92	13	12	408
		% within K67 Do you	2,2%	6,4%	28,9%	33,8%	22,5%	3,2%	2,9%	100,0%
		% within 31. Your	56,3%	59,1%	36,1%	28,9%	20,4%	16,7%	4,0%	24,1%
		% of Total	,5%	1,5%	7,0%	8,2%	5,4%	,8%	,7%	24,1%
Total		Count	16	44	327	478	451	78	297	1691
		% within K67 Do you	,9%	2,6%	19,3%	28,3%	26,7%	4,6%	17,6%	100,0%
		% within 31. Your	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	,9%	2,6%	19,3%	28,3%	26,7%	4,6%	17,6%	100,0%

**DIFFERENTIATION** of the Internet audience in occupation meets the initial research hypothesis. Empirical data shows that the group of regular internet users is mainly recruited from the group of specialists with higher education, students, entrepreneurs and skilled workers. However, we find that the proportion of regular users is lower in the groups of workers, staff, employees with secondary education, agricultural workers, pensioners, housewives and the unemployed. Naturally, this applies mostly to employees with higher education (78.3%), school students (89.8%), and university students (85.1%). Sporadic Internet usage is found in groups of workers, staff, and employees with secondary education.

**THE** group of respondents, who doesn't use the Internet is formed mainly by farmers, pensioners, unemployed where pensioners' group dominates with 44.7 percent of all non-internet users. At the same time, the proportion of people who do not use Internet among pensioners reaches 86.3% with an average distribution of this indicator of 24.3% - i.e. the deviation is 62%! The group of unemployed is the next major component of the community that doesn't use the Internet with 10.3% against total share of 7.3 percent unemployed. Among the group of unemployed proportion of those who do not use the Internet is 34.4%, i.e. exactly 10% of the total share of those who do not use Internet.

K67 Do you use Internet? * 34. What is your occupation? K80 Crosstabulation														
			34. What is your occupation? K80											
			01 Worker	02 Service staff	03 Qualified worker, technician	04 Employee with secondary school	05 Employee with high school	06 Entrepreneur	07 Farmer	08 School student	09 University student	10 Pensioner	11 Unemployed	12 Housewife
K67 Do you use Internet?	01 Every day	Count	128	47	38	29	116	50	15	159	165	16	45	12
		% within K67 Do you use Internet?	15,0%	5,5%	4,5%	3,4%	13,6%	5,9%	1,8%	18,6%	19,3%	1,9%	5,3%	1,4%
		% within 34. What is your occupation? K80	36,5%	44,3%	60,3%	51,8%	76,3%	61,7%	22,7%	89,8%	85,1%	7,6%	36,9%	26,1%
		% of Total	7,6%	2,8%	2,3%	1,7%	6,9%	3,0%	,9%	9,5%	9,8%	1,0%	2,7%	,7%
	02 2-3 times in a week	Count	62	21	10	10	23	13	12	10	17	5	21	15
		% within K67 Do you use Internet?	27,7%	9,4%	4,5%	4,5%	10,3%	5,8%	5,4%	4,5%	7,6%	2,2%	9,4%	6,7%
		% within 34. What is your occupation? K80	17,7%	19,8%	15,9%	17,9%	15,1%	16,0%	18,2%	5,6%	8,8%	2,4%	17,2%	32,6%
		% of Total	3,7%	1,3%	,6%	,6%	1,4%	,8%	,7%	,6%	1,0%	,3%	1,3%	,9%
	03 More rarely	Count	75	26	8	9	8	9	12	5	5	8	14	7
		% within K67 Do you use Internet?	38,7%	13,4%	4,1%	4,6%	4,1%	4,6%	6,2%	2,6%	2,6%	4,1%	7,2%	3,6%
		% within 34. What is your occupation? K80	21,4%	24,5%	12,7%	16,1%	5,3%	11,1%	18,2%	2,8%	2,6%	3,8%	11,5%	15,2%
		% of Total	4,5%	1,5%	,5%	,5%	,5%	,5%	,7%	,3%	,3%	,5%	,8%	,4%
	04 I don't use Internet	Count	86	12	7	8	5	9	27	3	7	182	42	12
		% within K67 Do you use Internet?	21,1%	2,9%	1,7%	2,0%	1,2%	2,2%	6,6%	,7%	1,7%	44,7%	10,3%	2,9%
		% within 34. What is your occupation? K80	24,5%	11,3%	11,1%	14,3%	3,3%	11,1%	40,9%	1,7%	3,6%	86,3%	34,4%	26,1%
		% of Total	5,1%	,7%	,4%	,5%	,3%	,5%	1,6%	,2%	,4%	10,8%	2,5%	,7%
Total		Count	351	106	63	56	152	81	66	177	194	211	122	46
		% within K67 Do you use Internet?	20,9%	6,3%	3,8%	3,3%	9,1%	4,8%	3,9%	10,5%	11,6%	12,6%	7,3%	2,7%
		% within 34. What is your occupation? K80	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	20,9%	6,3%	3,8%	3,3%	9,1%	4,8%	3,9%	10,5%	11,6%	12,6%	7,3%	2,7%

