#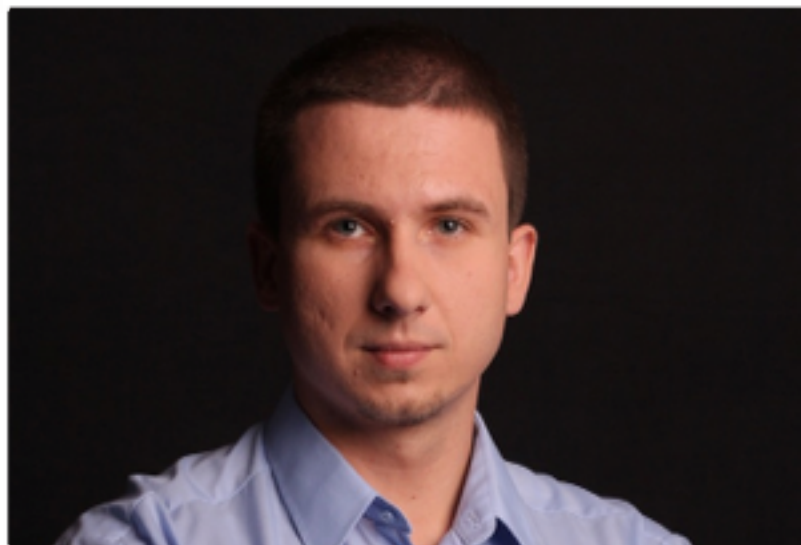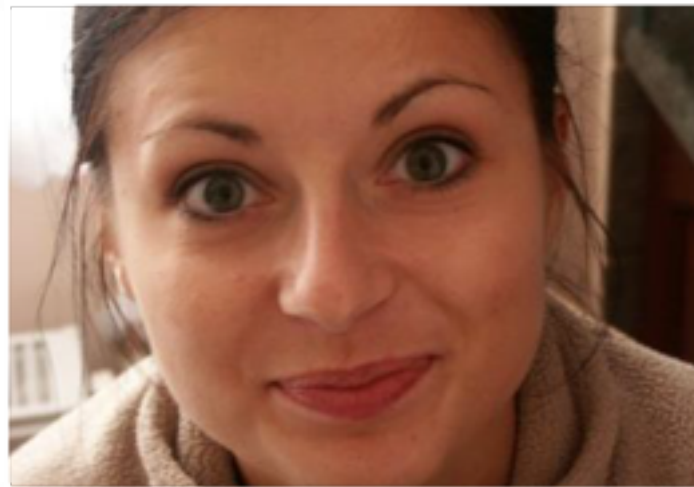 Information and Media Literacy of Polish Children According to the Results of "Children of the Net" and "Children of the Net 2.0" Studies

Ewa A. Rozkosz

The European Conference on Information Literacy, 2014

"We grew up with the Internet and on the Internet. This is what makes us different; this is what makes the crucial, although surprising from your point of view, difference: we do not 'surf' and the internet to us is not a 'place' or 'virtual space'. The Internet to us is not something external to reality but a part of it: an invisible yet constantly present layer intertwined with the physical environment."

Piotr Czerski

MIL of children/youth – research in Poland

Research in Poland

concerning mainly selected activities (e.g. information retrieval) in which the young people engaged on the Internet and risks involved in them

Missing

a complex approach in research on MIL of youngsters

Goals

- to identify the level of MIL in Polish children from two age groups (aged 9-13 and 13-16, respectively)

- to understand the contexts in which MIL is being or should be developed

Research framework

S. Livingstone, *Children's use of the internet: Reflections on the emerging research agenda*

Research agenda

Different approaches to competencies

Different approaches to collect data

Different results

Evidence MIL competencies **and/or** Interpret contexts in which MIL competencies develop

DECISION: a multidimensional approach
(a methodological bricolage)

Methodological bricolage

concept presented by Denzin & Lincoln

methodological orientation within the interpretive framework that allows the researcher to flexibly combine available perspectives, methods and materials

