

The Internet Functional Zones

The creation of the Internet has been a revolution due to its influence on forming a brand new medium of communication. With the appearance of the Internet the third medium of communication appeared in addition to oral and written communication. New media of communication do not appear very often in the history of the race [6]. The origination of this new medium meant not only the development of new means of communication (the creation of a global network – The Internet, the creation of hypertext, the abilities of e-mail, forums and conferences), but the whole new way to communicate. The main asset of communication via Internet is the ability to receive instant feedback without unity of place. The communicants may be located on the opposite sides of the Globe and still retain the synchrony of their dialogue (or even polylogue, as in chat rooms). Thus we may define Computer-mediated communication as **non-formal remote synchronic communication** [2].

Computer-mediated communication is available due to the existence of a global network – the Internet. It may be characterized as an extremely large system of computers connected together in a special way (Client-Server model) that enables them to communicate and share information. According to a famous British linguist David Crystal “The Internet is an electronic, global, and interactive medium, and each of these properties has consequences for the kind of language found there” [7].

The subject of interaction between language and the Internet is relatively new and only a few outstanding scientific works concerning this topic have been written so far. David Crystal remarked in 2001: “I...could find no account already written” [7] when talking about language and the Internet, though since then a number of studies including several doctoral theses appeared, making it possible to

parse and expand the ideas collected to achieve stunning results in further researches.

Due to its being both extremely powerful and easy to master, the Internet gained enormous popularity among the masses despite its being a severely underdeveloped scientific tool at the beginning of its life cycle.

ARPANET (Advanced Research Projects Agency Network), created by DARPA (Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency) of the United States Department of Defense, was the world's first operational packet switching network. The development of ARPANET was intended to serve purely scientific goals, although this project appeared as a part of the U.S. response to the launch of Soviet Sputnik in 1957 [8]. DARPA was assigned a project called Command and Control Research. Dr. J.C.R. Licklider was chosen to become the head of the project in 1962. He was among the first to realize the potential of computer networks, but he was unable to implement many of his ideas because the level of computer development was too low. J.C.R. Licklider saw that the only way to carry out this project was to advance further in researching computer technology and develop new techniques and methods of data processing instead of remodeling old ones: “While I was interested in a new way of doing things, they were studying how to make improvements in the ways things were done already” [5]. Soon the office was renamed Information Processing Techniques (IPTO) to reflect the shift towards studying the ways of enhancing current computer technologies that occurred on J.C.R. Licklider’s initiative. His successor Ivan Sutherland originated the development of one of the first computer networks being inspired by J.C.R. Licklider’s ideas about cyber communication. He put Lawrence Roberts in charge of the project. The researchers soon reached their goal: “In October, 1965, the Lincoln Labs TX-2/ANS/Q-32 computer talked to Marill's SDC's Q32 computer in one of the world’s first digital network communications” [14].

Although the basic applications and guidelines that make the Internet possible had existed for almost two decades, the network did not gain a public face

until the 1990s. On August 6, 1991, CERN (European Organization for Nuclear Research), publicized the new World Wide Web project: “The first proposal for the World Wide Web (WWW) was made at CERN by a physicist Tim Berners-Lee in 1989, and further refined by him and Robert Cailliau in 1990” [9]. This idea was invented as a solution for joining all the computers used by CERN in their projects. It was intended to make collaborating and sharing information stored at office computers easier for CERN researchers. Throughout next several years the Internet gained much popularity and web servers and clients started appearing at a great speed.

Renown modern scientists R.E.Kahn and V.E.Cerf on describing the Internet architecture state: “The authors created an architecture for interconnecting independent networks that could then be federated into a seamless whole without changing any of the underlying networks. This was the genesis of the Internet as we know it today” [11].

When a Web page is opened in a browser window, graphics and text laid out in certain order may be seen. The function of the Web browser is to display information by means of interpreting the programming language used to create the page (HTML, JavaScript, etc.) and transform it to what is seen in the browser window [10]. If more information is needed, you can click on a hyperlink to go to another page, which might contain more information. All pages are stored on so-called server computers or simply servers. Users can receive these pages by requesting the server to send them a certain page. Data is transferred from the server to the requesting computer in packets (this is called packet switching). “**Packet switching** is a digital networking communications method that groups all transmitted data – irrespective of content, type, or structure – into suitably-sized blocks, called packets” [12].

The Internet is not a homogeneous entity since its elements fulfil different functions. Transformation of the WWW into the attribute of modern life changed drastically the configuration of the information field surrounding us. It leads to

cardinal alteration of its functions, previously performed by libraries, museums, picture galleries, educational establishments of different types [4]. The suggested division of the Internet into five functional zones is formulated according to the prevailing performed functions.

Due to its dominant function the first zone may be called **informational zone**. Different sites which inform people about current events that happened recently belong to this zone. Many newspapers now publish online versions of their editions, for example *The Times* houses a site <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/> and *The Sun* owns a site <http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/>. Different radio and TV broadcasting companies also keep their sites, for example, *BBC* houses a site www.bbc.co.uk. There are informational sites that have no representation except their online versions, for example, *Google* has a news department <http://news.google.com/>. Search engines like *Google* or *Yahoo* also belong here.