**Table 7. Professional structure of Internet audience**

## 2.7. INTERNET USAGE AND INCOME

**EMPIRICAL** information for the relationship between household income and frequency of internet use proves the research hypothesis that higher income levels are directly associated with a higher intensity and frequency of internet usage. However, we have to specify that the data is not completely reliable because of the very high percentage of respondents who refused to indicate their income - 31.2%. It is noteworthy that this group has a very high percentage among regular users of the Internet - 37.5%. There is a positive deviation from the average distribution amounting to 6.3%. In the opposite direction also is observed a similar

effect - among those who refuse to answer the percentage of regular users is 61.6%, i.e. the positive deviation from average distribution is 10.4%.

**HOWEVER**, we find that among regular users of the Internet the share of respondents with an income of up to 300 lev is lower by 12.2% and the proportion of regular users of the Internet among people with incomes up to 300 lev a month is 30%, so it is by 20% lower than average proportion of regular users. However, this figures deserve attention. Very typical and indicative of the influence of the Internet and of the global network's importance for large groups of people is the fact that 30% (!) of those with the lowest, we can say drastically low income, find a way to use the Internet. The absolute magnitude of this group also deserves attention: it is 8.8% of respondents.

**DESPITE** the low number of responses for the groups with higher income, they demonstrate increased use of the Internet, depending on the magnitude of the increase in income. In the group with income of 601 to 1000 lev per month the share of regular users is 66.4%, in other words with 15.2% higher than the total share of regular users. Among the group with income above 1,000 levs this share is now 81.1%, i.e. its share is with 29.9 percent higher than the total share of regular users.

**THERE** are reciprocal values of the data for the group of respondents who do not use the Internet. Naturally, subgroups of low income dominate in it - 61.3%, and with the increase in income, the share of income groups among those respondents who do not use the Internet reduces.

