Why Do People Produce Content to User Generated Media?
A Study of Bloggers’ Motivations

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Abstract:
Social Media with its opportunities and challenges has received lots of attention in recent years. Many companies are trying to benefit from this media and one way for doing it is by using it as a communication channel. Social Media is effective for spreading the word and blogs have been noted as an especially good channel for word-of-mouth marketing. However, blogs often consist of User Generated Content, which means that individual people create blog content for their own purposes. In order to find out how companies can benefit from blogs, it is first necessary to find out what motivates people to blog.

The question of why people decide to use a certain type of media has been traditionally answered by the Uses and gratifications theory. This theory connects media use to gratifications that people are looking for by using a certain medium. The theory has also been applied to Internet research and blogs. However, when it comes to User Generated Content, people can either produce their own content, comment on others’ creations or just read and watch. It is believed that by doing different activities, people are seeking different gratifications. The problem is that up to date there is very little known on why people produce content. Thus, the aim of the study is to explain why people produce content to User Generated Media by identifying what motivates them to blog.

The theoretical framework for this paper presents internet Uses and gratifications research and summarizes the possible gratifications that could be applied to blogging. In addition, some of the most common self-presentation strategies that are used by bloggers are introduced. Both gratifications and self-presentation strategies are combined together in a model about constructing personal web pages that is applied to the context of blogging in this paper.

For the empirical study there were 12 Estonian bloggers interviewed. The data analysis was a combination of inductive and deductive approach and resulted in creation of a model for blogging. The results indicated that many gratifications for blogging were the same as for other internet gratifications that involved the activity of producing User Generated Content. In addition, there were some new gratifications found for blogging. It was also found that the social aspect is important for blogging and that bloggers use their blogs extensively for self-presentation purposes.

Keywords: Blogs, User Generated Media, Uses and gratifications, Self-presentation strategies
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1 INTRODUCTION

Social Media has been a hot topic during the past few years and its opportunities and challenges have been discussed by many. It is almost considered to be obligatory for every company to participate in social media as it is thought to bring them success and new benefits. However, making use of social media for business purposes often has not been an easy task for traditional companies. There are many rather uninteresting corporate blogs out there and social networking sites have become increasingly overloaded with advertising. This is often the best that companies can do.

Social Media consists of different types of media such as collaborative projects, blogs, content communities, social networking sites, virtual game worlds and virtual social worlds (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010:60). The key to Social Media are the people who use it. It is based on Web 2.0 technologies and either completely or to a large extent on User Generated Content (UGC) (Mustonen, 2009:7). The technologies of Web 2.0 can be seen as the technological platform while the UGC represents the ways in which people can make use of Social Media (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010:61). In other words, it is a type of media where people both produce and consume the content. For companies the challenge is to find their place and role in Social Media in order to be able to benefit from it.

To begin with, there are plenty of opportunities for the companies; for example different applications of Social Media could be used for getting feedback and information about customers’ opinions, developing new products, advertising and promotion as well as for education and training (Mustonen 2009:29). It can be also a good and innovative way to conduct market research with the help of social networking sites as those include lots of information about peoples’ tastes and preferences (Casteleyn, Mottart and Rutten, 2009). Furthermore, it is said that User Generated Content, and especially blogs, are a good type of media for creating awareness and interest for new things, or in other words, they are good for spreading the word (Bhagat, Klein & Sharma, 2009:91).

Word-of-mouth and Social media have been connected together often and by many and have also received attention from the academia. For example, it is found that WOM communications are existent online and similar to the communication in offline context (Cheung, Lee and Rabjohn, 2008:243). The WOM has been measured by new customer referrals (Trusov, Bucklin & Pauwels, 2009:93) and also has been analyzed
based on different texts, such as discussion board comments and blog posts (Fong & Burton, 2006; Fong & Burton, 2008; Kozinets, Valck, Wojnicki and Wilner, 2010). The problem with online WOM though seems to be often the source credibility because, for example, in the internet forums and discussion boards the poster identity remains often anonymous (Brown, Broderick & Lee, 2007:11).

However, with blogs there is usually no problem with source credibility as the blogger is often open about his/her identity. Moreover, Merwe and Heerden (2009:69) have found that people with central position in a social network tend to become opinion leaders and thereby have more influence on the decisions of others. Blogs are a good example of a network where the blogger has undoubtedly the central position. Kozinets et al (2010:86) say that positive blog mentions of a product can be the reason for a success of a product campaign. However, there are many different types of bloggers and their interests vary since they have very different characters and writing styles. Approaching a blogger to ask for a participation in a WOM campaign is considered to be a complex task and would require from managers a profound understanding of bloggers and their culture as well as their individual differences (Kozinets et al, 2010:87).

The problem with using personal blogs and other types of UGC for marketing purposes is that there are individual persons who create the content to the medium and it is up to those people to decide what they post on the internet. For the companies there is definitely an opportunity with the UGC but it is not that clear how they could benefit from it. As Kozinets et al. (2010:87) found out, blogs are a powerful medium for spreading WOM, but it should not be forgotten that blogs belong to private persons and are created to serve the needs of those people. First of all it is necessary to find out why people blog and what motivates them, and then it would be possible to see what the companies can offer those people in order to be able to benefit from this powerful media.

1.1. Research problem

The question of what motivates people to use a certain type of media has been traditionally answered by the theory of Uses and gratifications (Ruggiero, 2000:19). This approach has been used for explaining why people use Internet (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000; Leung 2003; Stafford, Stafford & Schkade, 2004) and different applications of internet such as participation in online communities (Grace-Farfaglia,
Dekkers, Sundararajan, Peters & Park, 2006) and visiting company websites (Huang, 2008). This theory links the use of a certain type of media with gratifications i.e. what people are looking for when using a specific type of media.

User Generated Media (UGM) as a separate type of media has not received much attention from the academia yet- some parts of it have been included in the internet Uses and gratifications research because UGM is a part of the Internet. Shao (2009:15) proposed an explorative model about how we can understand and study User Generated Media from the Uses and gratifications perspective. The main idea is that since people can become more active on the UGM and even produce the media content themselves, it is believed that different levels of activity could also lead to different gratifications (Shao, 2008:15). These activities are shown in a simplified picture (Figure 1) that is taken from the model by Shao (2009:15). These activities include consuming (reading or watching the content), participating (commenting on content posted by others) and producing (posting own content).

![Three types of uses (from Shao, 2009:15)](image)

Up to date there are no studies that would specifically differentiate between the levels of activity on the UGM and their connection to gratifications, as was suggested by Shao (2009:15). Uses and gratifications research has had the focus on answering the question of why people consume the content on the Internet (Papacharissi & Rubin,
and sometimes also what motivates people to participate or produce, for example by posting content to Internet-based discussion boards (Nonnecke, Andrews & Preece 2006). Nevertheless, none of these studies specify which motivations are connected to a specific level of activity.

There are different types of User Generated Media, for example YouTube, MySpace, Wikipedia and blogs belong to that broad selection. Blogs have been of interest for many researchers because they allow media audience to become producers (Papacharissi in Tremayne, 2007:21). Blogs have been studied as a genre (Herring, Scheidt, Wright & Bonus, 2005), as a tool for virtual self-presentation (Bortree, 2005; Trammell & Keshelashvili, 2005; McCullagh, 2008) and how they are used in professional contexts (Porter, Sweetser & Chung, 2009). While all these studies have concentrated on blogging as an activity of producing own content, they do not explain why people blog and what are their motivations for producing their content publicly.

Uses and gratifications theory has been applied to blogs by Chung & Kim (2008) in a study about cancer patients’ and their companions’ blog use. Several motivations to use blogs were listed as a result, in form of gratifications, but there was no attention paid to whether they represented reading blogs or writing them. The reasons for people to blog were studied by Nardi, Schiano, Gumbrecht and Swartz (2004) and the results of this study were further tested by Huang, Shen, Lin & Chang (2007). These two studies had blogging as an activity in focus but did not relate to previous internet Uses and gratifications research. Moreover, due to the fact that the study that describes the original motives for blogging dates back to year 2004 when blogging was still a novelty, the knowledge about what motivates bloggers can be considered incomplete.

The model presented by Shao (2009:15) reveals a research gap in studying the motives for producing UGC with the help of Uses and gratifications theory. This theory has not been applied to contexts where users of the media only have the role of producer. Blogs are a good example of UGM where the audience has the role of the producer. That makes studying bloggers’ motives to produce their own content an interesting research question.
1.2. **Aim of the study**

The aim of the study is to explain why people produce content to User Generated Media by identifying what motivates people to blog.

I have chosen to answer the research question by using the Uses and gratifications theory that I have additionally decided to combine with the use of virtual self-presentation strategies. This means that the theoretical framework for this study is borrowed from the subject field of media and communications. However, uses and gratifications theory has been increasingly adopted by marketing researchers especially in advertising and internet research (Stafford, Stafford & Schkade, 2004: 266), which means that the theory can be also used successfully in marketing research.

Many of the references were found from EBSCO Media database that is accessible from the Helsinki University libraries. It is important to note though, that I have learned about the subject of media and communication by reading on my own and I have no formal education in that field. The background reading was done in order to guarantee that I would be able to interpret and use the media theories correctly in this study. However, considering my educational background, this study has still an overall marketing perspective, especially when it comes to the empirical research and the data interpretation.

1.3. **Delimitations**

This study is limited to bloggers who write their blogs on non-commercial purposes in a non-professional context. This is done in order to keep the focus on blogs that belong to the category of User Generated Content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010:61). Because of that, the blogs of people who are primarily famous for something else than blogging are not considered in the study. In addition, private blogs that are not openly accessible will not be studied.

Considering the scope of this study, the studied blogs are further limited to blogs that include some kind of personal content about the blogger. Thereby the blogs that only concentrate on a hobby, like cooking, for example, are excluded from this study. Personal bloggers are often overlooked by marketers since their interests are much more difficult to determine and summarize compared to fashion or technology bloggers, for example. However, they are also interesting to study since they often write in a way that engages lots of readers and their blogs can cover different topics. Personal
bloggers are often role models for others as their blogs often include details about their life and this makes their personalities relatable and likable to many readers.