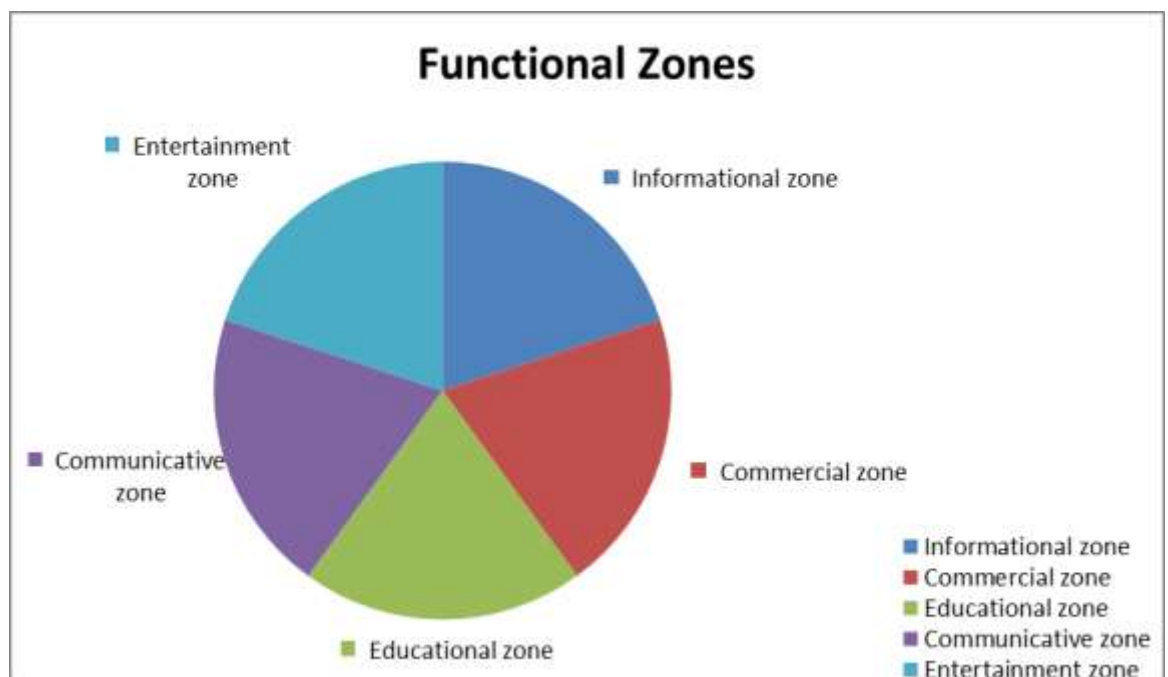
The **commercial zone** embraces various ways of earning money by gaining potential customers. Different online shops and auctions belong to this zone, for example, *eBay* or *Amazon.com*. Also e-advertising refers here because it is used to earn money, for example, spam, ads, pop-ups.

The **educational zone** consists of different sites that offer online education or material for self-study. Among them it is possible to mention such educational portals as <http://www.kelbytraining.com/>, which offers training for photographers and illustrators, or online Academy of Art: <http://online.academyart.edu/>. Here also belong online libraries like <http://lib.aldebaran.ru/> and online encyclopedias like Encyclopedia Britannica: <http://www.britannica.com/>. “Even in Russia (and Russia is not a leading country in informational industry) only the officially registered databases hold the amount of data that is bigger than the amount stored in Russian State Library.” [1] There also exists a certain phenomenon called **podcasting**. A **podcast** is a series of digital media files (either audio or video) that are released

episodically. Podcasts are often produced with educational purposes when, for example, a pro wants to share his knowledge concerning his achievements.

The **communicative zone** comprises Internet means of communication. Among them we can find **Email** (*Gmail, Mail.ru* or *Hotmail.com*), **Social Networks** (*Vkontakte.ru, Odnoklassniki.ru*), Instant Messaging (*ICQ, Skype*) and **Chat rooms** (Web chats, IRC).

The **entertainment zone** consists of different online archives of music or videos, like <http://thepiratebay.org/>, which enable users to download various content, not always legally. This zone also includes online games, which enable users to interact with each other in a cyber world. A virtual universe is created and supported by game developers and users may join this society to play together or fight against each other. The most famous online games are *World of Warcraft*, *Star Wars: The Old Republic*, *EVE Online*.



The provided division is quite imprecise, for no exact research was made. The amount of internet sites falling under each category may differ dramatically and the next step needed for further research consists of enumerating major sites from each zone and categorizing them to gather statistical data.

The popularity of Internet has led to the creation of the so-called **Net Language**, or **Net Discourse**, which provides basis for further linguistic research. A marginal branch of linguistics exists that is termed **Computer Linguistics**, which is aimed at developing automated saving methods, processing and using linguistic knowledge and information represented by signs of natural language [3:251]. Modern researchers claim: “We strongly believe that if we come to reflect on the rapid speed of Internet expansion (consider its growth in the 90s) sooner or later applied linguistics will have to generate a specific sub-area of applied linguistic research focused on net linguistic usage” [13]. Further linguistic perspective undoubtedly lies with the Net text, its genres and corresponding linguistic peculiarities.

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