K67 Do you use Internet? * 35. What is your total monthly income? K81 Crosstabulation								
			35. What is your total monthly income? K81					Total
			01 Less than 300 BGN	02 Between 301-600 BGN	03 Between 601-1000 BGN	04 More than 1000 BGN	05 I don't want to answer	
K67 Do you use Internet?	01 Every day	Count	145	233	73	73	315	839
		% within K67 Do you use Internet?	17,3%	27,8%	8,7%	8,7%	37,5%	100,0%
		% within 35. What is your total monthly income? K81	30,0%	52,4%	66,4%	81,1%	61,6%	51,2%
		% of Total	8,8%	14,2%	4,5%	4,5%	19,2%	51,2%
	02 2-3 times in a week	Count	50	70	21	9	71	221
		% within K67 Do you use Internet?	22,6%	31,7%	9,5%	4,1%	32,1%	100,0%
		% within 35. What is your total monthly income? K81	10,3%	15,7%	19,1%	10,0%	13,9%	13,5%
		% of Total	3,0%	4,3%	1,3%	,5%	4,3%	13,5%
	03 More rarely	Count	50	76	10	5	49	190
		% within K67 Do you use Internet?	26,3%	40,0%	5,3%	2,6%	25,8%	100,0%
		% within 35. What is your total monthly income? K81	10,3%	17,1%	9,1%	5,6%	9,6%	11,6%
		% of Total	3,0%	4,6%	,6%	,3%	3,0%	11,6%
	04 I don't use Internet	Count	239	66	6	3	76	390
		% within K67 Do you use Internet?	61,3%	16,9%	1,5%	,8%	19,5%	100,0%
		% within 35. What is your total monthly income? K81	49,4%	14,8%	5,5%	3,3%	14,9%	23,8%
		% of Total	14,6%	4,0%	,4%	,2%	4,6%	23,8%
Total	Count	484	445	110	90	511	1640	
	% within K67 Do you use Internet?	29,5%	27,1%	6,7%	5,5%	31,2%	100,0%	
	% within 35. What is your total monthly income? K81	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	
	% of Total	29,5%	27,1%	6,7%	5,5%	31,2%	100,0%	

**Table 8.** *Distribution of the Internet users by income*

**OVERALL** analysis of various socio-demographic characteristics that define the profile of the different categories of Internet users makes it possible to draw some conclusions. The



group of regular Internet users have significantly higher socio-cultural potential. These are generally people with higher education and higher skilled jobs, living in Blagoevgrad and cities in the region who are significantly younger and with higher incomes. This dominant characteristics determine the dynamic nature of the audience of regular Internet users and its greater social activity. However, these dominant features appear now as a trend, it is also important to pay attention to the relatively high proportion of groups with sporadic Internet access. Due to these circumstances, we are still talking about a monolithic social stratum, but the development of Internet usage certainly leads in that direction, as evidenced by the transient nature of the intermediate groups with sporadic internet access.

### 3. INTERNET USE AND CULTURAL VALUES

#### 3.1. INDIVIDUAL ATTITUDES

**DURING** the survey is gathered information on basic attitudes that characterize everyday behavior of people in Blagoevgrad region, and was looked for relationship between manifested life attitudes and types of Internet use, respondents adhere. Although we are dealing with nominal scales and we cannot deduce causal relationships, however, there are certain trends that characterize some cultural stereotypes - that of regular Internet users and people who do not use the Internet.

**IN** this respect the culture of regular Internet users has the following priority orientations:

**MOST** of these respondents indicated higher education and training as a priority in their life strategy: 66.9% of respondents who support this statement are regular Internet users. Among the group of regular Internet users those who have chosen this value also have a share higher than the average value of the trait - 33.4%, i.e. 7.9% higher than the total percentage of those who selected education and training as a vital priority. Another life priority that can be associated with the group of regular Internet users is the choice of profession, which corresponds to education and training. Among those who have chosen this priority, the proportion of regular Internet users is 70.6%, i.e. there is positive deviation of the total share of regular users, amounting to 19.4%. On the other hand, among regular Internet users themselves the share of those who have selected profession corresponding to their education and training is 11.1, versus 8% of overall distribution of the trait.

**ANOTHER** important attribute of life orientation of regular Internet users is friendship. They represent 61.5% of all who have specified this value as a priority, i.e. 10.4% above the overall distribution of the trait. Conversely, among regular users, the proportion of those who choose friendship as an important life value is 31.6%, i.e. 5.3% above the total percentage of respondents who indicated friendship as a core value.

**VERY** typical is the fact that constant Internet users typically do not indicate material well-being as a dominant value - shares of the sub-groups of regular users, chosen these values are lower than the average percentages for the entire sample. In contrast, however, we find that the share of regular users whose priority value is luxury and high standard is 70.3%, i.e. 19.2% higher than the share of the regular users in the sample. The opposite relationship is also in force: among the regular users also is observed a higher proportion of respondents who support that value, but the indicator is within the stochastic error and we cannot speculate about presence of relationship.