Concept of bricolage

Competence model

information behaviors

1. Skillful and effective retrieval of information
2. Critical assessment of information

production behaviors

3. Creation, processing and presentation of content
4. Legal awareness of content production and distribution

life on the Internet

5. Empathy and self-image
6. Security and privacy
7. Participation in the Internet communities

Methods

Children of the Net

- **structured qualitative interview with children and their guardians**

- participatory observation (at school)

- analysis of the Web portals most popular with the users in this particular age-group

- qualitative and quantitative analysis of school curricula

Children of the Net 2.0

- **survey of a large quantitative sample of youth**

- analysis of Polish youth's social network profiles

- qualitative and quantitative analysis of school curricula

Children of the Net

method: structured qualitative interview

respondents: children aged 9-13 (N=33)

Findings of the qualitative interview

1. Skillful and effective retrieval of information
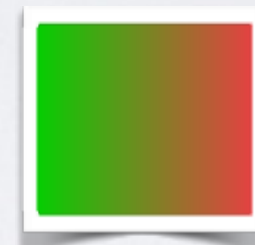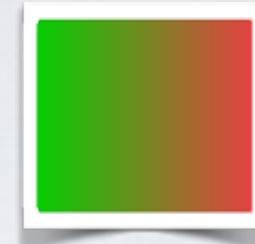
2. Critical assessment of information

3. Creation, processing and presentation of content

4. Legal awareness of content production and distribution

5. Empathy and self-image

6. Security and privacy

7. Participation in the Internet communities

Children declared that their MIL competencies are really high.

Example question:

"Imagine that you collect mascots and have several piglets that are exactly the same. You would like to exchange them with someone and you want to do it using an appropriate internet forum. Find this kind of internet forum where you could post a message that you would like to make an exchange."

Findings of the qualitative interview

- Most of children can retrieve information and understand the need to archive information (IT skills).

- Most of them don't have critical attitude to evaluate results of searching. When searching for information, they use only Google and most of them stick to the results from the first page (critical skills).

- Most of them understand what cyberbullying is, but they don't take action to help other children who experience it.

Children of the Net 2.0

method: survey

respondents: children aged 13-16 (N=742)

Findings of the survey

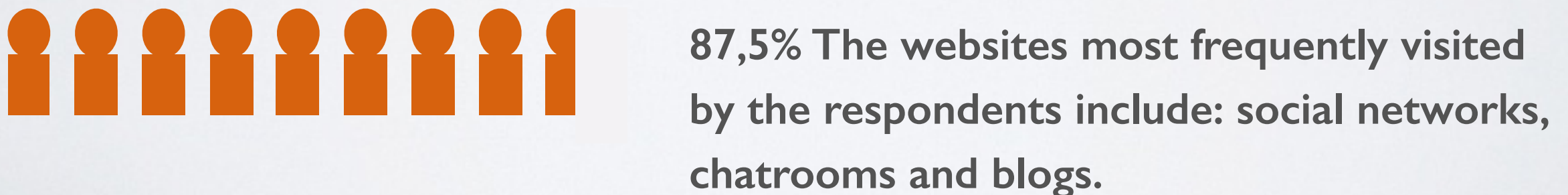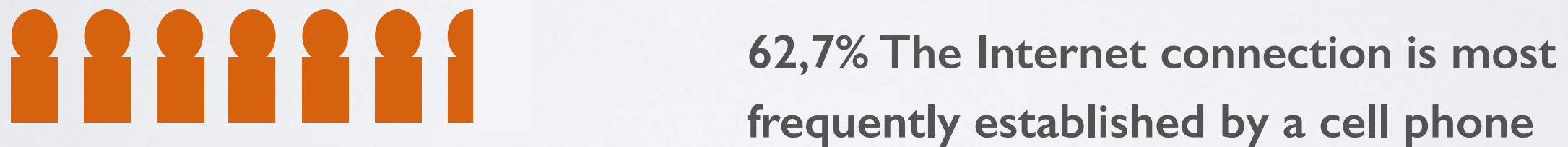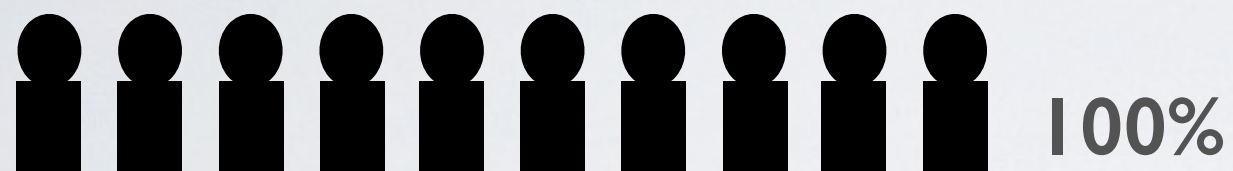## Dependent variables based on our MIL model

