# Transmission of Knowledge to Estonian Children

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- 1. Estonia and Internet
- 2. Social networks and exchange of knowledge in youth forums
- 3. Most popular forums, informal learning versus formal learning.
- 4. Conclusions

#### Research grant

"Internet. Processes of construction, reproduction and transformation of narratives, values and identities" -

My area of research has been children horror stories + emotions, and on-line medicine communities.

Liisa Vesik – communities of pet owners, and SF.

Rahel Laura Vesik – our expert for youth forums.

Communication strategies and key values characteristic of the community, communication opportunities,

narratives.

This research – analyzis of 2006-2007 schoollore competition



### 1. Estonia and Internet

Estonian.

Population: Out of the 1.5 million people living in Estonia 1,1 million Estonians, 0,4 minorities, mostly Russophone, with knowlegde of

For Estonians all education in Estonian language, incl. university and PhD level

Internet environment in Estonian language. Internet spread rapidly 1993 and onwards, first users very end of 1980s.



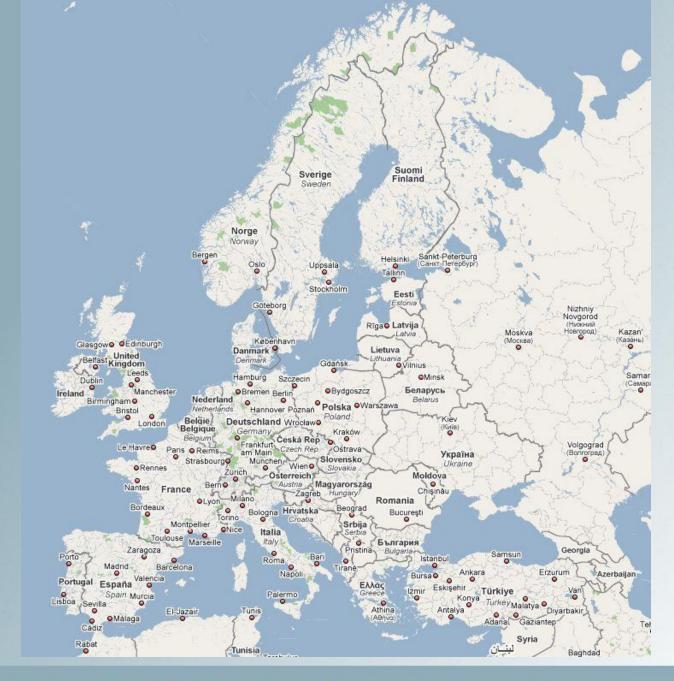
Internet forums and social networks as bases for social and cognitive learning + construction of self identity.

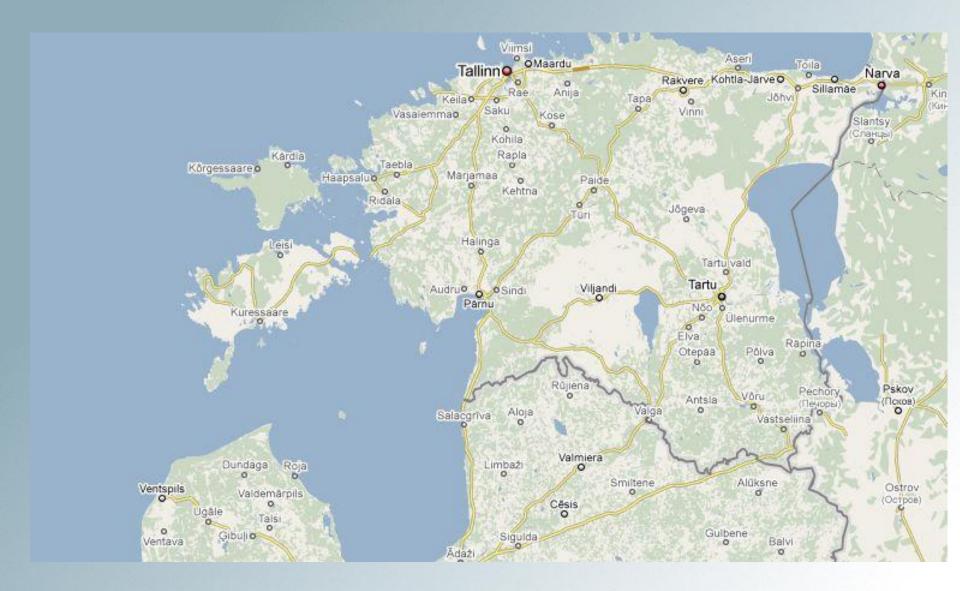
We can follow the personal growth and interpersonal relationships.