**SIMILAR** is the situation with another value, where regular Internet users' group dominates - prestige in society. Meanwhile, although the proportion of respondents who indicate that value among the regular users is also higher than the overall proportion of the trait, the indicator lies within the limits of stochastic error, which doesn't allow us to make conclusions about the reverse side of such a relationship.

**WE** need to pay attention to a very eloquent feature: regular users of the Internet in much greater degree indicate pleasure and fun as a leading value - something not found among those who don't use the Internet. This is a typical modern value, which is usually not openly manifested among those population groups where traditional attitudes and value orientations dominate. Among the group of those who indicate that value 73.1% are regular Internet users, i.e. by 21.9% over the total share of regular users. On the other hand, among regular users 11.3% have indicated pleasure and entertainment as a value, i.e. 3.4% more than the total percentage of respondents who have pointed that value.

**THE** described structure of life attitudes of respondents confirmed the conclusions made in the socio-demographic characteristics of Internet users - a group of regular users is characterized by a high level of cultural activity. It is worth noting the existence of a pragmatic attitude and desire to grow professionally, not just material welfare as an end in itself. This group is sensitive to social prestige and communication with other people and is characterized by a higher degree of socialization.

**IN** the group of respondents who do not use the Internet, we find radically different dominant values, which determine different type of culture: material prosperity, health, security, peaceful life without upheaval. Typical of this group is the traditional, conservative and passive approach to everyday life, rooted in the usual evidences of everyday life and focused on traditional, routine and passive reflection of the living reality. Interestingly, the attitude towards such priority as access to information about cultural values showed no differences between the positions of the various user groups. Combinations with other indicators explain it this way. For those who do not use the Internet, one may conclude that they are much less interested in these issues. As to the regular users, they attach great importance to this phenomenon, because it is due to the constant use of the Internet, they have access to it and it is also a kind of living evidence, characteristic for everyday life in the world of digital culture.

K51*K67 Crosstabulation							
			K67 Do you use Internet?				Total
			U1 Every	U2 2-3	U3 more	U4 I don't	
K51 What is most important for you in life?	K51_01 Material prosperity	Count	202	64	51	100	417
		% within K51	48,4%	15,3%	12,2%	24,0%	
		% within K67	23,4%	28,4%	26,3%	24,6%	
		% of Total	11,9%	3,8%	3,0%	5,9%	24,7%
	K51_02 Luxury and high standard	Count	71	8	8	14	101
		% within K51	70,3%	7,9%	7,9%	13,9%	
		% within K67	8,2%	3,6%	4,1%	3,4%	
		% of Total	4,2%	,5%	,5%	,8%	6,0%
	K51_03 Education and high qualification	Count	289	54	44	45	432
		% within K51	70,3%	13,5%	10,8%	11,1%	
		% within K67	33,4%	24,0%	22,7%	11,1%	
		% of Total	17,1%	3,2%	2,6%	2,7%	25,5%
	K51_04 Prestige in society	Count	100	26	17	25	168
		% within K51	59,5%	15,5%	10,1%	14,9%	

**Table 9.** *The everyday value orientations of Internet users*

**THE** characteristics of constant Internet users appear clearly in the analysis of their attitudes and value orientations. When we asked about the most important things in life, the constant users demonstrate a preference for luxury and standard instead of material prosperity (this can be explained by the relatively high income of this part of population).

**THEIR** preference for higher education and training is clearly manifested. An important indicator in this respect is the importance that respondents attach to the correlation between work and education. This group is sensitive to social prestige and communication with other people. However, it leaves the health in the background, we will find that rarely using Internet users largely ignore these values.

**REGULAR** users of the Internet in much greater level appreciate pleasure and entertainment - something that rarely occurs among those who don't use the Internet. Those respondents, who don't use Internet, show a preference for traditional values such as material prosperity, security, peaceful life, health.