1. Skillful and effective retrieval of information

2. Critical assessment of information

3. Creation, processing and presentation of content

4. Legal awareness of content production and distribution

5. Empathy and self-image

6. Security and privacy

7. Participation in the Internet communities

Independent variables

1. school grade

2. sex

3. type and size of the place of residence

4. parental education

5. assessment of the Internet skills

6. years of the Internet use

7. frequency of the Internet use

8. the average time spent on using the Internet

9. the number of devices and tools used

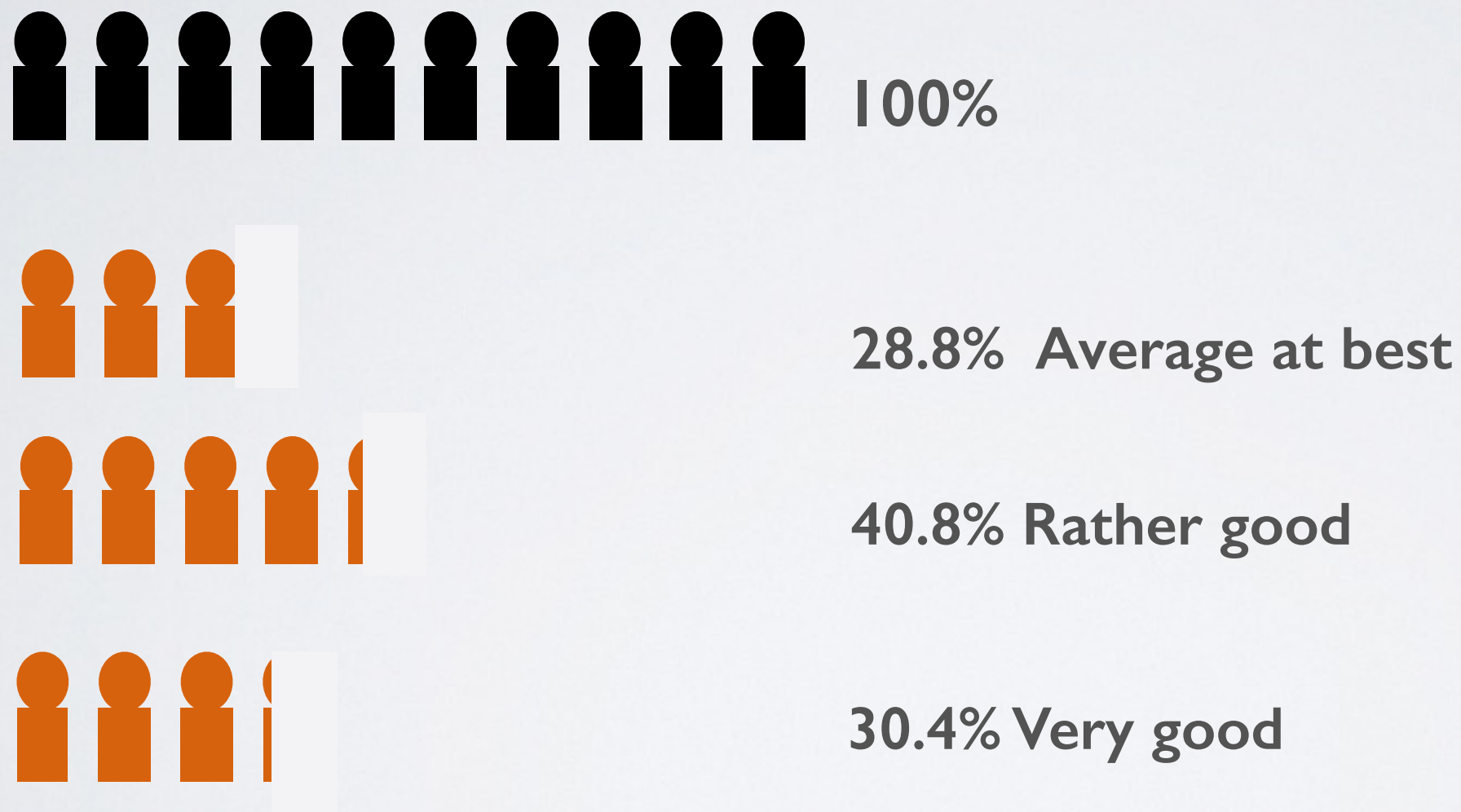10. the number of devices and tools used