Social learning theory focuses on the learning that occurs within a social context. It considers that people learn from one another, including such concepts as observational learning, imitation, and modeling. In the Internet environment children can teach each other + help parents.

Two types of feedback: - comes in the form of the application of consequences from the environment or social group. In social network-system children can form and select their group.

- important is the internal feedback.





## Tiigrihüpe (Estonian for Tiger's Leap)

was a project undertaken by Republic of Estonia in late 1990s to heavily invest in development and expansion of computer and network infrastructure in Estonia, with a particular emphasis on education. An important primary effect of the project was rollout of Internet access to all Estonian schools, which effectively ended UUCP usage in Estonia, combined with installing computer labs in most schools, and replacing those that already existed with IBM PC based parks.



The setting up of computer labs was followed by curriculum lessons on computer usage for pupils, and after that, for teachers, to help them be on par with their students. Another aim was to introduce webbased and interactive teaching tools.

Today, most families have a computer at home, not to mention internet connection, and children often have their own personal computer. Our school lore surveys indicate that most respondents had their own computers or could use their parents' computer while they were working.

17600 respondents – own computer 16 000



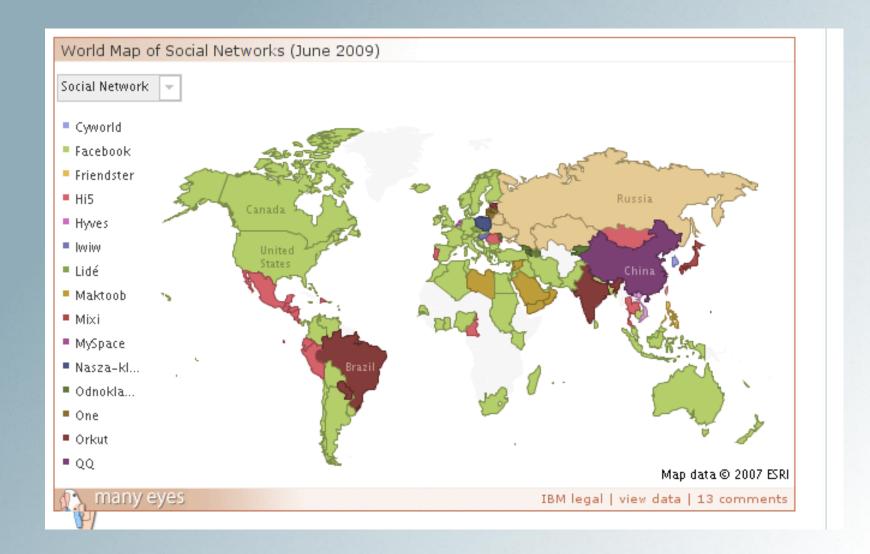
#### Starting the communication

E-school and e-mails

Neopets msn Rate.ee Orkut

Forums in the WWW





#### Social Networks Around the World

Italian PR professional and former Microsoft Italy marketer Vincenzo Cosenza made an interesting social network map.

Below is a map of the world, showing the most popular social networks by country. The map was built using Alexa and Google Trends for Website traffic data in June 2009 and it shows some interesting trends.

