Rediscovering the netiquette:
the role of propagated values and personal patterns in defining self-identity of the Internet user.

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Abstract

As Howard Rheingold (2002) put it, the "killer apps" of tomorrow will not be the hardware devices or software programs themselves – the social practices will. It becomes less important to build, expand and extend proper tools; instead, it is becoming more and more important what people think of doing with these tools. Rheingold's statement also reveals why norms and values associated with Internet use are important for sociologists, especially ones interested in sociology of morality. Considerations about the future of the Internet in the moral context are not complete without reaching to its past, though. Netiquette can be considered as the carrier of core values typical for the early Internet culture; it also carries the propagated values (as defined by Maria Ossowska, Polish sociologist of morality) which can be seen as the backbone of social order on the Internet.

The propagated values present in the netiquette reveal the expectations toward a human in his or her social role of the Internet user. In my paper I present these expectations in the form of the personal pattern of the "appropriate Internet user", as well as two negative patterns and social implications of formulating such.

Introduction: Netiquette, the heterogeneous code of conduct of the Internet

English Wikipedia describes netiquette as a „*set of social conventions that facilitate interaction over networks, ranging from Usenet and mailing lists to blogs and forums"* (Wikipedia 2008). This definition is hardly precise, but a precise one would be difficult to coin. Decentralized nature of the Internet helps understand why there is no "one and only" definition of the net etiquette. Generally speaking, the netiquette can be described in many ways, although an adequate description could consider it being the ethical code of conduct on the Internet and a form of online *savoir-vivre*, created spontaneously by the users, for the users.

One could also say that netiquette is an index of proper and improper behaviors, good and bad online deeds – but it is also heterogeneous, meaning that one can find a significant amount of online documents called by that name[1]. These documents differ in contents – some are very detailed, while other remain more general; some are universal and aim at Internet users all around the world, while other target only a particular environment (e.g. students and staff of a particular faculty at a particular university, etc.) that has its own specifics. Some netiquettes concern only particular online services, whereas other remain as extensive as it gets. It is worth noting, however, that despite many differences, a common normative-regulating core – with references to the most general rules of social coexistence[2] – remains distinct in most texts self-described as netiquettes.

Although it is not the aim of this article to present the history of the netiquette, a few important remarks should be made. This entity is relatively young; one of the documents most often perceived as "the ancestor of the netiquette", the NSFNET Backbone Services Acceptable Use Policy, was published in January 1992. It was *"provided to support open research and education in and among US research and instructional institutions, plus research arms of for-profit firms when engaged in open scholarly communication and research"* (NSFNET 1992). This document was not called netiquette, however, similarly to „A Primer on How to Work With the Usenet Community" by Chuq Von Rospach (Von Rospach 1999), first written in the 1980's [3]. The proper history of net etiquette most likely began a little bit later, in the aforementioned 1992, along with creation of Arlene H. Rinaldi's "The Net: User Guidelines and Netiquette".

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[1]   This is why I will use simultaneously two form, writing about the "netiquette" and "netiquettes". The former thus relates either to the general idea behind, or to particular documents that were a part of my research.
[2]   Although I consider netiquette as something recognized around the world, in this paper I refer to documents made within the so-called Western Civilization circle, i.e. documents created mostly by Americans and Europeans.
[3]   It is worth noting though, that Von Rospach is sometimes identified as the person who coined the term „netiquette", as referred to in The Jargon File - http://catb.org/jargon/html/N/netiquette.html

While mentioning the last decade of the 20th century, one has to keep in mind that the Internet itself was born back in the 1960's. It existed almost thirty years without the need to formulate the official or semi-official, generally-valid code of conduct. This is brought up in accord with Manuel Castells' concept of the early and distinct Internet culture which was formed by the creators of the Web, as well as its first users. The pioneers of the Web, the techno-elite and hackers, were a rather homogeneous, meritocratic group with great technical competence in electronics and informatics. According to Castells, they shared values and similar working ethics – and in such firm groups a written code of conduct is often unnecessary, which could explain the lack of need for coining netiquette. The situation did not change much when virtual communitarians flocked the Internet in the 1980's, since they have generally abided by the already established rules (Castells 2003).