1.4. Key concepts

Throughout the study some of the most frequent concepts used are understood as follows:

**Social media** is defined by Kaplan & Haenlein (2010:61) as:”a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and allow the creation and change of User Generated Content.” In this study social media is understood accordingly.

**User Generated Content (UGC)** in this study the concept of User Generated Content is used as defined by Kaplan & Haenlein (2010:61). It is a content posted to the Internet that:

- is posted to a publicly accessible website
- shows a certain amount of creative effort
- is not created in a professional context i.e. is not created by having a commercial market in mind.

**User Generated Media (UGM)** is any type of media that consists mainly of User Generated Content (as defined by Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010:61).

**Blogs**, or formerly known as weblogs, are considered to be Social Media equivalent of personal web pages. They are websites that are often managed by one person only and where the entries are usually displayed in reversed chronological order (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010:63).

1.5. Structure of the paper

The study consists of four major parts: the overview of the theoretical background, the method discussion, and the presentation of the results with the empirical analysis and finally the conclusions with discussion of results along with the presentation of possible implications.
The theoretical framework consists of two parts—first the Uses and gratifications theory is going to be presented in chapter 2 along with the discussion of its applicability to blogging research. Moreover, an overview of the existing internet gratifications is given in this chapter and a list of possible blogging gratifications, based on the existing theory, is composed. Chapter 3 introduces blogs research from the point of view of virtual self-presentation and how the self-presentation strategies are used in blogging. This chapter mainly concentrates on how the knowledge about the self-presentation strategies can be combined with the Uses and gratifications theory to better explain the phenomenon of blogging. In addition, a theoretical model combining gratifications with self-presentation strategies applied to blogging context is presented in the end of chapter 3.

The research methodology for the empirical study is presented in chapter 4. Due to the exploratory nature of the study, the qualitative interviews were chosen as an appropriate method for finding out what motivates bloggers. The sample consisted of Estonian 12 bloggers who were interviewed in July 2010. In chapter 4 there is also a further description of the sample and the interview guide. The data analysis was a combination of inductive, deductive and abductive approaches and lead to results that are presented in chapter 5. The main results are summarized in a model for blogging that has the same structure as the theoretical model that is presented in chapter 3. The results are divided into two major parts, the first part consists of a list of blogging gratifications and the second part is about the use of self-presentation strategies in blogs.

Finally, chapter 6 includes a discussion of the main findings of the study. The differences and similarities between blogs and personal web sites are discussed because the model for blogging that was presented as a result of this study was based on a model about constructing personal web sites by Schau & Gilly (2003:391). Moreover, the division of gratifications into social, content and process gratifications is further discussed and the blogging gratifications that were found as a result of this study are compared to the existing theoretical framework. The paper is concluded by theoretical and managerial implications and recommendations for future research.
USES AND GRATIFICATIONS FOR BLOGGING

This chapter is about Uses and gratifications theory that was chosen as the main theory for this study as it is the most common theory for finding out why people use certain types of media (Chung and Kim, 2008:298). A short overview of the theory is given in chapter 2.1 and how it has been used in internet research is further presented in chapter 2.1.1. Moreover, the applicability of Users and gratifications theory to blogs research is discussed in chapter 2.1.2. This discussion is necessary as the theory is originally a mass media theory (Katz, Blumer & Gurevitch, 1974: 19) and blogs form a part of Social media that is often opposed to mass media.

Chapter 2.2 concentrates on gratifications in internet research and first in chapter 2.2.1 presents different studies in internet Uses and gratifications research. Those studies consider Internet as one type of media and do not differentiate between different websites or applications. The gratifications for User generated media are presented in chapter 2.2.2 along with the model of different levels of activity in User Generated Media (Shao, 2009:15). Finally, chapter 2.2.3 concentrates on blogging gratifications and gives an overview of the existing blogging motivations research. This chapter is concluded by presenting a list of possible blogging gratifications that I have combined.

The use and gratification concepts are used widely and since these can be understood in different ways, in the context of this study they are defined as following:

**Use** in Uses and Gratifications theory is understood as an activity of using a certain type of media. Media use is for example watching TV or sending a text message to a friend. Normally people either use a specific type of media or do not use it. In the internet research use can be divided into different categories depending on the level of activity. These activities are *consumption*, *participation* and *production* and are going to be discussed more in detail further on in this chapter. A use in terms of blogging is understood as posting content to a blog.

**Gratification** is something that people are looking for to obtain when they decide to use a certain type of media. This is the same thing as *motivation* to do something. For example a gratification for watching TV could be obtaining information or surveillance if a person is watching, for example, a news program. Another person might watch the same news program because he/she is bored and wants to pass time. In the context of
media research even a **reason** to use a certain type of media is understood to be a gratification that is sought.

### 2.1. Uses and gratifications theory

"Ask not what media do to people but ask what people do to media" (Katz & Blumler (1974) cited in Rosengren, Wenner and Palmgreen (1985:11))

Uses and gratifications is a media theory that is used for explaining why people as individual members of mass media audience seek out and use certain media (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974: 19). Furthermore, it has a very individualistic approach since it is assumed that people use media in order to find gratifications that would satisfy their personal needs. Stafford, Stafford & Schkade, (2004: 259) describe Uses and gratifications as a media use paradigm that helps to assess consumer motivation for media usage and access.

Uses and gratifications was first used in research for finding out why people consume different types of media such as television, radio, newspapers, books, cinema etc (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974: 20; Ruggiero, 2000:19; Stafford & Stafford, 2004: 259). The theory has proven to be useful in exploring the new types of media that have evolved during the 20th century- such as play stations, TV remote controls, cell phones and ultimately Internet.

According to Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1974: 21-22) there are five basic assumptions for Uses and gratifications:

1) The audience of mass media is conceived as active and the media use is assumed to be goal directed

2) It is the audience member who links the needs gratification with the choice of media

3) The media compete with other sources of need satisfaction, i.e. there are no special media related needs but the same needs could be also satisfied by other ways.

4) The goals of mass media use can be self-reported by the individual audience members.

5) The value judgments of the media can be assessed only by the audience. Every individual audience member knows best how to use the media and what needs gratifications are sought by using it.

These basic assumptions are the core of the Uses and gratifications theory and have given the researchers guidelines on how to apply the theory to different media contexts.
In other words, based on these assumptions it is possible to say that people choose to use certain type of media purposefully. Every single person knows best how to use the media and what they are looking for. Moreover, according to the assumption of audience members being able to self-report their goals, it is possible to find out media gratifications by simply asking people about their motives to use a certain media, for example blogs. In conclusion, these five basic assumptions can be taken as the framework for using Uses and gratifications theory.

Palmgreen, Wenner & Rosengren (1985:) describe the relationship between the needs, motivation, behaviour and gratifications as follows: “Social psychological origins of needs, values and beliefs give rise to motives for behaviour, which may in turn be guided by beliefs, values, and social circumstances into seeking various gratifications through media consumption.” The link between particular needs and gratifications is not very theoretical though and thereby the research is mainly concentrated on what is called media related needs, i.e. the needs that can be satisfied by the media (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974: 24).

According to the studies there are three different sources for audience gratifications: the media content, exposure to the media per se and the social context that typifies the situation of exposure to different media. Each media has a different combination of attributes and these characteristics make the media more or less appropriate for satisfying specific needs (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974: 24).

2.1.1. Uses and gratifications applied to Internet research

Uses & gratifications approach has been successfully used in numerous studies on internet research. For example Papacharissi & Rubin (2000), Stafford, Stafford & Schkade (2004) and LaRose & Eastin (2004) have used the approach on the internet use in general. Ko, Cho & Roberts (2005) have used the same approach for interactive advertising and company website in a study where they concluded that Uses and gratifications can also be applied to internet research. Moreover, the approach has been used in some studies regarding Social media, for example Grace-Farfaglia et al. (2006) has used Uses and gratifications for studying online discussion board members, Chung & Kim (2008) has applied it to blogs and Raacke & Bonds-Raacke (2008) to social networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace.
Ruggiero (2000:15) suggests that compared to traditional mass media, there are at least three distinctive attributes that the Internet has: interactivity, demassification and asynchronicity. Interactivity means both the possibility to communicate with others and actively search for information or entertainment. Demassification represents the increased selectivity of the content and asynchronicity stands for more freedom for the audience to consume whenever they choose to do it. Ruggiero (2000:16) says that these three characteristics give more possibilities for examining different communication behaviours with using the Uses and gratifications theory.

In the internet research, one of the basic assumptions of Uses and gratifications theory, the concept of active audience (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974:21) has been discussed widely. Many internet researchers use the assumption of active audience as their main argument for using the Uses and gratifications theory in internet research. For example Kim and Chung (2008:298) believe that due to the active audience assumption the theory is even capable of explaining the aspects of interpersonal communication that internet largely consists of. Other internet researchers such as Huang (2008:410) have interpreted the basic assumptions of the active audience so, that as the users are actively involved with the media, the found that the theory is especially suitable for internet research, as internet is interactive and user-directed medium.

However, Ruggiero (2000:20) points out that internet has been viewed as the “ultimate in individualism” by communications scholars and that the audience is significantly more active than with the older media types such as radio or television for example. Claiming that a concept, that was first introduced long before Internet was even invented, would represent the special characteristics of internet might be rather far-fetching. The original meaning of active audience that was introduced by Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1974:21) was meant to indicate that the audience is active when choosing the medium they wanted to use. Nevertheless, Ruggiero (2000:23), as many other communications researchers is not against applying Uses and gratifications theory to internet research, but sees the development of new, more interactive media as an opportunity to expand the existing theory and make it more diverse.
2.1.2. **Applicability of Uses and gratifications to blogging**

Uses and gratifications have been applied to blogs research before. Chung & Kim (2008) used it for studying the blogs of cancer patients and their companions. Many already existing gratifications known for internet uses were used and tested in the study. However, this study did not distinguish between reading blogs and writing them and I have found no studies that would concentrate on producing User Generated Content from the Uses and gratifications point of view.

However, based on the literature and the discussion about the applicability of the Uses and gratifications approach in internet research, there are both arguments for and against applying this theory to blogs. These arguments are summarized and discussed shortly.