#### **Patterns:**

- Facebook has almost colonized Europe and it's extending its domination with more than 200 millions users
- QQ, leader in China, is the largest social network of the world (300 million active accounts)
- MySpace lost its leadership everywhere (except in Guam)
- V Kontakte is the most popular in Russian territories (looks a lot like Facebook)
- Orkut is strong in India and Brazil. In Europe, Estonia is exception in

its love of Orkut

- Hi5 is still leading in Peru, Colombia, Ecuador and other scattered

countries such as Portugal, Mongolia, Romania

- Odnoklassniki is strong in some former territories of the Soviet Union
- Maktoob is the most important Arab community/portal

### **Top 3 Social Networking Sites by Country:**

Australia: Facebook, MySpace, Twitter

Canada: Facebook, MySpace, Flickr

India: Facebook, Orkut, Hi5 (Twitter is a close fourth)

France: Facebook, Skyrock, MySpace,

China: QQ, Xiaonei, 51

Germany: Facebook, StudiVZ, MySpace

Italy: Facebook, Netlog, Badoo

Russia: V Kontakte, Odnoklassniki, LiveJournal

Spain: Facebook, Tuenti, Fotolog

United Kingdom: Facebook, Bebo, MySpace

United States: Facebook, MySpace, Twitter

In the case of many communities' members it is possible to follow the creation of personal and group identity.

R. Jenkins (1996) notes that "Self image is 'an ongoing, and in practice simultaneous, synthesis of (internal) self-definition and the (external) definitions of oneself offered by others' and this conception of selfhood gives rise to a model of identity construction containing two district threads."

For example, Kavanaugh, Reese, Carroll & Rosson (2003) have maintained that people who act as bridges between various web-groups are usually also more active in the local community, the internet being for them a tool for maintaining and managing their involvement.

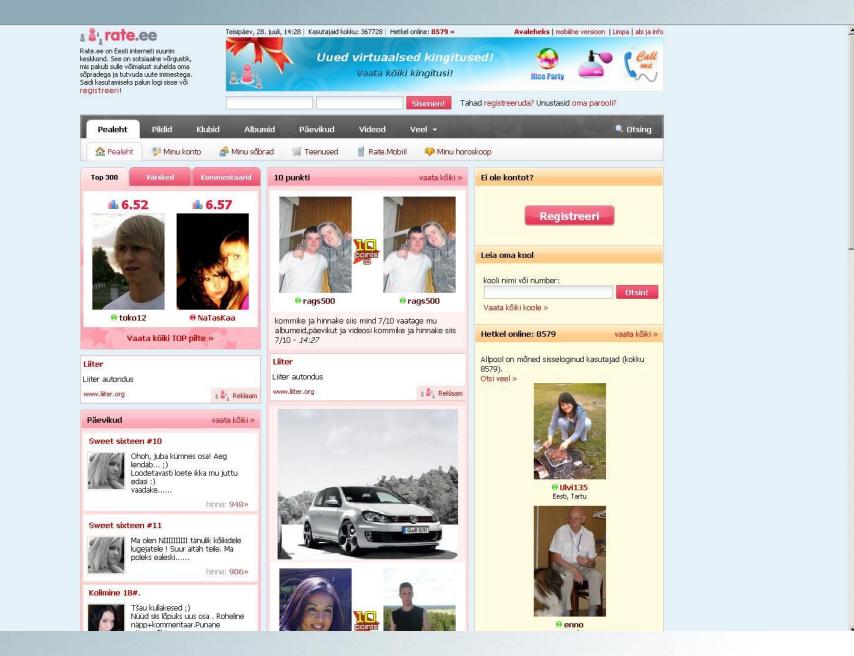
According to Karau and Williams (2001), one motivator could be collective success in case this supports also a person's individual success.

Prior research by project participants and empirical observations have shown that both global and local virtual communities develop multi-layered communication inbetween several channels and mediators, but also meet in real life.

The process of identity-forming and categorization presumes collective cohesion, integration and separation from another group, all understandable in certain historical context and situation. Communicating via the internet, two people can be joined by interpersonal ties, or they can be members of two or more groups. Such participation forms intergroup ties making all members of different groups connected, helping the flow of information and heritage between groups. Similar intergroup bridging, improved by intragroup relations creates an important social capital.

*Neopets* (originally NeoPets) is a virtual pet website launched by Adam Powell and Donna Williams on 15 November 1999.