Netiquette can thus be called a product of the Internet popularization era, created after the symbolic invention of the World Wide Web (1990-1991), yet before other symbolic moments, such as the beginning of the Eternal September (1993). Creation of the first netiquette was more pragmatic than altruistic, but it helped significantly in integrating Internet beginners with the already rich (and "newbie-sensitive") infrastructure, as well as with savvy and usually very competent veterans.

Because of the environmental and social conditions outlined above, netiquettes often carry values important to members of the early Internet culture. Manuel Castells described these values and mentioned among them, e.g.: open access to Internet resources, which should be treated as a common good of its users; very strong emphasis laid on cooperation, i.e. meritocracy as the main factor in accessing certain communities; importance of self-development that bases and depends on above mentioned resources; unselfishness in using common goods (Castells 2003).

Such motives also emerge in the content analysis of chosen netiquettes; my research thus focuses on what we should call *propagated values*, in order to differentiate them from the *accepted* ones. By wording the former we can analyze the latter with more precision, without having to rely solely on well-preserved values typical for the offline part of human activity. In my research I try to determine what are the attributes of an appropriate Internet user, as promoted by the netiquette.

Determining such key, propagated values allows to answer – to some extent and strictly in the Internet context – the questions asked by Anthony Giddens in relation to modern societies and self-identity that often needs (re)definition. To quote Giddens: *"What to do? How to act? Who to be? These are focal questions for everyone living in circumstances of late modernity - and ones which, on some level or another, all of us answer, either discursively or through day-to-day social behaviour."* (Giddens 1991).

My research suggests that the netiquette can be an important instrument dedicated to answering them. Even if we assume that people in general tend to agree with the long-lasting universal values which are key in the offline human activities, a question emerges: which of these values are still important online? This effort aims at answering this question as well, at least partially.

Methodology

As mentioned before, the netiquette is represented by numerous – and to some extent countless, taking the nature of the Internet into consideration – documents. A short peek at the search engine's records reveals an enormous number of files and pages self-described as netiquettes, as well as even bigger set of references to most popular net etiquettes. In effect, to try and analyze all existing netiquettes seems impossible, as well as reminds the work of Sysiphus (during analysis, new documents would emerge sooner or later). In order to perform a well-considered research, it was then crucial to choose a set of documents according to a reasonable criterion. Eventually I decided to pick the criterion of importance, understood in a similar way to importance of academic work – the more references and links a paper or book gets, the more important it usually is. Furthermore, in the case of netiquette: the more copies, translations and remakes (remixes) of it can be found elsewhere on the Web – the more important a particular document is.

According to these directives I have selected five most prominent netiquettes, containing a total of 318 separate rules. The documents were authored by: Arlene H. Rinaldi (1992; coded in the research as netiquette number 2), Virginia Shea (1994; netiquette no. 1),

Internet Engineering Task Force (1995; netiquette no. 3), Marcin Dębowski (1996; netiquette no. 5), as well as Rafał Rynkiewicz (2003; netiquette no. 4). Two latter authors wrote their documents in Polish – making it into top 3 of most popular netiquettes in Poland along with translated Rinaldi's work – which allowed me to gather extra data regarding potential differences between their moral core and the core present in three most important American netiquettes. This part of my research is of no importance to hereby presented paper, but it should be stated that I was able to confirm a previous assumption that Polish net guidelines model themselves after American ones and are not significantly different in any way (Author 2008).

The first step of the research was to find the normative trace in the netiquettes, i.e. to determine which moral norms and virtues are most referred to. I used a typology of these norms and virtues proposed by Maria Ossowska in her "Normy moralne – próba systematyzacji" ("Moral norms. A tentative

systematization"). Because Ossowska's works on the theory of value were best recognized abroad in the 1970's and some of her works were translated only to languages other than English, I decided to present her research contributions in a more expanded way.

In her works, the late sociologist of morality has mentioned numerous categories of norms, starting with the basic category of metanorms and supplementing them with:

    a) norms defending human biological existence;

    b) norms defending dignity;

    c) norms guarding independence;

    d) norms defending privacy;

    e) norms defending trust;

    f) norms defending justice;

    g) norms dealing with social conflicts;

...as well as four supplemental categories of virtues:

1. virtues aiding peaceful coexistence;

2. virtues organizing collective life;

3. personal virtues;

4. practical virtues (Ossowska 1985).