**Strengths of using Uses and gratifications in blogs research:**

**Active audience assumption** - it means that the audience actively seeks out the medium in order to obtain the gratifications they seek (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974:21). This assumption supports the use of theory for internet research since Internet is an interactive medium by nature and requires activity from the audience. The popularity of using Uses and gratifications theory in Internet research (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000; Stafford, Stafford & Schkade, 2004) and its previous application to blogs research (Chung & Kim, 2008) suggests that it is possible to apply Uses and Gratifications also to social media, for example blogs.

**Interactivity** is one of the core characteristics of Internet as presented by Ruggiero (2000:15). It is believed that this is also the characteristic that significantly strengthens internet Uses and gratifications research as it complements the basic assumption of active audience. For example blogs are an interactive type of media because the blogger decides on the content of the blog. Ruggiero (2000:21) also suggests that because of the interpersonal potential of the Internet, some new gratifications might be found.

**Success in the past** Uses and Gratifications have been successfully applied on research of all kinds of new media types. Advances in digital technology have been traditionally researched with Uses and gratifications theory. Moreover, the theory has been applied to research of newer communication media such as VCR-s, personal computers, walkman radios and cellular telephones (Ruggiero, 2000:19).
Weaknesses of using Uses and gratifications in blogs research:

**Audience as the producer** User generated content differs from mass media because the consumer is also the one who produces the content. It is not known whether it is possible to explain with Uses and gratifications theory why people choose to produce their own content on different types of media. Shao (2009:15) however, has proposed a model with different types of activities from a Uses and gratifications perspective. Content creation is one element of it and as proposed by the author, brings some specific gratifications to the audience (while also being the media producer). It is important to note though that this model has not yet been empirically tested.

**User Generated Content is not mass-media** When Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1974:19) introduced the Uses and gratifications theory, it was originally meant for mass media research. Social Media is often opposed to mass media (Mustonen, 2010:7) because of the consumers of it are often also the ones who produce it and thereby it is questionable if this theory can be applied to blogging, that is a part of social media. This argument is, however, somewhat similar to the previous one, because it relies on the changed role of the audience. There already exist studies where Uses and gratifications approach has been applied to Social Media, like social networking sites, for example (Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008).

**Different gratifications** Most of the internet research has been conducted by using the “old” media gratifications (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000) but there are also new specific gratifications found, such as social gratifications (Stafford, Stafford & Schkade, 2004:268). Shao (2009:9) suggests that since there are different internet uses, such as consumption, participation and production, there also exist different gratifications. This means that existing internet related gratifications can be used to some extent, but cannot be entirely relied on.

### 2.2. Gratifications for internet uses

There are several studies done where gratifications for internet use are listed and tested empirically on various audiences. These studies and their results are presented in chapter 2.2.1. Next, chapter 2.2.2 provides an overview of studies that concentrate on different types of User generated media gratifications. Moreover, a model about different levels of activity on User generated media is presented in this chapter (Shao,
Lastly, chapter 2.2.3 presents the blogging motivations research and there is a list of gratifications that could be possibly applied to blogging, presented.

### 2.2.1. Gratifications for internet uses in general

Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1974:513) name the most common media gratifications that are *diversion* including escape and emotional release, *personal relationships* meaning substitute to companionship and *social utility*, *personal identity* and *surveillance*. These gratifications have been used in research of many different forms of media, including internet. Due to the interactive nature of internet, a stronger emphasis has been put on the interpersonal relationships. Papacharissi & Rubin (2000:186) added some motives that were related to interpersonal relationships and new technology, to the traditional media gratifications in order to explain why use Internet. As a result, a large proportion of motives for using internet were related to social utility, including *self-expression*, *belonging to a group* and *meeting new people*, among others.

Stafford, Stafford and Schkade (2004:265) divide the traditional media gratifications into two categories- *content gratifications* and *process gratifications*. Content gratifications can be obtained by consuming the content of media, for example reading an article from a newspaper. Process gratifications are sought by the media consumption process itself, for example watching television together with friends. Stafford, Stafford and Schkade (2004:266) criticize prior internet related Uses and gratifications research for paying very little attention to the social aspects of this medium and testing only two traditional types of gratifications. The third type of internet gratifications, *social gratifications*, was added to the traditional media gratifications as a new potential category (Stafford, Stafford & Schkade, 2004:268).

Leung (2003:115-116) studied the relationship between Net-generation attributes, seductive properties of the Internet and gratifications-obtained on Internet use. The gratifications used in the questionnaires were partly traditional, such as *surveillance*, *entertainment* and *escape* but as a result of some focus group interviews prior to the study, some social gratifications, such as *affection*, *social bonding* and *social identity* were added to the set. This supports the suggestion of Stafford, Stafford and Schkade (2004:266) that social gratifications should be given a greater attention when researching internet uses.
Because of the increasingly interactive and interpersonal character of Internet, Uses and gratifications theory has been often complemented by some other theory. This has been done by Papacharissi & Rubin (2000) by combining Uses and gratifications with Computer Mediated Communications theory and by Huang (2008:406) by combining it with the Technology Acceptance Model. Moreover, Leung (2003) has combined the seductive properties of the Internet with parts of the Uses and gratifications theory.

### 2.2.2. Gratifications for User Generated Media

Shao (2009:15) presents an explorative model (Figure 1) of how User Generated Media works and what roles people can take in it. The model shows the interdependency between different activities and proposes what the uses and gratifications could be in the UGM context. Shao (2009:15) suggests that different activities, consumption, participation and production, are tied to different gratifications. This division is also supported by Ruggiero (2000:21) who suggested that due to the interactive and interpersonal nature of Internet, there can emerge different types of uses as well. By consumption people seek information and entertainment, that are basic media gratifications also mentioned by Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, (1974:513). Participating that is mostly understood as commenting on the content, is connected to the gratifications of social interaction and community development. The existence of the social gratification group that was proposed by Stafford, Stafford & Schkade (2004:265) is evident here. Finally the producing i.e. publishing own original comment is thought to be motivated by self-expression and self-actualization.

Shao (2008:16) also suggests that all three activities are important for the UGM because people performing one activity benefit from other peoples’ activities. It means that people who produce the content to the UGM, benefit from the participators as they offer feedback by their commenting. Both participators and consumers benefit from the producers as producers offer them the content to read and comment on. Even passive consumers, who only read the content, contribute to the UGM as their visits to the site are often recorded, and both producers and commentators are encouraged by seeing that they have audience. (Shao, 2008:16)
It is important to note that these gratifications presented by Shao (2009:16) are not yet tested empirically and that there is no previous research done about Uses and gratifications that would differentiate between different activities on the Internet.

However, both participation in online communities and posting to discussion boards have been studied, and these activities correspond to participation and production according to Shao (2009:15). For example Nonnecke, Preece and Andrews (2006) focused their study on lurking i.e. just reading or consuming in online communities and discovered specific motives why some people become active members online and why others prefer not to do so. The motives were about looking for entertainment and information as well as social benefits. Similarly, Grace-Farfaglia et al. (2006) presented gratifications for participating in online communities. These gratifications varied from entertainment and social companionship to self-improvement and attempt to control one’s image. Furthermore, Lee et al. (2006) researched the reasons for not posting to online discussion boards. The results were somewhat different from the ones that Nonnecke, Preece and Andrews (2006:13) and Grace-Farfaglia et al. (2006:90-91) presented for similar studies, as only enjoyment of helping and reciprocity were found to motivate people to participate more actively (Lee et al. 2006:296). The reason for
different results can be explained by different methods- Lee et al. (2006: 293) did not use any previously determined motives or gratifications in the study but obtained the results from answers to open-ended survey questions. Moreover, the reasons for why so little motivations for posting were found could be also explained by the negative approach the study had, as the focus was on people who did not post.

These three studies differentiate between two levels of activity, being a lurker or a poster. According to Shao (2009: 15) lurking is the same as consuming and posting could mean both participating and producing, the latter would occur if people pose their own questions or start discussions. However, there is no clear division between the motives or gratifications that are sought respectively by commenting or starting a discussion. Some gratifications, such as *get answers to questions* (Nonnecke, Preece & Andrews, 2006:13) or *publishing own ideas* (Grace-Farfaglia et al. 2006:16) have more focus on production whereas *gaining respect from people* or *meeting people like me* (Grace-Farfaglia et al. 2006:90-91) for example can be possibly obtained from both posting own ideas and commenting on others.

### 2.2.3. Gratifications for bloggers

There were only three studies found that were directly dedicated to finding out what are the motives for bloggers. The results of these are discussed here along with the presentation of the main gratifications found for blogging.

Chung and Kim (2008) have examined cancer patients’ and their companions’ sought gratifications for different blogging activities. In their study, various media and internet related gratifications were tested. Due to the specific nature of the study, the existing gratifications were carefully examined by the authors and only a selection of gratifications that were possibly applicable to the context of cancer patients was used. The study combines more common gratifications such as *emotion management* and *information sharing* with more cancer specific ones such as *prevention* and *care* (Chung & Kim, 2008:301). However, this study does not distinguish between different blogging activities such as writing, commenting or just reading when it comes to gratifications.

In addition, motives for blogging have been studied to some extent by Nardi et al. (2004) in a qualitative explorative study among people who were blogging. Different motives were found, such as *life-documenting, commenting, expressing feelings, using*
blogs as a muse and as a community forum. Huang et al. (2007) modified these motives after conducting further interviews and decided to reorganize some of Nardi et al. (2004) categories. Moreover, information seeking was added as an additional motive (Huang et al. 2007: 474). These studies did not have the Uses and gratifications theory approach but explored the motivations for blogging, which are equal to gratifications sought by bloggers.

However, since these three studies were performed some years ago (Nardi et al. 2004; Huang et al. 2007) and one of them is very specific as it concentrates on cancer blogs only (Chung & Kim, 2008) it is assumed that there exist more gratifications for blogging than the ones known. Since many of the previous studies on internet research include a manifold of gratifications, it is possible that also some of these can be applied to blogging.