Neopets is based around the virtual pets that inhabit the virtual world of Neopia. Visitors can create an account and take care of up to four virtual pets, buying them food, toys, clothes, and other accessories using a virtual currency called Neopoints. Neopoints can be earned through playing games, investing in the game's stock market, trading, and winning contests. Users can explore the world of Neopia with their Neopets and interact with each other through the Neoboards, NeoMail, guilds, and Key Quest.



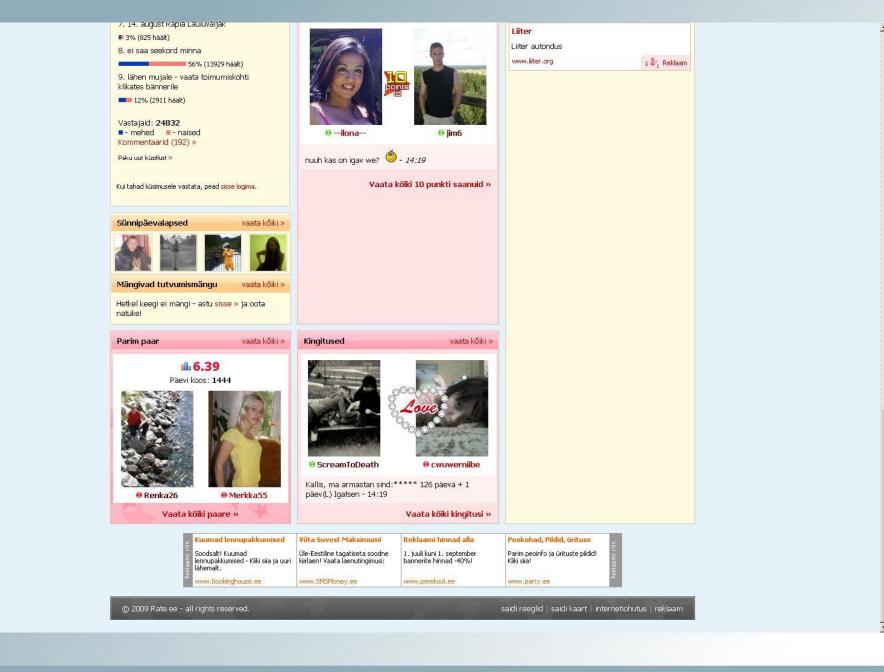


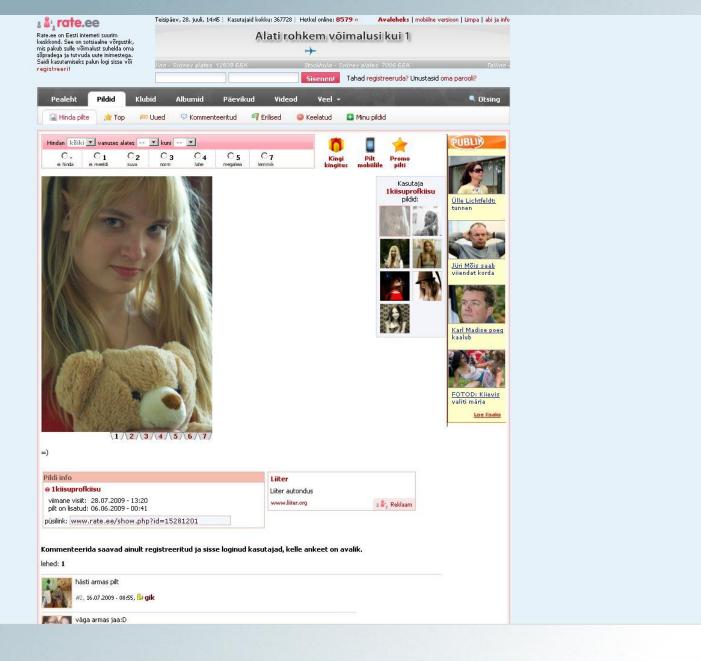


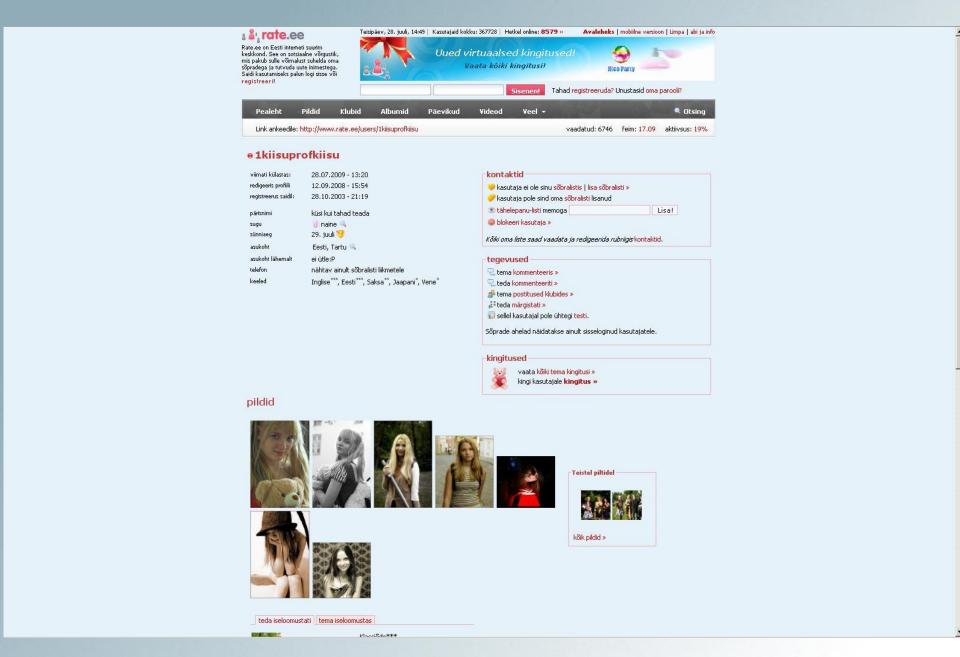
Rate.ee, colloquially often referred to as "reit", is an Estonian original social network portal. The portal was initiated (and is still partly owned) by Andrei Korobeinik, who opened the page on May 1, 2002. Since then, a number of clones have been opened in other countries: Alfa.fi, Face.lv, Limpa.ru, Ifame.co.uk, etc. In 2008, the portal earned ca 1 million EUR in profit.

As of July 2009, the portal has 367,728 registered users (30% of all Estonian speaking residents).

Users can improve to their profiles with a self-description, upload photos and look at other people's photos, give them grades and comment. In addition, users can send each other messages, there is a forum and chatroom. In addition to these free features there are some paid services (for example, to give someone 10 points you need to send an SMS worth 10 EEK or 0.65 EUR).









For children living in dispersed rural households this is a replacement for social environment, especially in villages where there are children only in 1-2 families.

In Estonia, the most popular social network is rate.ee which has no age limitations.

Children are from 8 years upwards. Sometimes both parents and children have an account in Rate.ee.



# What does Rate.ee give the children?

1. special skills – making digital photographs or scanning photographs, and adding them to the online gallery. Posting comments develops their skills in self-expression and giving points to photos makes them discerning in value gradation.

Photo editing (and taking) tips are shared among peers.



Choosing which photos to expose is a creative process since composition is an important factor — background, poses, portrait or action-centered photos, suitable light, etc. About a third of photos displayed in Rate.ee are obviously posed, not spontaneous. The most popular part of Rate.ee is personal profiles with photos that can be commented and graded by other registered users.

There are several environments for artistic creation, blogs, forums. Usually users need to make a choice: to communicate in their private room with chosen friends or in the public communication space.

Usually people browse the most popular public photos and post comments about the photos of people they know.

2. Every social web group has its own **etiquette and rules.** This is easy to see in photo grades — by giving low points, you keep the other person from moving up in the popularity ranking, which makes that person block you. If you keep giving only low points, you are banned from the portal.

The same goes for the content of comments – if you go against good tone, being impolite, using harsh language, you end up banned. This is an exercise in social rules that applies to real life as well.

