



TRENDWOLVES NV
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Trendwolves presents: A guide to the Netlog user's galaxy

*International Trendwolves Research shows how youngsters behave online
and how Netlog anticipates to these trends*

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followed by television (22%)*

Ghent, 29 October 2009 – As a result of their fresh partnership, Trendwolves, a research agency specialized in youth research, supported Netlog in its experience and expertise by defining "a guide to the Netlog user's galaxy". Trendwolves offers an overview of what the current generation of digital natives are looking for, what they want and what they like.

According to Trendwolves' philosophy, young people can no longer be defined as an age group, a culture, a music style, a picture, a story... A fragmented society has complex cultures, and young people regularly switch cultures and mix different cultures simultaneously. The combination of cultures is structured, but the choices within them are not. It is thus impossible to define young people in one single way.

Maarten Leyts, Managing Director of Trendwolves, gives an inside view of the Netlog user world: *"These learnings are based upon continuous research among different European youth segments. It isn't a look in a magic ball but rather a capturing of the times which they bring. Europe counts over 92 million young people (aged 14 through 25 years), making this an important segment with specific needs and interests. In fast evolving digital world youngsters, a significant amount of these being Netlog users, have embraced social networking".*

How do Netloggers think about social networking?

The majority of the Netlog users describe their social network as **young, easy** and especially **fun**. Besides this **everyday** and **global** are important keywords. Their main interests are music (74%), friends (69%) and sports (58%).

When it comes to media usage, Netlog (together with other social network sites) takes up a significant portion of the youngster's time spent online:

- 67% of youngsters even stated that internet is their channel of preference, followed by television (22%).
- 75% of young people recently even stated that *'they could not live without the internet'*.
- 88% of the Belgian youth surfs the web on a daily basis.



Maarten Leyts: *“In order to capture Netlog's significance in youngster's daily lives, one has to grasp the importance of several elements”:*

- **Connectivity. Online 24/7. Wire/Wireless...**
Accounts iMySpace/Facebook/Netlog/Youtube /Twitter/Skype/... are endless...Young people in front of their laptop, their PSP, using their mobile, their MP3, ... It is logical that it seems as if everything is very anti-social and just interested in their own little world. But in this new light young people communicate with each other, keep their friends posted on their travels and arrange to meet up. **Generation Y members have bytes running through their veins, and live on being connected.**
- Netlog plays an important part in this as **it's about interacting & connecting to (new) friends**. 86% loves "how new technology helps them communicate with people". Whether on- or offline, young people have a continuous need for human contact.

Carolyn (22): *“It's funny, we use all this time on the Internet and on our phones, just working out ways to spend time face-to-face. It's absurd”*

Understanding of Youth Culture

Trendwolves proposes eight elements that facilitate the understanding of youth cultures: travel, skills, rebellion, looks, heroes, gathering, diy (Do it Yourself) and connectivity.

These elements are not all-comprising; they are constantly changing and not exhaustive. Young people might shine in one element and not pay any attention (be it intentional or not) to other elements. It might thus not be possible to give a young person a place in all 8 elements. The different elements also cover common ground, where young people feel at home. Rebellion often happens in a gathering, if you travel you are often connected... The different elements can give depth to these stories about young people in this day and age.

What really matters for youngsters?

Once young people quit shopping with their parents, they might ask their friends for advice. The term sub-culture is now being replaced by neo-tribes, scenes of communities. All to show that young people still **gather**, but don't want to lose their identity. Nowadays we put an emphasis on the individual, but gather to consciously distinguish ourselves, to meet and to exchange.

Young people refer to music and show off their clothes. With their clothes they can profile and distinguish themselves. For young **looks** is an easy tool. Looks are apart from a real life characteristic also an online phenomenon. The look of your personal website, blog or social networking page and your avatar communicate an impression of who you are.