The attribution of particular rules of netiquettes to particular categories from Ossowska's typology was carried with the method of content analysis followed by a single variable quantitative analysis. Third step of my research required using another concept by Maria Ossowska – the personal pattern (Ossowska 1973). It allowed me to formulate the personal pattern of an appropriate Internet user and two negative patterns, also called anti-patterns.

In her work „Ethos rycerski i jego odmiany" („The ethos of chivalry and varieties thereof") Ossowska pointed at a specific confusion present in the realm of sociology of morality and in ethics. Following a certain "pattern" of behavior neither implies striving to reach the "ideal", nor it assumes an existence of any factual "model" to strictly follow (Ossowska 1973). In Ossowska's words, the personal pattern implies a certain hierarchy of values, a hierarchy of normative kind. It does not assume any kind of perfection and does not promise any evident tangibles; instead it only encourages followers to act (or, in the case of anti-patterns, not to act) in a similar way.

The author also distinguished two major types of positive personal patterns: the propagated and accepted ones. The latter become important in the moment of actual reception. Both patterns require different research techniques: the propagated ones can be analyzed thanks to their recordability; accepted patterns are a bit more problematic, as they require reconstructing through surveys or participant observation (Ossowska 1973). Theoretical concept by Ossowska also includes the idea of negative patterns, which describe people who do not abide by the general rules.

To sum up, the propagated personal pattern I am trying to formulate is, accordingly to Ossowska's definition, a set of propagated values; these values provoke a strong group appreciation upon reception by a given individual. It is also worth underlining that this pattern might be perceived as going beyond morality and relating as well to intellect or competence.

Being practical and pro-social. The results

The executed research allowed me to come up with numerous conclusions. Among the categories of norms and virtues, most references pointed to three categories of the latter. Netiquette rules referring to all categories of virtues were in significant majority (80,2%) over the rules connected directly to all categories of norms (14,1%); metanorms (1,6%) and rules without a moral context (4,1%) were counted separately. A detailed specification is presented on Fig. 1.

Category of norms/virtues	Netiquette 1	Netiquette 2	Netiquette 3	Netiquette 4	Netiquette 5	Total % of guidelines in the category
Norms defending human biological existence	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%
Norms defending dignity	2,9%	0,0%	2,0%	0,0%	0,0%	1,3%
Norms guarding independence	2,9%	0,0%	1,3%	0,0%	0,0%	0,9%
Norms defending privacy	2,9%	9,6%	4,0%	3,3%	0,0%	4,4%
Norms defending trust	0,0%	15,4%	3,3%	3,3%	4,5%	5,0%
Norms defending justice	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%
Norms dealing with social conflicts	11,8%	3,8%	0,7%	1,7%	0,0%	2,5%
Norms	**20,6%**	**28,8%**	**11,3%**	**8,3%**	**4,5%**	**14,1%**
Virtues aiding peaceful coexistence	20,6%	1,9%	13,3%	13,3%	0,0%	11,3%
Virtues organizing collective life	14,7%	19,2%	20,0%	18,3%	31,8%	19,8%
Personal virtues	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%
Practical virtues	29,4%	48,1%	52,7%	55,0%	40,9%	49,1%
Virtues	**64,7%**	**69,2%**	**86,0%**	**86,7%**	**72,7%**	**80,2%**
Metanorms	**14,7%**	**0,0%**	**0,0%**	**0,0%**	**0,0%**	**1,6%**
Rules without moral context	**0,0%**	**1,9%**	**2,7%**	**5,0%**	**22,7%**	**4,1%**
Total % of guidelines in the given netiquette	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

(Fig. 1 – Proportional share of netiquette rules attributed to categories
of norms or virtues, split into five analyzed documents)

Why virtues and not norms? Although division between the two is not very glaring, many norms tend to operate with some forms of orders and/or prohibitions, whereas virtues are tied with recommendations.

This is very close to what netiquette is all about – even though it can be seen as customary law (see e.g. Maltz 1996), it is in fact devoid of typically law-like sanctions. The netiquette usually recommends actions and uses condemnation and stigmatization – both moral sanctions – as its main power. One could even say that as long as bans remain easily dodged online, social pressure will continue to be the main weapon for numerous Internet communities.

Some of the analyzed rules were, however, related directly to norms. These records treated mostly about common trust, as well as about fighting lies and deception. Altogether, these rules made for less than 15% of the grand total of 318.