In order to determine possible gratifications for blogging, the existing blogging gratifications (Nardi et al. 2004; Huang et al 2007; Chung & Kim, 2008) were combined with internet gratifications used in previous research (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000; Leung, 2003), as well as with motivations for posting to discussion boards (Lee et al. 2006) and with gratifications for participating in online communities (Grace-Farfaglia et al., 2006; Nonnecke, Andrews & Preece, 2006).

I have analyzed and combined the gratifications and motives that could be applicable to blogging, and sorted them into three categories- content, process and social gratifications. This division of gratifications was suggested by Stafford, Stafford & Schkade (2004:298) and is used in this study mainly for keeping an overview of the variety of different gratifications. Process gratifications for blogging are sought to satisfy specific needs by the action of activity of writing a blog. Content gratifications in blogging context represent the gratifications that are sought by writing and sharing specific texts, i.e. the content posted to the blog is to satisfy some specific need. Lastly, the social gratifications are motives for blogging that are most directly related to interaction and connections with other people. These combined hypothetical gratifications for blogging are summarized in Table 1.
Table 1  Gratifications for bloggers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Social</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyment of helping (Lee et al. 2006)</td>
<td>Information sharing (Huang et al. 2007; Nonnecke et al. 2006; Chung &amp; Kim, 2008)</td>
<td>Affection (Leung, 2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-improvement (Nardi et al. 2004; Grace-Farfaglia et al., 2006)</td>
<td>Entertain others (Nonnecke et al. 2006)</td>
<td>Self-presentation (Grace-Farfaglia et al., 2006; Leung, 2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escape (Grace-Farfaglia et al., 2006; Leung 2003, Huang et al. 2007)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Find people like me (Grace-Farfaglia et al., 2006, Leung, 2003; Nonnecke et al. 2006, Papacharissi &amp; Rubin, 2000) Reciprocity (Lee et al., 2006)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The combined gratifications for blogging are presented here as following:

**Process gratifications:**

**Emotion management** Nardi et al. (2004: 44) found that some bloggers tend to use their blogs as “catharsis” and a medium for letting out their emotions. Some people write down their feelings in order to sort them out and find solutions by this reflection. Bloggers might seek emotional relief by writing to either their friends or family or total strangers. This often occurs in difficult life situations, such as dealing with death of a family member (Nardi 2004:44). This is also illustrated by the fact that cancer patients and their companions use blogs widely for emotion management and expressing their frustration with the situation (Chung & Kim, 2008:301).

**Enjoy myself** Even though the studies about bloggers’ motivations (Nardi et al 2004; Huang et al. 2006) did not mention entertainment or any other ways of enjoyment as a reason for writing a blog, other studies about internet gratifications let us assume that even this kind of gratification might exist. For discussion board posters, social community members and internet users in general, entertainment is definitely a gratification that is sought often (Nonnecke et al. 2006:13; Grace-Farfaglia et al.
Enjoyment covers different aspects, such as having fun, relaxing, passing the time and feeling less tense.

Enjoyment of helping is mentioned by Lee et al. (2006:295) as a reason for sharing information and posting comments to online discussion boards. This motive has the eventual reader in focus and is thereby considered a process gratification.

Self-improvement Nardi et al. (2004:44) mention the use of blogs as help for writing since many people think and write simultaneously. Articulating ideas by blogging helps people to improve their analytical writing skills as well as get some inspiration. Many bloggers had also expressed their intention of publishing their blog texts later on in some conventional publication. Self-improvement as a gratification is also mentioned by Grace-Farfaglia et al. (2006:90) and is illustrated by intent of continuous learning and an urge to stay updated.

Escape was mentioned by Huang et al. (2007: 482) as a possible motivation for blogging that was mentioned in the interviews but has not been studied further. Leung (2003: 115) mentions escape as one of the gratifications of Internet use. Getting away from responsibilities, forgetting my problems and putting off something I should do describe this gratification. Moreover, Grace-Farfaglia et al. (2006: 91) mention escape as a gratification for participation in internet communities and describe the possibility to escape from the real world and try out new identities.

Content gratifications:

Life-Documenting Nardi et al. (2004:43) describes life-documenting as a way of communication. Bloggers want to let their friends and family know what they are doing, often while travelling, living abroad or having a different life situation (wife being ill, for example). Blogs are also used for publishing photos and different texts and are considered to be more convenient than emailing. The broadcasting-nature is pointed out as nobody is forced to read. The information about the blogger, even the minor happenings in their life, is posted to the blog, available for reading to anyone who is interested. Huang et al. (2007:476) tested this gratification and found that “life-documenting motivation leads to interaction –oriented blogging behaviour”.

Commenting Nardi et al. (2004:44) describes commenting as expressing your opinion, expressing yourself from a serious point-of view, giving critique, providing helpful links, writing commentary to current issues and being an amateur critic. Huang
et al. (2007: 476) found out that bloggers who comment are expecting to get some response in order to discuss.

**Information sharing** is a motivation added by Huang et al. (2007:474) as a result of qualitative interviews. Some people are blogging in order to organize information on different topics and they actively engage in hyper linking. It was also found that information sharing leads to content-gathering blogging behaviour. Chung & Kim (2008:301) found that people tend to help each other with providing as much information as possible in their blogs. Moreover, Nonnecke et al (2006:13) found that information sharing is one of the main reasons for participating in online discussion boards; thereby it might be also applicable to blogging. Furthermore, Nonnecke et al. (2006:13) have also another reason for posting to discussion boards- that is called “offering my expertise”, which means that the poster has something to share with the audience that he/she knows better about than the others. Information sharing differs from commenting since it is mostly factual and practical information shared opposed to expressing opinions when commenting.

**Entertain others** Nonnecke et al. (2006:13) describe entertaining other readers as a reason for posting content to discussion boards. Since this activity assumingly needs some kind of personal or original input, it could also be applicable to blogs. This possible gratification is interesting to add to the set because of its seemingly altruistic nature that is opposed to *entertainment-seeking* that was also mentioned by Nonnecke et al. 2006:13 as well as Grace-Farfaglia (2006:91) and Leung (2003: 115).

**Social gratifications:**

**Community forum** Nardi et al. (2004:45) found that some bloggers feel strongly that they belong to a specific community and they write their blogs for supporting this community. Moreover, some blogs can be written together by different bloggers and function as a representative platform for a community and a place for sharing thoughts. Another possibility is that a community forms between different bloggers when their blogs become interconnected. Community-building is also known as a motivation for discussion board posting (Nonnecke et al. 2006:13).

**Get empathetic support** is a gratification that is closely related to another one that is *emotion management*. While *emotion management* is about releasing emotions then *get empathetic support* aims for getting feedback. This is mentioned by Nonnecke et al.
(2006:13) as support-seeking and Leung (2003:115) as a desire to feel closer to family and talking about my problems.

**Affection** Leung (2003:115) has added a factor called “affection” in her study about internet gratifications. While the gratification named get empathetic support mainly represents the affection and understanding that the blogger wants to get from others, then affection represents blogger’s feelings towards the readers. Affection is about acknowledging other people and letting them know what the blogger thinks about them.

**Self-presentation** is a way of impression management on Internet. Grace-Farfaglia et al. (2006: 91) mention a gratification that is called Fame & Aesthetics for internet community members. That gratification represents the wish to let people know who you are and gain respect from people. Moreover, Leung (2003:116) mention a gratification factor called social identity that consists of feeling important, impress people and look fashionable. Blogs, due to their user (owner)-generated content, could be a good way for engaging in impression management.

**Find people like me** Leung (2003:116) describes social bonding as an internet gratification that includes the wish of meeting new people online who share the same opinions or interests. Furthermore, even friends and romantic interests can be sought. Even Grace-Farfaglia et al. (2006: 90) has a gratification that represents social companionship with similar factors, such as finding people like me, finding companionship and meeting new people. Nonnecke et al. (2006:13) mention building professional relationships that could possibly be tied to commenting or self-improvement gratification as a social dimension. Papacharissi & Rubin (2000: 186) also have a variable called meet new people in their study about internet gratifications.

**Reciprocity** Lee (2006:296) mentions reciprocity as one reason for sharing comments on online discussion boards. It is described as an obligation to share your thoughts with others since they are sharing their thoughts with you. In the context of blogs it might be translated into situations when the blogger’s friends also have blogs and by that a mutual obligation of posting is established.
3 SELF-PRESENTATION IN BLOGGING

In this chapter the most common self-presentation strategies that are used by bloggers, are explored since it is another common approach to studying the phenomenon of blogging. Since virtual self-presentation studies concentrate solely on the audience as producer (Papacharissi, 2002:643), they are supposed to give a better insight into bloggers’ intentions and also help to complete the knowledge about blogging gratifications. Thereby the aim of this chapter is to complement the previous chapter about the Uses and gratifications by offering further insight into what motivates bloggers.

Some studies about virtual self-representation are presented and the use of blogs as tools for self-presentation is going to be discussed in chapter 3.1. The most common self-presentation strategies that are used by bloggers are summarized in chapter 3.1.1. Next, in chapter 3.1.2 the connection between self-presentation strategies and blogging gratifications is presented and discussed. There is also a research gap evident, as none of the studies about bloggers’ motivations have mentioned self-presentation as a blogging gratification.

Moreover, in order to study better the connection between self-presentation and motivations, there is a model about constructing personal web sites presented in chapter 3.2. This model is of interest for this study as it combines self-presentation and motivations in the context of personal web pages, which means producing content to Internet. Finally, chapter 3.3 summarizes the theoretical framework of this study with an initial model for blogging.

3.1. Blog as a tool for self-presentation

Blogs, similarly to personal web pages, are noted for giving media users an audience as well as an opportunity to send messages to everyone (Papacharissi in Tremayne, 2007:21). People perceive blogs as public space and therefore are fully aware of their unlimited audience (McCullagh, 2008:16). Taking this into account, it can be concluded that blogging gives people “a unique opportunity to work on their self-identity via the degree of self-expression and social interaction that is available in this medium” (McCullagh, 2008:3).
Self-presentation is defined as “the process by which individuals attempt to control the impressions others have of them” (Dominick, 1999:647). Before blogs, personal web sites were studied as an example of digital self-presentation (Dominick, 1999; Schau & Gilly, 2003; Papacharissi, 2002). Bortree (2005) studied teenage girls’ blogs from a self-presentation perspective and Trammell & Keshelashvili (2005) concentrated on A-list bloggers, i.e., the authors of most read blogs, and found that self-presentation strategies are widely used among bloggers.