Findings of the survey

Some facts about how the youths use the Internet.

100%

80,1% Use the Internet everyday

62,7% The Internet connection is most frequently established by a cell phone

87,5% The websites most frequently visited by the respondents include: social networks, chatrooms and blogs.

Findings of the survey

Self-assessed MIL competencies.

100%

28.8% Average at best

40.8% Rather good

30.4% Very good

Findings of the survey

1st area of MIL model

100%
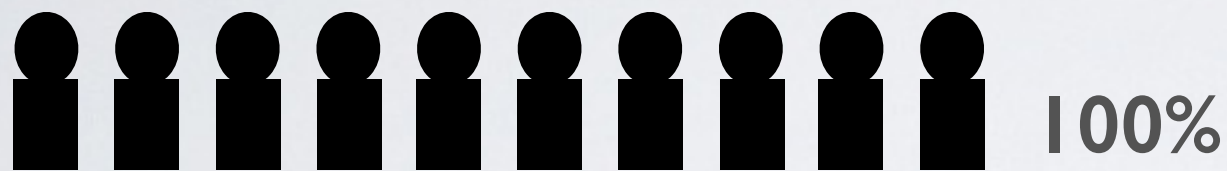
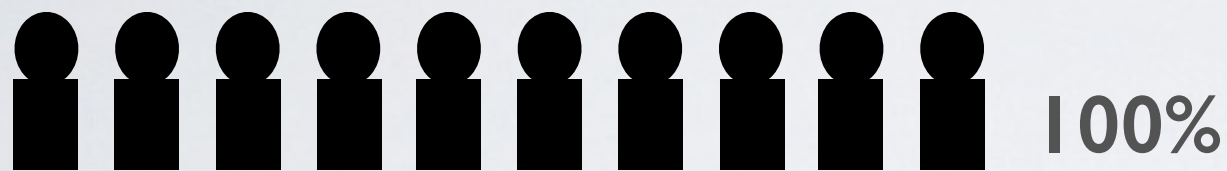**9.2%** understand search queries which contained logical operators