**PEOPLE** who don't use the Internet are characterized by a more conservative behavior, attitudes toward traditional values and low interest in all major components of the cultural life in the region, and even to a greater extent - in Europe and the world

### 3.2. SOCIAL ATTITUDES

**I**N addition to individual values in the study were included also universal values, characterizing the life of society, the main aim was to find out whether there is differentiation between different value orientations that can be associated with Internet usage. Naturally, here again we cannot talk about causal relationships, but for characteristics that describe the behavior of different types of social and communicative communities and the found relationships can be explored further in order to penetrate into the depth of cultural interactions and analysis of these communication aspects of the Internet that have formative influence and implement culture-forming function. Exactly as in the individual values of constant users and people who don't use the Internet are revealed number of differences that are associated with different type of cultural orientation, attitudes and different type of life strategy.

**F**IRST group of regular users is characterized by the great importance it attaches to environmental issues. Among those who indicated environment as the most important value everyday Internet users are 57.4%, i.e. there is a positive deviation of 6.3%. And among Internet users the share of concerned in environmental problems is 46.3%, i.e. by 3.2% over the total share this trait.

**A**NOTHER value that is indicated by a higher proportion of regular users of the Internet is freedom of conscience - 60.5% . Meanwhile reverse combination demonstrates that despite the positive deviation (i.e. the share of the regular users who have indicated that value is higher than the proportion of all who have chosen it), this deviation is within the stochastic error and does not warrant definite statements.

**T**HE situation with that lawfulness as a fundamental value is similar. 54.7% of respondents indicating that values are regular users, i.e. their share is 3.6 percent higher than the proportion of all regular users. Conversely, a positive deviation in the proportion of those who opted for this value among the regular users amounted to 2.6%, i.e. again within the limits of stochastic error. So we can conclude that the core values that enter into the culture of constant Internet users are environmental protection, freedom of conscience and the lawfulness. To a certain extent, to them we can add solidarity as far as among those who have indicated it there is higher proportion of regular Internet users, but within the group of regular users itself we do not notice any deviations from the overall distribution of the trait. Anyway, we have to admit that people who use the Internet every day demonstrate a much more social activity and commitment to modern social values, although this can be recognized more as a trend that could lead to permanent changes in the future, as a process of social dynamics that have not yet been realized in the current circumstances.

**A**S for the group of respondents who do not use the Internet in their mix of values prevail values such as human understanding, peace, faith in God. The data allows us to claim that people who use the Internet are characterized by more conservative behavior with predominant affinity for traditional values and relatively low interest to all major components of the cultural life in the region, and even more - in Europe and the world.

**R**ESearch shows that regular users of the Internet are characterized by higher levels of involvement in cultural life and the reproductive activities of culture - they more often go to concerts, shows, cultural events, while consider it important and significant for its full development.

**SURVEY** data shows that constant Internet users have a significantly wider range of interests related to the cultural life and cultural development in the Balkans and the world.