3.1.1. **Self-presentation strategies used in blogging**

Dominick (1999:648) summarizes the five strategies of self-presentation in interpersonal situations that are commonly used in real life situations. The use of these strategies was also evident in personal web pages. These strategies are presented as following:

**Ingratiation** is a strategy that is used for being liked by others. When using this strategy a person is usually saying good things about others and mildly negative things about himself/herself. Statements of modesty, familiarity and humour are frequent. This strategy was also most commonly used among the personal web page owners (Dominick, 1999:652). Ingratiation was also often used in teenage girls’ weblogs by acknowledging their friends and disclosing funny and slightly embarrassing facts about themselves (Bortree, 2005:35-36). Furthermore, Trammell & Keshelashvili (2005:976) found out that the most influential bloggers (called A-list bloggers) engaged in ingratiating by addressing their audience directly, praising others and paying attention to other’s comments and opinions.

**Competence** reflects how much claims about a person’s abilities, accomplishments, performance and qualifications are made. This strategy is mainly used for being perceived as skilled and qualified (Dominick, 1999:652). Even this strategy was widely used by personal web page owners (Dominick, 1999:652). In addition, Trammell & Keshelashvili (2005:977) found that A-list bloggers often engage in competence by presenting their opinions in a professional manner and praising their own abilities.

**Intimidation** is a strategy that is used for showing power and is typically shown by threats, statements of anger and potential unpleasantness. Dominick (1999:649) argues that the use of this strategy is rare online since visiting web sites is a voluntary relationship. Nobody is forced to visit an intimidating web page and therefore it is
doubtful that this kind of strategy would be used in internet context. This strategy is not supposed to have any significant use among the bloggers either because the blogs as well are visited on a voluntary basis.

**Exemplification** has a goal of being perceived as having high moral standards. It is used by showing ideological commitment, self-sacrifice and self-discipline. Dominick (1999:652) found only little evidence of exemplification on personal web pages. Bortree (2005) and Trammell & Keshelashvili (2005) found no evidence of exemplification in blogs and thereby this strategy is not considered to be of importance for studying blogs.

**Supplication** is used by people who are looking for nurturance by others and help. Usually this strategy is used by appearing helpless and being self-deprecated. Dominick (1999:652) did not find much evidence of the use of this strategy online. However, Bortree (2005:36) found evidence of supplication when studying teenage girls’ weblogs. Some girls were writing seriously self-depreciating text to their blogs and it was seen as craving for empathy from others.

Dominick (1999:655) suggested that there is another self-presentation used—**Social association.** It is represented by the number of links posted to the personal website. Bortree (2005:36) found that many teenage bloggers tried to present themselves as socially competent by posting the links of their friends’ blogs to the sidebar and thereby associating themselves with other people. The difference between ingratiation and social association is mainly in how the references to other people are made. Social association is presented by links to other peoples’ blogs while ingratiation strategy is about acknowledging friends in blog post.

**Feedback mechanisms** are mentioned by Dominick (1999:649) since the target of the self-presentation strategies is important. Trammell & Keshelashvili (2005:977) also mention bloggers’ need for receiving comments as craving for social acceptance.

**Technical features and aesthetics** Schau & Gilly (2003:394) introduce various self-presentation strategies that personal webpage owners use. Some of these are directly connected to the aesthetics of the webpage as it is believed that every element that is put on the web page, is carefully considered. It is assumed that with blogs the technical part does not have as important role as with personal web pages since blogs are technically easier to manage. However, Bortree (2005:36) noted that even bloggers use advanced HTML for self-expression.
Disclosure of personal information Dominick (2003:651) found that there was relatively little personal information disclosed to personal web pages. However, Bortree (2005:33) found that teenagers disclosed personal information to their blogs in order to create more meaningful relationships. Trammell & Keshelashvili (2005:975) also concluded that A-list bloggers tend to include personal information in their blogs. This could be explained by the facts that the majority of blogs are personal journals (Herring, Scheidt, Wright & Bonus, 2005:151).

3.1.2. Self-presentation techniques combined with gratifications

Self-presentation strategies can be linked to some of the gratifications that were presented in previous chapter. Table 2 summarizes the connections between specific self-presentation strategies, how they could be used in blogs and the possible gratification.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-presentation strategy</th>
<th>Used in blogs</th>
<th>Gratification sought</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ingratiation</td>
<td>Saying good things about other people, mentioning your friends, making jokes about yourself, telling funny details about yourself, use of self-humour</td>
<td>Self-presentation, affection, entertain others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>Expressing own opinion, sharing expertise, mentioning professional accomplishments</td>
<td>Self-presentation, commenting, information sharing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplication</td>
<td>Showing yourself in a more negative way, telling about negative emotions, problems in life</td>
<td>Get empathetic support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social association</td>
<td>List of other peoples’ blogs</td>
<td>Self-presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback mechanisms</td>
<td>Possibility to comment on a blog, personal e-mail included</td>
<td>Find people like me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical features and aesthetics</td>
<td>Blog templates, colours, pictures used</td>
<td>Self-presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disclosure of personal information</td>
<td>Full name, age, what do you like/dislike etc.</td>
<td>Self-presentation, find people like me</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen from the Table 2, most of the self-presentation strategies are connected to social gratifications, as defined by Stafford, Stafford & Schkade (2004:266). This category of gratifications is relatively new and first brought up in the Internet context. It is also important to note that the most common gratification associated with self-presentation strategies is a gratification called *self-presentation*. Interestingly, self-presentation has not been mentioned in connection to blogging motivations at all. Self-presentation has been mentioned though, by Grace-Farfaglia et al. (2006) as one of the gratifications for online community members.
3.2. Constructing personal websites

Schau & Gilly (2003:391) present a model for constructing personal web sites that is a result of a study about personal web sites and interviews with their owners. This study tries to explain the mechanisms behind creating and maintaining personal websites and is of particular interest because of the model’s possible applicability to blogs. Schau & Gilly (2003:387) suggest that the main purpose of personal web sites is communication with known and unknown others. Blogs are known to have similar characteristics to the personal web pages since blogs also have often one owner who posts content of own choosing. The model for constructing personal websites is presented in Figure 3 followed by a discussion of its content.
According to Schau & Gilly (2003:391) there is always some communicative intent present for constructing a web site since the owners of the web site know that their site is open to everyone. However, the motives for constructing websites vary a lot among people.

Usually constructing a website begins with some kind of initial impetus, i.e., there is some first motive that makes a person to decide to construct own webpage. Schau & Gilly (2003:392) name three types of initial impetus: triggering event, desire for personal growth and advocacy. A triggering event can be a change in life situation, either in personal or professional life. Getting married or graduating from a university are examples of a triggering event. Another type of initial impetus, a desire for personal growth is described by Schau & Gilly (2003:392) as: “an educational endeavour (mastering of a technology, adroit use of software), professional and personal self-promotion (search for a job, win clients, or find a date/mate), an exercise in self-discovery, or a fulfilment of a fantasy.” Finally, personal web pages can be also created in advocacy for something- it can be homage to a favourite artist or a social cause.
Schau & Gilly (2003:394) describe four self-presentation strategies that are used in personal websites: constructing a digital self, projecting a digital likeness, digitally associating as a new form of possession and reorganizing linear narrative structure. All these strategies are related to the appearance of the website and its features. Constructing digital self is similar to the technical features and aesthetics strategy described by Dominick (1999) and Bortree (2005:36). It was found that people usually consider very carefully every element they add to their personal webpage since it is considered to be a representation of the self (Schau & Gilly, 2003:394). Projecting a digital likeness means using an avatar or a picture of the website owner. Another self-presentation strategy found by Schau & Gilly (2003:394) is “digitally associating as a new form of possession” and by this it is suggested that as people usually define themselves by their possessions then digitally it can be understood as making reference to relationships with objects and places. For example posting a link to a company’s webpage or making a reference to one’s old college are considered to be forms of digital association. Finally, also “reorganizing linear narrative structures” is representing the possibility to use hyperlinks and by that reorganize the linear narrative.

Schau & Gilly (2003:400) did not pay much attention to the bottom part of the model with evolving motivations. It was concluded that these motivations can change in time and the new motivations would usually evolve, which makes the process of keeping a personal web page a continuous process. People also tend to create new pages for new purposes if the content of a new webpage is somewhat contradictory with the old one. For example a lawyer who is a fan of a rock band would probably keep one web page for representation of his/her professional interest and another one for collecting information about the band.

3.2.1. The personal websites model’s applicability to blogs

The model presented by Schau & Gilly (2003:391) could be also applied to blogs at least to some extent. Personal web pages are similar to blogs in sense that both are usually maintained by a single individual and thereby the content of it serves the interests of its owner (Herring et al. 2005:146). The communicative intent (Schau & Gilly, 2003:391) is also evident with blogs since bloggers tend to keep their audience in mind (Trammell & Keshelashvili, 2005:977; McCullagh, 2008:9). As for reasons to start a blog, Nardi (2004:43) mentions significant changes in a person’s life. This is similar to a triggering event that was presented in the model for web sites (Schau & Gilly, 2003:392).
Furthermore, desire for self-improvement as a motivation for blogging was also presented by Nardi (2004:44) and was also mentioned in connection to web sites (Schau & Gilly, 2003:392)

As for the self-presentation strategies presented by Schau & Gilly (2003:391) there are arguably other types of strategies that are used by bloggers since the majority of blogs are more textual and technically less challenging than personal web pages (Herring et al. 2005:144). However, these strategies for personal web sites can be combined with the ones discussed earlier in this chapter in order to make them more representatives for blogging. The most common self-presentation strategies used by bloggers were presented in chapter 3.1.1.

The evolving motivations presented by Schau & Gilly (2003:391) are also quite web page centred, for example desire to increase and display technical competence is not applicable to blogs. However, both exploration of other selves and desire to meet expectations could be applied to blogging as well. However, the possible gratifications that were found blogging can be incorporated into this model. These gratifications were presented in chapter 2. In the next chapter the theoretical part of the study is summarized by the personal web sites model that is applied to blogging.