41.3% can identify the purpose of popular Internet portals

30.4% correctly distinguish between the provided examples of facts and opinions

Findings of the survey

2nd area of MIL model

100%

4.3% understand what is and what is not legally admissible

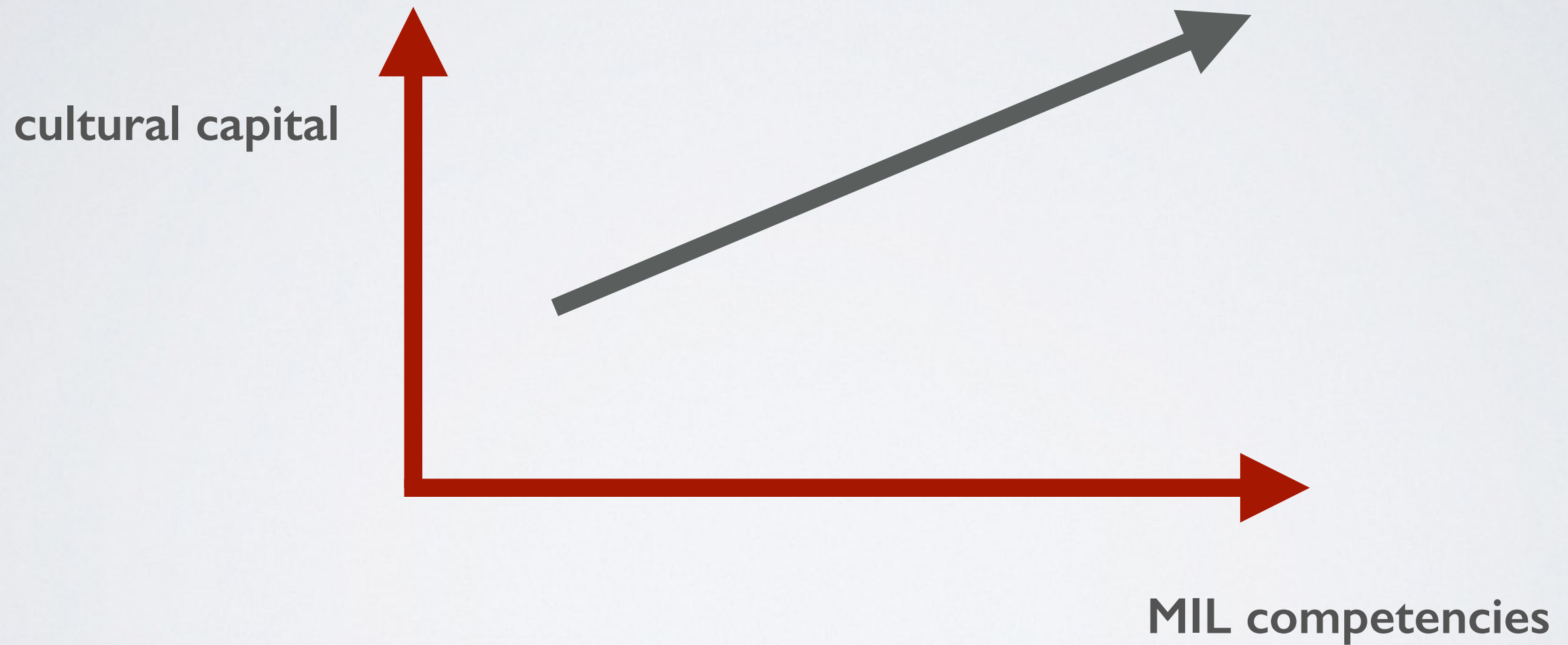24.2% can't say whether downloading and sharing music and movies is legal or not

Findings of the survey

3rd area of MIL model

100%

64% identify capital letters in an Internet post as a way of underscoring its importance

Findings of the survey

The findings of suplemented research

and conclusions

Children of the Net

- **structured qualitative interview with guardians of children**

- **participatory observation (at school)**

- **analysis of the Web portals most popular with the users in this particular age-group**

- **qualitative and quantitative analysis of school curricula**

The home, a potential site of comprehensive family MIL education, apparently fails to fulfill that role.

The analysis carried out in schools demonstrated a contrast between a student's school and identity and their online identity.

The analysis of children's activity on the web reveals that they are actively involved in interactions.

The analysis of curricula showed that their authors are only marginally interested in promoting popular media education.

Children of the Net. Conclusions

Communication competences that children use on the Internet are mainly developed outside of school or home. In other words, most likely children acquire them by reproducing modes of action observed in online communities which are specific communities of practitioners.

Children of the Net 2.0. Conclusions

Conclusions from the second project are similar, although it shows an even bigger need to expose oneself and one's values, including the physical ones, on the Internet.

As far as curricula for children aged 13-16 are concerned, their authors are more likely to perceive the Internet as the space of learning, acquiring new knowledge and communication with other people.

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