In order to be able to formulate the personal pattern of an appropriate Internet user as propagated by the netiquettes, one needs to take a longer look into three most important categories. In my research, the most important one turned out to be the practical virtues (49,1%) – category consisting of thoroughness, precision, persistence, foresight and moderation (as worded by Ossowska in her "Normy moralne..."). Another significant category was virtues organizing collective life (19,8%), such as mutuality, solidarity, ability to cooperate, interest in common good, as well as some sense of responsibility for it. Third of the major categories turned out to be virtues aiding peaceful coexistence (11,3%), among them generosity, kindness, tolerance, understanding and unselfishness.

Some, or perhaps even most of the new Internet users, do not realize nowadays that for many others the Internet is/was a value by itself. Many also do not realize that ignorance of an individual can negatively influence the online well-being of many others. An example of personal recklessness regarding malware protection, leading to infection of user's computer and turning it into a "zombie PC" that sends out spams and trojan-embedded e-mails, comes to mind.

Even if we assume that people in general tend to agree with the long-lasting universal values which are key in the offline human activities, a question emerges. Which of these values are still important online? My research allows to answer – at least partially – to this question as well. The netiquette in fact often relates to values already known and agreed upon; the point is that some of them appear here in a different light. This is also why we can state that online realm has its own, dedicated personal patterns.

The personal pattern of an appropriate Internet user. Two negative patterns

Finally, what are the attributes of that Internet User, capital U – someone who we should be willing to be similar to, according to the netiquettes? According to my analysis, this person should be:

a) thorough and precise (and these attributes seem to play a key role, as research shows);

b) able and willing to cooperate with other users, as well as with admins;

c) committed to common good;

d) co-responsible, to some extent, for the collective life conducted online;

e) generous, kind and tolerant towards other users.

It should be underlined that such a user does not have to be *altruistic*; netiquettes do not persuade readers into choosing other's good over their own. It is rather about linking personal interest with interests of others and with the common good – thus about opposing against selfishness and egoism. Most of the values propagated by the netiquette are pro-social. The meaning of such values are often underlined in analyzed documents. If we were to use a metaphor of a state, we would say that netiquettes propagate a personal pattern of a good citizen of The Web. And if one was to reach to communitarian philosophy and theoretical concepts of Amitai Etzioni – it would also be righteous to state that the netiquette helps us understand and put ourselves in order, as well as notice a certain continuity around us (Etzioni 1996).

Description of attributes meaningful to the propagated personal pattern presented above very briefly, allows us to formulate an equally noticeable description of a user we should not resemble. Such a person would be described by all or some of the attributes presented below:

1. carelessness;

2. inaccuracy;

3. irresponsibility (not understanding or not caring to understand the social consequences of undertaken actions);

4. lack of technical competence in the field of computers and Internet use;

5. lack of interest in the common good (consumer-like approach to the Internet; Internet as something to be due and not common good);

6. egoism (setting one's own good above everything else; also – unwillingness to cooperate and to be mutual, as well as lack of moderation in using common resources);

7. lack of tolerance and confrontational approach;

8. lack of discretion (especially abusing privacy).

These attributes allow to propose two separate negative patterns. The first focuses on characteristics connected with lack of knowledge, "newbieness" – and in consequence, on typical problems that can

emerge in such circumstances. The second anti-pattern centers on egoism, self-imposing, lack of tolerance. In other words, the first pattern is a collection of negative attributes related to technological aspects of Internet use, whereas the other accumulates those connected to the psychological and personal side of individual and its place in a given (virtual) group. In this way the propagated personal pattern of an appropriate Internet user is opposed by anti-patterns of the newbie and the egoist.

One can characterize a newbie as someone incompetent and not savvy with computers and the Internet. The negative patterns related to the netiquette allow to be more specific, though; clumsy beginners often have no idea what a FAQ is and they do not see or understand the difference between plain text and HTML. Lack of knowledge does not help in setting up software in a satisfactory way, both for the user and for his environment. This obvious example has a lot to do with responsibility and thoroughness – or lack thereof. Ignorance and carelessness can lead to computer infections, but the nature of trojans, viruses and other malware is social (i.e. they are futile if they can not multiply), which means that by being careless we pose a serious threat not only to our own online well-being, but also to well-being of others. The same rule applies e.g. to unintentional abusing of online privacy.