\$K66*K67 Crosstabulation							
			K67 Do you use Internet?				Total
			01 Every	02 2-3	03 More	04 I don't	
K66 What in the society is most important for you?	K66_01 Conservation of Nature	Count	420	87	89	136	732
		% within \$K66	57,4%	11,9%	12,2%	18,6%	
		% within K67	48,3%	38,5%	45,4%	33,3%	
		% of Total	24,7%	5,1%	5,2%	8,0%	43,1%
	K66_02 Freedom of conscience	Count	115	26	13	36	190
		% within \$K66	60,5%	13,7%	6,8%	18,9%	
		% within K67	13,2%	11,5%	6,6%	8,8%	
		% of Total	6,8%	1,5%	,8%	2,1%	11,2%
	K66_03 Rule of law	Count	372	86	75	147	680
		% within \$K66	54,7%	12,6%	11,0%	21,6%	
		% within K67	42,8%	38,1%	38,3%	35,9%	
		% of Total	21,9%	5,1%	4,4%	8,6%	40,0%
	K66_04 Material prosperity	Count	141	33	30	64	268
		% within \$K66	52,6%	12,3%	11,2%	23,9%	
		% within K67	16,2%	14,6%	15,3%	15,6%	
		% of Total	8,3%	1,9%	1,8%	3,8%	15,8%
	K66_05 Understanding between people	Count	412	108	96	207	823
		% within \$K66	50,1%	13,1%	11,7%	25,2%	
		% within K67	47,4%	47,8%	49,0%	50,6%	
		% of Total	24,2%	6,4%	5,6%	12,2%	48,4%
	K66_06 Social equality	Count	91	24	17	42	174
		% within \$K66	52,3%	13,8%	9,8%	24,1%	
		% within K67	10,5%	10,6%	8,7%	10,3%	
		% of Total	5,4%	1,4%	1,0%	2,5%	10,2%
	K66_07 Solidarity	Count	37	12	6	13	68
		% within \$K66	54,4%	17,6%	8,8%	19,1%	
		% within K67	4,3%	5,3%	3,1%	3,2%	
		% of Total	2,2%	,7%	,4%	,8%	4,0%
	K66_08 Tolerance	Count	71	29	12	26	138
		% within \$K66	51,4%	21,0%	8,7%	18,8%	
		% within K67	8,2%	12,8%	6,1%	6,4%	
		% of Total	4,2%	1,7%	,7%	1,5%	8,1%
	K66_09 National interests	Count	38	10	7	18	73
		% within \$K66	52,1%	13,7%	9,6%	24,7%	
		% within K67	4,4%	4,4%	3,6%	4,4%	
		% of Total	2,2%	,6%	,4%	1,1%	4,3%
	K66_10 Peace	Count	139	31	27	78	275
		% within \$K66	50,5%	11,3%	9,8%	28,4%	
		% within K67	16,0%	13,7%	13,8%	19,1%	
		% of Total	8,2%	1,8%	1,6%	4,6%	16,2%
	K66_11 Family	Count	328	101	97	169	695
		% within \$K66	47,2%	14,5%	14,0%	24,3%	
		% within K67	37,7%	44,7%	49,5%	41,3%	
		% of Total	19,3%	5,9%	5,7%	9,9%	40,9%
	K66_12 Friendship	Count	170	54	32	40	296
		% within \$K66	57,4%	18,2%	10,8%	13,5%	
		% within K67	19,6%	23,9%	16,3%	9,8%	
		% of Total	10,0%	3,2%	1,9%	2,4%	17,4%
	K66_13 Faith in God	Count	67	24	14	72	177
		% within \$K66	37,9%	13,6%	7,9%	40,7%	
		% within K67	7,7%	10,6%	7,1%	17,6%	
		% of Total	3,9%	1,4%	,8%	4,2%	10,4%
	K66_14 Other	Count	4	0	2	6	12
		% within \$K66	33,3%	0,0%	16,7%	50,0%	
		% within K67	,5%	0,0%	1,0%	1,5%	
		% of Total	,2%	0,0%	,1%	,4%	,7%
Total	Count	869	226	196	409	1700	
	% of Total	51,1%	13,3%	11,5%	24,1%	100,0%	

**Table 10. Social attitudes of Internet users**

It is interesting that the attribute access to information about cultural values showed no differences between the positions of the various user groups. Combinations with other indicators show that if those who don't use the Internet are less interested in these problems, regular users rather not attach importance to something they have access to.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

**ONE** of the conclusions that can be drawn from this study is a categorical statement on the role of the Internet in the formation of new cultural architecture of relationships locally, regionally and globally. The empirical data clearly shows that Internet communication is becoming a dominating factor for culture development not only because it carries immediate access to exterritorial global world, but also because it creates a subculture - a relatively compact community that is characterized by high activity and social influence on all aspects and activities of public life.

**THE** constant Internet users are the most active and dynamic group in society. They represent the cultural influence of global modernity and have their own potential of social change.

**WE** have already noticed how regular Internet users form a community that over time becomes increasingly more compact sociocultural entity, although still we cannot say that this is a new class.

**THE** study clearly shows that in the Blagoevgrad region there are now early signs of this trend and its population gradually enters modernity in all spheres of culture.

**NOW** the regular Internet users are compact sociocultural subject, but we can't say yet that it is a new class.