Example – I had a really big row with my friend, we were calling each other names and we were both thrown off the website. Girl, 14 yrs

### 3. Internet skills give you a better position

Example: In addition I have made about 3-5 home pages for my class, some with forums. The last one was quite popular, there was a lot of activity in the forum and the webpage was updated sometimes. The site gave information about my class, our activities, opinions and attitudes.

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#### 4. Communication in differents environments

Example: I made a web page for my class, I take part in Estonian and Russian web. I have very cool penfriend from Israel. Girl, 13 yrs.

Example: Gamecave – there you can play, use e-mail, make a home page, talk to classmates and friends – and imagine – it is all free of charge. Boy, 9 yrs.

A place for constant exchange of information and talking is the class's web page. Usually there are also friends from outsice, they are usually communicated to via MSN Messenger and other environments.



## 5. Good opportunity to practice foreign languages:

#### 6. Be a bit older

In Orkut I take part in the communities of my class and school. Active interaction takes place through personal scrapbooks, on any topic at all.

Boy, 16 yrs.



#### About orkut

Demographics

User testimonials

Tell us your story

Keep orkut beautiful

Safety and security

#### orkut

orkut is an online community designed to make your social life more active and stimulating, orkut's social network can help you maintain existing relationships with pictures and messages and establish new ones by reaching out to people that you have never met before.

orkut makes it easy to find people who share your hobbies and interests, look for romantic connections or establish new business contacts. You can also create and join a wide variety of online communities to discuss current events, reconnect with old school mates or even exchange your favourite recipes.

Who you interact with is entirely up to you, Before getting to know an orkut member, you can read his/her profile and even see how he/she is connected to you through the friends network.

To join orkut, simply sign in with your Google Account and you can begin to create your own profile right away. If you do not have a Google Account yet, we will help you create one in minutes.

It is our mission to help you create a closer, more intimate network of friends. We hope to put you on the path to social bliss soon.

Enjoy (=

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Google'





Connect with friends and family using scraps and instant messaging
Discover new people through friends of friends and communities
Share your videos, pictures, and passions all in one place

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Can't access your account?

Google.

orkut Home Profil	e Scrapbook Friends Communitie	3	llisawilalujas	.folklore.ee Logout	search orkut
Age			Country		
18-25		54.65%	Brazil		49.66%
26-30		13.55%			
31-35		6.02%	United States		20.48%
36-40		3.79%			
41-50		3.79%	India		18.10%
50+		3.02%			
Here for			Pakistan		0.90%
		40.500/	Paraguay		0.40%
friends		48.60%			
activity partners		14.93%	United Kingdom		0.40%
business networking		14.45%			
dating	ta de la companya della companya del	16.03%	Afghanistan		0.38%
Relationship status			Japan		0.36%
no answer		56.16%	B. 41		0.060
single		27.08%	Portugal		0.36%
married		8.96%			
committed		5.74%	Australia Australia	1.0	0.34%
open marriage		0.21%	* •		
open relationship		1.83%			



# Communities - Conclusion

Active writers and narrators
The number of readers, lurkers, stalkers, observers is minimal.

The passive portion of the community is much bigger on the class or school environment.

The bridging person is the (un)official head of the union, who is actively involved in discussion and creation, whose announcements are always read.

From the motivational point of view, the forum also offers the opportunity to take on the role of an expert, to feel valued, needed and competent on a topic

In the most popular forums the range of ages reaches from teenagers to middle aged, and even retired members. Exists the family sites, although women are more active in organizing get-togethers, more active in discussions about cultural events, accessories, decorations - just as in real life. The community has a strong I- and us-identity. Supportive group, friends (the closes relatives are often a long way away).

Discussion groups are used as a replacement for the role once played by the extended family or geographical community - discussing important questions, emotions and looking for solutions in the discourse.

Since the postmodern lifestyle and interpretations find a different set of knowledge acceptable, and is largely oriented to subjectivity, the multitude of opinions expressed in an online discussion group conforms well with the modern style.

The online communities can be seen as a the writing communities, which use more and more audiovisual possibilities.

Such groups are based on information, the shared experience and values.

Individuals, personal identitiy, training and sharing of skills