3.3. Summary of the theoretical part

The main purpose of chapter 2 was to introduce the Uses and gratifications theory and show that it could also be used for studying blogs, despite the fact that it was initially a mass media theory. The main gratifications for UGM and blogs were summarized and based on past studies, a list of potential blogging gratifications was composed.

Chapter 3 introduced various self-presentation strategies that were used by bloggers (Bortree, 2005; Trammell & Keshelashvili, 2005). These strategies were presented and linked to the gratifications from chapter 2. It was concluded that it is difficult to explain the connection between the use of self-presentation strategies and the sought gratifications with existing research.

For that reason, a model for constructing personal web sites by Schau & Gilly (2003:391) was introduced. This model combines the use of self-presentation and motivations in the context of personal web sites. Even though blogs and personal web sites are different media, they were considered to have enough common traits for
applying the same model to blogs. An initial model for blogging that is based on the personal web sites model is presented in the next chapter.

3.3.1. *An initial model for blogging*

Based on past research, the initial framework for this study is summarized in the model for blogging (Figure 4). This model is based on the model for construction of personal web sites by Schau & Gilly (2003:391) and it may be modified based on the findings of empirical research.

![Figure 4 An initial model for blogging](image)

The initial impetus for starting a blog is presumed to be similar to what Schau & Gilly (2003:392) describe for personal websites. A change in life or desire for self-improvement could be also reasons for starting a blog. We know that in blogs there are also various self-presentation strategies used (Bortree, 2005; Trammell & Keshelashvili, 2005; McCullagh, 2008). These strategies, as presented earlier, include ingratiation, competence, supplication, social association, presence of feedback...
mechanisms, use of technical features and aesthetics and disclosure of personal information.

The evolving motivations that were originally used by Schau & Gilly (2003:400), are replaced by the potential blogging gratifications that were presented in chapter 2. This change was made because the motivations by Schau & Gilly (2003:391) were intended for personal web sites and were thus not considered very useful for this study. Finally, the influence from others that is called *observation of other’s web sites* was replaced by *observation of other’s blogs* for obvious reasons.
4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the chosen research method as well as gives an overview of how the empirical part of the study was done. Qualitative interviews were found appropriate for determining the gratifications for blogging and the choice of method is further discussed in chapter 4.1. The data was collected by interviewing 12 Estonian bloggers in July 2010. All the interviews were conducted with the help of an interview guide. The description of sampling strategies and the interview guide are presented in chapters 4.2 and 4.3. The data analysis was done by composing steps of inductive and deductive analysis. Likewise, the data analysis is further discussed in chapter 4.4. Finally, the quality of the research is evaluated according to five criteria introduced by Wallendorf & Belk (1989) in chapter 4.5.

4.1. Method

Studies in Uses and gratifications research have been mostly conducted quantitatively (Ruggiero, 2000:24) and internet research has been no exception to this (Papacharissi, 2000; Leung, 2003; Grace-Faraglia et al. 2006). However, since there are no previous studies that would concentrate on determining the gratifications for producing content to User Generated Media, it is advisable to first determine what gratifications users are seeking. These gratifications could be then further tested with quantitative methods in the future. Both Stafford, Stafford & Schkade (2004:265) and Ruggiero (2000:24) suggest that since we do not know all the possible gratifications of the “newer media” such as Social Media or UGM, it would be better to start with composing a suitable set of gratifications.

In order to determine the gratifications, qualitative methods are suggested by Ruggiero (2004:265). According to Katz, Blumler & Gurevich (1974:22) the gratifications can be self-reported by the audience i.e. in the context of this study it is possible to determine the motivations by asking the bloggers. Nardi et al. (2004:42) did qualitative in-depth interviews with bloggers in order to find out what motivates them. Qualitative interviews are also appropriate to use in this study since the aim is to find out why people blog.
4.2. Sample

The respondents for the study were chosen purposefully by combining three sampling strategies: intensity sampling, maximum variation sampling and snowball sampling (Patton 2002: 243). All the interviews were conducted with Estonian bloggers because of the researcher’s previous knowledge and personal contacts to some bloggers. The sampling strategies for the study are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3  Sampling strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sampling Strategy</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Choice of Informant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intensity sample</td>
<td>Information-rich cases</td>
<td>Frequent posts, blogging experience, many readers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum variation sample</td>
<td>To find as many as possible different gratifications</td>
<td>Variations in age, gender, occupation and home district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snowball sample</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Recommended by other bloggers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Because all bloggers are not equally active or interested in their blogs, the intensity sampling strategy (Patton 2002:234) was used as it gives the possibility to pick only information-rich cases that represent the phenomenon of interest intensely. Blogging activity can be measured by the frequency of blog posts and thereby bloggers who usually post several times every month were considered. Another way to interpret the intensity of the phenomenon of blogging is by the number of blog readers. Since blog hosts use different ways of counting visitors and the use of blog counters as well as being listed in blog catalogues are voluntary, it is difficult to choose criteria for measuring how popular a blog is. However, appearance in blog catalogues’ “most read” lists (blog.tr.ee, blogs.station.ee), having blog’s link in numerous other blogs’ blog rolls, Blogger.com profile view counter and Wordpress.com visitor counter can be considered as indicators of blog’s popularity. Overall popularity and how well the blogger is known, was also considered.

Additionally, the blogging phenomenon is supposedly manifested more intensely when the blogger has some experience of blogging and is thereby presumed to be more serious about having a blog. For that reason only bloggers who have been blogging for at least three years were considered to be part of this study. Last but not least, the
content of the blog was considered too, because the study is limited only to blogs that include personal content.

Snowball sampling (Patton, 2002: 237) was used as bloggers were asked to recommend other bloggers they knew. Moreover, the blog rolls were examined on order to find suitable informants. However, using snowball sampling strategy bears the risk of finding informants with very similar profiles who might also have similar motives for blogging. For that reason the maximum variation sampling strategy (Patton, 2002:234) was used as well. This strategy means that a diverse criteria or characteristics have to be chosen for the sample and then a maximum variation of cases based on determined criteria would be chosen for the study (Patton, 2002:235). By this using this strategy it is possible to assure that a broader variety of motives for blogging would be found. For that age, gender, occupation, home district and popularity were considered. The popularity in case of blogging means that both active bloggers who are somewhat famous in Estonia and the ones who are not known to the broader audiences were interviewed.

The final sample consisted of 12 informants, all active and experienced bloggers currently living in Estonia. The informants and their codes are presented in Table 4. Codes with F represent female and with M male informants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informant code</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Blogging since</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F1</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F3</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F5</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F6</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M1</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M2</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M3</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M4</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M5</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M6</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The informants were between 22 and 50 years old and were either students or working for different sectors. Half were men and half were women. All of the informants had at least three years of blogging experience. However, one of the bloggers deleted her blog
shortly after the interview. A short follow-up interview was done with her about the reasons for closing the blog.

4.3. Interviews and Interview Guide Design

The interviews took place in Tallinn, Tartu and Räpina in Estonia during July 2010. There were 12 interviews in total with lengths between 30 minutes to 80 minutes. Most of the interviews were done in public places such as bars and cafes but some were also done at the informant’s home. Some interviews were more precise and focused on the interview guide while others had a more conversational style and often led to a general discussion about blogging. However, all the necessary topics from the interview guide were covered at all interviews.

An interview guide with predetermined topics was used for the interviews as it gives the researcher the freedom to keep the conversational style while interviewing without losing focus (Patton, 2002:343-344). The interview guide had the role of a check-list were all the important topics were listed (Appendix 1). There were many questions about blogging in general and how blogging has affected informant’s life. These questions had the aim of warming up and letting the informant talk freely about what he/she felt was important. Silverman (2010:197) warns from asking the research question directly since it could lead to less meaningful results. For this reason the question “What motivates you to blog?” was avoided and was replaced by several other questions that could lead to the same answer. There was no secrecy about the aim of the study, though.

The interview guide consists of three parts: first there is an introductory part with warm up questions, the second part is about blogging in general and the third part is about the use of self-presentation strategies. The three parts with specific themes are summarized in Table 5.
Table 5 Interview guide design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part</th>
<th>Topics covered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Part 1: Background questions | Warming up  
| | Getting background information |
| Part 2: Why do people blog? | Positive and negative aspects of blogging  
| | Value of blogging  
| | Content of the blog  
| | Social aspects of blogging  
| | Self-presentation |
| Part 3: Use of self-presentation strategies (used as help for part 2) | Feedback mechanisms  
| | References to other people (ingratiation)  
| | Social association  
| | Supplication  
| | Competence  
| | Technical features and aesthetics  
| | Disclosure of personal information |

The first part has an aim to function as warm-up and the questions are about starting a blog and about the details of the informant’s blog. The second part of the interview guide is the most important part as it is about different aspects of having a blog and provides a set of questions for finding out why people blog. There are four types of questions: about having a blog in general, about choosing content and the main topics of the blog, about social aspects of blogging and self-presentation in blogs. The informants were given the freedom to tell about their thoughts on different aspects of blogging and were encouraged to tell about incidents they thought were interesting.

Finally, the third part of the interview guide included the use of self-presentation strategies. This part was slightly different for interview since those questions were based on the informant’s blog. The questions were prepared separately for every interview beforehand after looking at the blog. The questions were mainly about the mention of other people in the blog as it represents the self-presentation strategy of ingratiation (Dominick, 199:652; Bortree, 2005: 35-36; Trammell & Keshelashvili, 2005: 977), the feedback mechanisms and the importance of feedback (Dominick,
1999: 649; Trammell & Keshelashvili, 2005: 977) and the use of blog rolls and links that represent social association (Bortree, 2005: 36). How much and why the informant tells negative things about himself/herself was also of interest since this represents the use of supplication strategy (Dominick, 1999: 652; Bortree, 2005:36). Showing competence, for example, by telling about one’s work related accomplishments (Dominick, 1999: 652; Trammell & Keshelashvili, 2005: 977), the appearance of the blog (Schau & Gilly, 2003: 294; Bortree, 2005:36) and disclosure of personal information (Bortree, 2005: 33; Trammell & Keshelashvili, 2005: 975) were also covered since they are all related with the use of self-presentation strategies. These questions were often mixed with the questions of the second part of the interview guide and asked when appropriate.