The rudimentary negative attribute of a newbie is low technical competence that causes problems – the sooner we learn the basics of the net ("Internet for dummies"), the better for us and our environment. Other negative characteristics, such as lack of thoroughness, inaccuracy, irresponsibility et al., can be a direct consequence of the lack of basic technical know-how. This relation is worth mentioning as well, because, obviously, one can not assume that a careless Internet user is generally careless as an individual.

Another remark regarding the negative pattern of a newbie: although netiquette guidelines motivate users to not being such, no repulsion toward beginners was verbalized in any of 318 rules subjected to content analysis in my research. Furthermore, one of the rules even urged readers to remain patient toward beginners, since *"you too were a newbie once"*.

It is however very different in the case of the anti-pattern of an egoist. The repulsion not only is present here, but is in fact quite strong and can be found in many rules of the netiquette (especially in longer, explanatory ones). Describing the egoist with the use of netiquette's guidelines would lead to aforementioned characteristics, such as setting one's own good above anything else, unwillingness to cooperate and to be mutual – as well as to attributes often linked to individuals called Internet trolls, i.e. to intolerance, selfish approach to group, society, their commons and mental resources.

Contrary to newbies, Internet egoists may be quite competent, technically wise. Their fault is not respecting others and their time. Asking a newsgroup a question its members have already answered numerous times before is a (stereo)typical egoistic behavior according to netiquettes – one should put some effort first and search for answers instead of engaging others' time and energy right away. This case is especially strong if an egoist is not a member of a given virtual community, thus does not contribute in any way to its well-being; it is not a coincidence that frequent peer-to-peer networks users tend to call passive users "leechers". The netiquette propagates cooperation, exchange of knowledge and the culture of gift in which egoistic behaviors are not welcome.

According to the negative personal pattern, Internet egoists may also be intolerant and confrontational, especially against those who openly oppose their conduct. Sometimes it happens just because, though, as some people tend to get overly wary against the slightest form of discussion (instead of expected blind approval). Such people often impose themselves to their respective communities. This description fits well the concept of Internet troll; such trolls are included in the anti-pattern of an egoist, which itself is more extensive and more general.

If the main complaint about the newbie can be worded as accidental and involuntary complications he or she causes in the community, the egoist is best described as someone who does not care about others and their rights, as well as about the common good. Perhaps one could even say that this anti-pattern represents almost everything that early hackers and techno-elite stood against.

I mentioned before that a propagated personal pattern encourages followers to act in a similar way. The anti-patterns serve as the opposite and teach them what is perceived as faulty or shameful. Definitional function of the propagated pattern – i.e. facilitating self-identity of an individual in the role of an Internet user – would not be complete or even possible, shall we have only coined the positive, propagated pattern.

In order to loose the eventual stigma of a newbie, one should gain competence and act responsibly. By following what is expected from us – and written in netiquettes, thus present in the propagated personal pattern of appropriate Internet user – we define or redefine our online self-identities, hopefully becoming more responsible and careful. The stigma of the egoist is more powerful than the one of the newbie and more difficult to loose. Both aforementioned anti-patterns are not exclusive – they share some attributes. For example, we can imagine an intolerant newbie with consumer-like approach to anything he lays his hands on while online – or a savvy egoist who just does not care about the consequences of his or her own actions.

Internet users as responsible citizens. Discussion

We could also say that netiquettes propagate a good citizen attitude (also called citizen virtue), consisting e.g. of social commitment, responsibility and care, tolerance, reliability, as well as honesty and helpfulness. Such care would undoubtedly appeal to Castells' techno-elites and hackers, as these groups would easily agree that without commitment of regular users the Internet would not fare overly well (and would not be today the way it is).

Also, the analyzed guidelines not only reflect a general concern towards other Internet users, but to the Internet *per se*, the common good without a factual owner, thus requiring a common care, for our own good. Many rules of analyzed netiquettes relate directly to online communities and their well-being. This in turn leads us to social philosophy of the communitarian movement and its representatives.

Describing Internet as a global community is open to question, however Alasdair MacIntyre seems to understand the communitarian community as a multidimensional entity, reaching as far as to the level of state (MacIntyre 2007). Similar points of view can be found in works of Michael Walzer and Charles Taylor. Because a communitarian community can be also understood as a set of shared values of a given society, I believe one can also approach the Internet, *per analogiam*, as a community of values of its users. All in all we are immersed in the infrastructure and relations with other users – or encumbered with certain duties toward them, as Michael Sandel would say (Sandel 1996).