Maarten Leyts: *“Netlog facilitates this, as **it's about belonging**. Young people, especially those aged 14 through 20, are on a continuous search of their own identity. They carry an identity in BETA with them, still being developed through their surroundings. It's for this reason they seek to meet new people. They feel the need to belong to a group and their peers play a huge role in developing their interests and overall identity”.*



A Netlog skin for example expresses a lot about youngsters. This fuels **personal branding** amongst young people. Where branding was marketing concept it has evolved into a state of mind for youth. Society has taught youngsters to think in ways of winners and losers. They know that linking them to an A-brand, might give them the panache of an A-personality. This is why on social networks such as Netlog, young people don't mind befriending a brand.

Hector (19, London): *"You only brand up yourself because you're aware of how brands work. With all the advertisements that are surrounding us, we know how to get the best of us accross, as quickly as possible."*

DIY or Do It Yourself is a concept that has been growing in popularity since the 70's with the punk movement. DIY refers to the customization of existing products and the creation of products from scratch. Youngsters make their own arts and crafts and promote themselves through social media.

As nowadays style is for sale in the shop windows of every shopping street, young people go back to **skills**. Skills require talent, but mainly training and perseverance. In this way skills surpass the temporary and make you authentic. Skills can earn you global respect and further shape ones identity.

Netlog is also about DIY and skills as it's about sharing and that results in our so-called lifestreaming trend Trendwolves has described in last year's European Youth Trend Report '09. Every day we witness how youngsters upload **photos & videos** together with their thoughts and experiences. At first people seemed very skeptic about the idea of 'following your friends' life', but nowadays they have transformed into passionate followers and commenters on their friends thoughts and actions, making youngsters today '**entertailors**' in this post-tv era. Young people become tailors for their own entertainment. Not to say every youngster is a talented television maker all of a sudden, but a shift has happened. When asked about their media preferences, 67% preferred internet over television (33%).

Importance of gaming

In their search for entertainment, Trendwolves also witnesses how more and more that **it's about gaming**. The past years, there's been a huge demographic shift taking place when it comes to (online) gaming. Kids nowadays grow up with gaming, and research has shown that in 65% of households computer games are played.

Facts on gaming:

- 80% of youth regularly plays games
- 70% of these are online gamers
- girls make up 40% of gaming population
 - This is partially fuelled by the introduction of the Wii together with more and better targeted games for this segment. The Wii brought gaming from the bedroom to the living room resulting in more and more 'social gaming'
- 16,9% of teens games every day
- 11-12 year olds play most



- 16,7% never plays games
- gaming grew 10-15% passed years
 - This is higher than the music- and film industry, hence the importance
- gaming has turned social, 1/3 plays multiplayer games online

Although we live in an ever expanding European Union and globalization has been an important shift throughout the past decade, more often we see how **it's about locality** with **local brands and heroes** generating a huge following on Netlog for instance.

Young people look up to **heroes**. They learn from them. Heroes help decide their life's trajectory. Because of globalization, heroes nowadays often have an international character. Today though, we are seeing a shift towards local friends and family. Underlying this, an even bigger change is on the cards. Heroes are cut loose from location, time and space.

Maarten Leyts: *"Overall we can state that **it's all about 'their own space'**, a place where fun is king and young people can belong. Netlog offers such a place".*

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About Trendwolves

Trendwolves, experts on European youth culture. Continuous research and their connections with the world of young people are the basis of effective marcom strategies. Their services are pre-tested by young people and thoroughly underpinned with facts, figures, benchmarks and best practices; and are used by communication and marketing agencies, private companies and governments.

About Netlog

Netlog is an online community where young people make friends by building a digital identity, sharing experiences and playing games. The community counts over 56 million members and is growing by half a million new members every week. Overall statistics for Netlog:

- Netlog is the Leading Online Youth Community in Europe & Middle East
- Its member population consists of 50% male - 50% female
- Over 250 million visits from 55 million unique visitors per month
- Targeted towards 14 to 24 years old
- 2 million gameplays every day
- Available in 38 languages

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