Schau & Gilly (2003) combined content analysis with qualitative interviews while studying the creation of personal web-pages. During the interviews the researcher and informant looked together at the website, which gave the researcher a good opportunity to pose more concrete questions about the website. The informants were glad to tell about different aspects of their web pages and what was their motivation to do different things there. Because of this an initial idea for this study was also to look at the informant’s blog together at the interview. However, the computer was used only at some of the interviews because of the choice of interview location. Sometimes there was no need for looking at the blog since the informant knew his/her blog very well and had no problems with giving rich and meaningful answers. On the other hand, on some other interviews, looking at the informant’s blog proved to be very useful and gave additional information.

4.4. Analysis of the Data

In order to analyze the data, all the interviews were transcribed, although some of the content was omitted from the transcription process due to the non-relevant or too sensitive content. Everything that was left out was considered thoroughly and its importance for the study was evaluated carefully in order to avoid leaving out any information relevant for the study.

Because of the limited amount of the previous studies that would concentrate specifically on the identification of the gratifications for blogging, the analysis of the data was a combination of deductive and inductive approach that is also called abduction. The empirical study was based on the theoretical framework, which makes
the research deductive (Saunders et al. 2009:124). On the other hand, the set of gratifications that was presented in the theoretical part, as well as the model for blogging, were demonstrating the existing knowledge about internet gratifications and were presumably applicable to blogging. The existing theoretical framework was not believed to be sufficient for providing all the existing gratifications for blogging. For that reason the data analysis added inductive insights. Abduction was used by comparing the results with theory and when needed, adjusting theory (Kovacs & Spens, 2005:138). Different steps in data analysis as well as their purpose and approach are summarized in Table 6.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical theme</th>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gratifications</td>
<td>Categorizing data into primary categories</td>
<td>Inductive</td>
<td>To determine all possible gratifications from gathered data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gratifications</td>
<td>Comparison with the existing theory</td>
<td>Abductive</td>
<td>To see how much could be explained by the existing theoretical framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gratifications</td>
<td>Revising the existing categories as well as the theoretical background</td>
<td>Abductive</td>
<td>To critically assess the data analysis and the composition of the theoretical framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gratifications</td>
<td>Composition of a list of gratifications</td>
<td>Abductive</td>
<td>To combine the existing knowledge with the results of the data analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-presentation strategies and social gratification</td>
<td>Examine the connection between social gratifications and self-presentation strategies used</td>
<td>Deductive</td>
<td>To be able to understand and explain the link between using self-presentations in blogs and the gratifications that are sought by them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why do people blog?</td>
<td>Composition of a model for blogging</td>
<td>Deductive/Abductive</td>
<td>To use the model from the theoretical framework as a template for organizing the result of the data analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Determining the gratifications for blogging

First the transcriptions were read carefully and the two following steps of data analysis could be described as categorization and abstraction as Spiggle (1994:493) calls them. All passages of the transcribed text that involved any mention of motivations or gratifications were highlighted and moved to a separate file. This part of the analysis used the inductive approach and was conducted as template analysis (Saunders, 2009: 506) with no predefined templates used.

Those motives were divided into rough inductive categories that received descriptive names. Each new data unit was evaluated, whether it was the same as some of the previous data units or could be moved to a new category of its own. This step of the data analysis resulted in 51 separate categories describing different gratifications for blogging. Although the theoretical framework offered a set of possible gratifications ready for testing, it was considered more appropriate to use the inductive approach first, in order to also spot the gratifications that had not been mentioned in previous studies.

As the next step, the initial categories were revised and each was provided with as accurate description as possible. Some categories were very close to each other while some others were too wide and contained several meanings. Due to this, some of the categories were reorganized and their total amount was changing during the analysis process, varying between 40 and 50. Since the original inductively created categories were very different, overlapping to some extent, and hierarchically on different levels, they were further tested with different qualitative criteria. These criteria emerged from the transcription data, additionally one theoretical division was also used in the data analysis.

The theoretical division was presented by Stafford, Stafford and Schkade (2004:2008) and proposed the division of gratifications into three categories: process, content and social. This division proved to be useful for organizing the gathered data in this study. However, since this division was not sufficient for arranging the emerged categories, all the items were evaluated by four qualitative scales. These came out from the transcribed data and were:
• Rational vs. emotional
• Egoistic vs. altruistic
• The timing of the value (while posting- only directly after posting- value for longer time- value only in the future)
• Feedback (no feedback expected- reading is sufficient- active response expected)

After grouping different motivations for blogging according to their characteristics, a new and more precise set of gratifications was composed and thereafter the results were compared to the set of gratifications that already existed in the theoretical part of the study. Both sets were revised carefully since the data were collected in Estonia and the categories received names through free translation. Thereby it was important to concentrate on the meanings within the categories in order to determine whether the same gratification already existed in the previous research or not. In addition, the theoretical framework was also revised since the preliminary set of gratifications that was presented, was hypothetical and based on lists of variables from different internet uses and gratifications studies. As the final step a list of gratifications for blogging was composed.

**Self-presentation strategies and social gratifications**

The link between self-representation strategies and social gratifications was analyzed deductively since the analysis was based self-presentation strategies that were described in the existing theory. The results of this step were used to give a more meaningful explanation to the phenomenon of social gratifications for producing user generated content.

**Composition of a model for blogging**

For this part of the analysis, the model for blogging that was presented in chapter 3.3 was used as a template. The parts of gratifications and the use of self-presentation strategies from the previous stages of the analysis were incorporated to the model. However, the transcriptions were analyzed once again deductively in order to find out the initial impetus for blogging and for that all the passages from the transcriptions mentioning the reasons for starting a blog were analyzed.
4.5. Quality of the Research

For assessing the quality of the research, there are five categories of trustworthiness proposed by Wallendorf and Belk (1989:71). These categories are credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability and integrity. Since Wallendorf and Belk (1989: 69) had focus on participant observation and ethnographic fieldwork, while presenting specific techniques for assuring the research quality, discussion in this chapter is adapted to qualitative interviews and the scope of this study.

Credibility means that the constructs of reality that have been studied, have been presented in a believable and sufficient way (Wallendorf & Belk, 1989:71). It is recommended to pay extra attention to the data collection methods and processes, prolonged engagement and triangulation of methods and sources is recommended, as well as doing member checks (Wallendorf & Belk, 1989: 72-79). Since this study did not include ethnographic fieldwork and had a limited timeframe, the prolonged engagement could be defined by following the informant’s blogs also months before and after the data collection. Moreover, the maximum variation sample was used in order to guarantee that all bloggers would not come from the same circle of friends. In addition, during the interviews, many issues that one informant had mentioned, were brought up for discussion with next informants in order to gain further understanding.

Transferability shows to what extent the results of the study could be also employed in other contexts (Wallendorf & Belk, 1989:71). The empirical data were gathered only in one country due to the scope of the project. However, this is deemed to be sufficient since blogging is a relatively international phenomenon and the international studies about blogging and internet gratifications have shown similar results. For example, Nardi et al. (2004) interviewed bloggers in the United Stated and their findings were reflected to a certain extent even in this study. However, it is uncertain if the same results could be found among the world wide A-list bloggers who have readers in many countries across the world or among other types of bloggers than personal bloggers.

Dependability assesses whether the interpretation avoids any instabilities other than the instabilities of the phenomenon itself (Wallendorf & Belk, 1989:71). Ideally the research could be done in the same context with the same informants again with exactly the same results and Wallendorf & Belk (1989: 82) argue that the best way of ensuring dependability is prolonged observation and explanation over time. With the timeframe of this project it is not possible to go back to the informants for example one
year later, but due to the chosen research method it is not that important either. Interviews give the opportunity to reflect over the thoughts and aspiration in the past as well and for that reason there were also questions about the motivations for blogging at different times.

**Confirmability** means that it should be possible to trace back to the researcher’s construction of an interpretation and Belk and Wallendorf (1989:83-85) propose the triangulation of researchers and confirmability audit for that. Being an individual project, it was not possible to engage more researchers to it, but however, the study is supervised. In addition, all the interviews were recorded as well as transcribed and the analysis was described in detail in order to avoid any misunderstandings. The translation of citations was also examined by an English teacher in order to avoid any misinterpretations.

**Integrity** assesses how truthful the information given by informants was (Wallendorf & Belk, 1989: 71). It is recommended to pay attention to the interviewing technique, assure the anonymity of the informants and prolonged engagement in order to gain trust (Belk & Wallendorf, 1989:83-85). The latter proved to be, however, the opposite while interviewing and asking questions about self-presentation issues, for example. The interviews with strangers were more fluent than with informants that I knew from before. Overall, personal bloggers do not have any significant problems with expressing their thoughts and ideas. The interview data proved to be information-rich and my outsider role as a blogger gave me the freedom to ask for further explanation about different topics. To sum up, the gathered information is assessed to be honest and open, however, with its obvious limitations about self-presentation issues as people never tend to be fully honest about them.
5 WHY DO PEOPLE BLOG?

This chapter presents the main results of the empirical study. The results are summarized in a model for blogging (Figure 5). This model is based on a model for constructing personal websites by Schau & Gilly (2003:291) and integrates all the aspects of blogging that were covered in the empirical research. The model will be described in detail in this chapter.

![Figure 5 A model for blogging](image)

Chapter 5.1 presents the initial impetus for starting a blog. Next, the gratifications for blogging are presented in the chapter 5.2. The gratifications are divided into three categories, process, content and social gratifications and are discussed accordingly in chapters 5.2.1, 5.2.2 and 5.2.3. However, this division is not always very clear as even the process and content gratifications have some social and communicative aspect to them. Lastly, chapter 5.3 gives an overview of the self-presentation strategies that are used in blogging and their connection to different gratifications sought by the use of those strategies. The results and implications are further discussed in Chapter 6.
5.1. Reasons for starting a blog

There are different motivations for blogging, but the initial impetus for starting a blog can be similar for many bloggers. There were three different reasons why one should start a personal blog: moving to other town or country, trying out new things and influence from other people. It is also interesting that many informants had started blogging more than once, for example they first tried it out when it was a novelty, and later on took it up again because of moving to a different town or country. Moving often creates a new need for some medium that would facilitate staying in contact with friends and family.