Many IT administrators and netiquette supporters would probably agree that caring about the Internet, even in a personal micro scale, should be a factual duty of a user. As mentioned before, getting more technical competence and having willingness to learn new tools – all this benefits not only a particular individual, but also his environment. Competent users mean less risk of damages to it, which in consequence implies less worries in the admins' heads.

It is however worth reminding that according to the research I conducted, the netiquette should not be perceived as a set of rules that makes a fetish out of the community. If this was the case, it would be safe to assume that majority of the rules would be in form of orders or prohibitions – regardless the factual compliance – instead of suggestions and recommendations. Particular guidelines usually explain widely why it is wise to undertake a particular action and why to restrain oneself from another. Such specificity of the netiquette – putting remarkable responsibility on the user, but also defending beginners from harsh repulsion of veterans, as well as calling to peaceful coexistence – is close to postulates of Amitai Etzioni. His efforts to propose a concept of a social order that respects both community and individual are very intriguing in the context of the executed research. One could

wonder to what extent does the netiquette fit the answer to Etzioni's question: how to create a society that would protect its members from each other, but without oppressing them (Etzioni 1996).

It should also be reminded that the netiquette is a democratic entity, i.e. anyone can write a set of e-rules, call it "netiquette" and promote it among particular group(s) of users. This allows the netiquette (this time treated as a whole entity) to be a part of social dialogues about values – especially about values important for online activities. Such dialogues are an opportunity to constantly test and reconstruct the social order, perhaps in a direction mentioned by Etzioni (i.e. re-establishing balance between social order and autonomy of an individual; Etzioni 1996).

It is very important to note as well that the most prominent netiquettes are the early ones; this can lead to conclusion that perhaps these documents are very universal in broad sense and still very useful, despite being devoted in details to rather outdated and/or often depopulated online services, such as talk, IRC or Usenet. For Etzioni, however, the most important point made here would rather be the sole potential of modifying the current social system or, to be exact, its online part. According to Etzioni, the ability to discuss the existing order helps to keep the aforementioned balance between social order and individual's autonomy in such way that neither side dominates – i.e. neither the individual is unnecessarily controlled by the group, nor the individual ignores the in order to fulfill personal (and only personal, above every other) goals.

In his "The New Golden Rule", Amitai Etzioni formulates such rule, urging to *"respect and uphold society's moral order as you would have society respect and uphold your autonomy"* (Etzioni 1996). He postulates keeping balance between rights of individuals and the common good, perceiving them as equal and interdependent. Thus we can state that the autonomy of a user is key for setting a functional moral order on the Net – but only in combination with strengthened and factually meaningful social order (on which each user eventually depends). One can also say figuratively that we are all constituted by the Online Commonwealth. It is community that gives us stability in life, providing us e.g. with support and appreciation – but without proper autonomy of the individual all of us would loose a lot, since at the end of the day it is individuals who arbitrate in moral causes. Individual autonomy is constantly created and recreated within communities, it is institutionalized by and dependent of the social order. By supporting this order, urges Etzioni, we support the long-term well-being of our autonomy. This relation is perhaps best put by MacIntyre in his metaphor of chess: if we want to become good chess players, we first need to learn how to play the game. Then, with time, we will start to tell good moves from bad ones and the virtuosos from the bunglers (MacIntyre 2007).

This is particularly important in the context of netiquette and the Internet. Almost no newbie knows in advance how to do well online – i.e. how to answer Giddens' questions about self-identity in relation to this realm (i.e. *"What to do? How to act? Who to be?"* ...online).

In order to become responsible, thorough and precise – some of the key values according to results of the presented research – such a user should learn the "game rules" (i.e. netiquette rules) and apply to them. In order to become highly effective in his or her efforts, as well as to be liked and appreciated, one probably should also be patient, thanks to which one would start "telling good moves from bad ones". Sheer practice counted in hours spent online is obviously important and often sufficient, but one can spend them with or without certain social conscience. This conscience, as shown above, is well supported by the netiquette and it may eventually determine if one will, or will not, join the quite abundant group of the very good and competent "players". Or even become a member of the future ruling elite called the netocrats, according to Alexander Bard and Jan Söderqvist (Bard, Söderqvist 2002).

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