The beginning of the Estonian one was easier since I moved permanently from Tartu to Tallinn and some of my closer friends also moved here but others stayed in Tartu and then there was this wish for some medium where I could write about what I’m doing, put my photos there, so that my friends could see how my life is going here (M4).

All the informants had been blogging for at least couple of years and many had done it for a much longer time. Many just started blogging because they had heard of a new thing and wanted to try it out.

I have been writing all my life, I started writing novels like when I was 12 and started keeping a diary when I was 9...so when I got a computer then I started to write down my thoughts into word files and then at some point when I read in the newspaper that there are these things like blogs, then I thought that this is exactly what I could be doing (F1).

Moreover, a decision to start a blog can be influenced by other people. For example, if one’s friends already are blogging then this might tempt him/her also to start a blog.

This is how I started blogging that when I went to the 10th grade then I had no idea what a blog was but then one of my new classmates was blogging. I started to read her blog and this vibe...I immediately started liking this blogging vibe and then I also started blogging in heike like she did (F6).

The initiative for blogging can also come from other people as somebody can recommend one to start a blog. For example one of the informants started his blog during the elections when a newspaper was gathering the blogs of all candidates. Another blogger started a blog because his friend suggested him to do so.

It actually started when one of my friends suggested I should start blogging since I was doing quite a lot of interesting things, like organized different projects and events and sold books in the US. He told me to write because it might be interesting for people to read about it (M3).

5.2. Gratifications for blogging

Many personal blogs look quite alike when it comes to their content, for example there is often something about the blogger’s life there, sometimes a description of what has
happened lately, what the blogger thinks about it, some photos and something about current events or the interests of the blogger. However, there are many different motivations of why people keep their blogs and post content to it.

Table 7 presents the list of gratifications that were found for blogging. All gratifications in the table are the result of the inductive data analysis and were found from the interview data. Some of the gratifications in this table have been also mentioned earlier in the theory or are partially similar to blogging or internet gratifications that were known before. The similarities and differences with other blogging and internet gratifications are going to be discussed further in chapter 6.

Table 7 Gratifications for blogging

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process gratifications</th>
<th>Content gratifications</th>
<th>Social gratifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotion management</td>
<td>Life documenting</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-improvement</td>
<td>Commenting</td>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyable activity</td>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>Find friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>Self-presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Entertain others</td>
<td>Image management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enlighten others</td>
<td>Satisfy one’s vanity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Get help</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is important to note that the gratifications listed in Table 7 are the overview of the most important blogging gratifications for personal bloggers. However, this does not mean that every blogger would be looking for all those gratifications at the same time. The motivations for blogging can evolve and change in time and there are some motivations that never apply to all bloggers, although they are very important to some. For example there are bloggers who are very eager to evoke discussions but others tend to avoid any kind of confrontation.

**5.2.1. Process gratifications**

The process gratifications are acquired at the time of blogging and are mostly connected to the activity of writing or posting photos to a blog. These gratifications are presented in Table 8 and described in more detail in this chapter.
Table 8  Process gratifications

| Emotion management                  | Releasing negative emotions  
|                                    | Therapy                        
|                                    | Self-analysis                  
| Self-improvement                    | Improve writing skills         
|                                    | Improve analytical thinking and written expression 
| Enjoyable activity                  | Passion for writing            
|                                    | Excitement                     
|                                    | Addiction                      |

People use blogging for emotion management, with the emphasis on releasing negative emotions and sorting out their feelings. Additionally, regular blogging also supports self-improvement; mainly by improving one’s writing skills. However, blogging can also be seen as an enjoyable activity and pastime. Those gratifications usually bring immediate value to the blogger and are often not that important later on. The only process gratification that has a long-time value is self-improvement since it is a longer process in time.

Process gratifications for blogging are egoistic by nature because they are sought in order to benefit the blogger. At the time of composing a blog post some bloggers do not think much about their audience. Not surprisingly, feedback is neither very important in connection to the process gratifications. The process gratifications that were found in this study are presented and described in more detail as following.

**Emotion management**

Blogs are quite widely used for expressing emotions and for sorting them out. This is especially common practice among female bloggers: “There just are this kind of people who need such diary-keeping and expressing their feelings in order not to keep them inside and so on” (F2). Naturally, emotion management is often used for releasing negative feelings and getting rid of them by doing it: “I very often release my negative feelings in my blog” (F6).

However, emotion management does not only mean releasing the tensions but some bloggers can also analyze the situation during the writing process. It helps the blogger to understand his/her feelings and sort out difficult thoughts:
When I’m feeling good or when I’m angry, then it’s always good to write, so that you analyze the situation and try to look at things neutrally, so that you don’t write that somebody is stupid or that somebody is a jerk and that everybody is so bad, but you write what you feel and why you feel like this (M3).

For similar reasons emotion management can be also used as a form therapy: And now I’m saying completely honestly that blogging is therapy for me. It is...I sit down and I’m forced to think about why I did something like this and I’m forced to analyze myself and my behaviour“(F6).

However, not all the personal bloggers use blogs for expressing their feelings and many bloggers claimed that they would never do it. Writing about negative emotions was often especially avoided for self-presentation reasons since people do not want to give negative impression of them. For some talking about negative feelings is just not considered an appropriate thing to do.

(I usually don’t write)... about negative things and when...when I’m really depressed then I would rather not write about it and maybe because of that there are also pauses in my blogging because then...on the one hand, there is nothing interesting to write about and on the other hand, I don’t find it necessary to complain on the internet about how much life sucks and how pointless the world is (M5).

Self-improvement

Self-improvement also often motivates people to blog, especially when it comes to improving one’s verbal skills. Many bloggers admitted that they were interested in writing in general and that blogging has been a good way for them to practice it. Differently from other process gratifications, self-improvement is a long-term benefit of blogging and seeing the results require a commitment over longer time:

For those who want to write something else than a blog some day, it is training. I look at my posts from the year 2004 and my style, everything, has improved a lot...well I could write already in secondary school but well, you improve yourself like this every day (F1).

People use blogs also for learning to expressing themselves better verbally: “And then I thought that when I start blogging and writing down my thoughts, then I would also practice my written expression” (M3). Moreover, blogging could even involve other kinds of self-improvement than related to verbal skills. For example one blogger was keeping a photo blog where he constantly had to work and evaluate his own photos: „And well, it also helps that much that as I’m working here with those pictures, then at least I have to evaluate my own pictures and choose which ones to take and which ones to leave“(M2).
Enjoyable activity

Bloggers also blog just for blogging’s sake: some take it as an enjoyable activity that has become a part of their life. Many mentioned that blogging is a habit for them and they consider it as a normal every-day activity. Devoted bloggers often used words such as need and addiction in relation to blogging:

“And then I’ll come back again. I don’t know any other way. It’s like I write otherwise as well, I don’t know how many book projects I have unfinished but I just cannot do without it (blogging) anymore” (F6).

Knowing that anyone can read your blog can make blogging a really exciting thing to do. One of the female bloggers had an opinion that the main mystery of blogging might lie in the fact that a blogger can never exactly know who the readers are: „There is some kind of romance in there, maybe a professor who I have a crush on, reads it...or maybe a prince on a white horse or the president of Estonia...I don’t know” F6.

5.2.2. Content gratifications

Content gratifications represent everything that is related to the blog’s content and how bloggers choose what to put in their blogs and why they do so. Bloggers write texts, post photos, videos and different links to their blogs. One of the most common content gratifications is traditional journal-keeping in order to keep track of one’s activities. Blogs can be also used for advocating blogger’s ideas or for helping others who are in a similar situation as the blogger. Content gratifications usually have a long-time value because the gratifications are sought by the content that is created. All the content gratifications that were found are presented in Table 9 and discussed in detail in this chapter.
Table 9  Content gratifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Life documenting</th>
<th>Keeping a journal</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>External memory</td>
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<tr>
<td>Express your viewpoint</td>
<td>Express your viewpoint</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>Spreading your word</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Introducing own interests</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Give back</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>Advertising</td>
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<tr>
<td>Entertain others</td>
<td>Entertain others</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enlighten others</td>
<td>Educate</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Give support</td>
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**Life-documenting**

Many bloggers love the idea of recording and archiving their life in their blog as in today’s world there are so many things one should remember. By writing about the happenings in one’s life and illustrating it with photos it is possible to create a journal that would be always accessible on the internet:

> Sometimes it is really good for me too to have a look, something like in July 2006...was it then that something specific happened or something like that and I can always find it in my own blog. Like some kind of memory-help, so to speak, that I can access wherever there is internet access (F4).

Blogs have an extra value as it is possible to record experiences and thoughts you would otherwise maybe forget later on, there. It gives the blogger a possibility to see the change in her/his world view and thought patterns over time:

> With memory it is as it is, that today you have some thoughts and then years later you think that oh, did I really think like that. You say it out and write it down and you put it aside and move on with your life and at some point you look then that oh, did I really think something like this then...I don't even remember that (F5).

Sometimes the value of archiving was perceived to last over a very long time as the blog could also serve as interesting reading even for the next generations: *At some point I thought a bit that this is like my personal historical archive, if I should have children some time, then it would be interesting for them to read* (M4).
Commenting

Blog offers a space where it is possible to publish whatever a blogger wants to, and allows the blogger express his/her viewpoint. Blog posts can often be related to current topics such as politics or some recent event:

And sometimes it was like commenting on something that was in the newspaper, when I felt that this newspaper has...Something, like for example written about politics very subjectively or I had my own very strong opinion about what else should also be pointed out there (M4).

With this kind of posts bloggers usually hope that someone might read what they have to say but do not necessarily need immediate feedback: “When I have an opinion about something then I'll write it down and it would be very nice if someone would also read it” (F5).

Advocacy

For using a blog in advocacy for something means that the blogger wants to influence the readers and feels much stronger about the topic than when just commenting. Advocacy is all about spreading one’s word and sending some kind of message: “I make like those posts where I feel like I know that I should deliver some kind of message, either like personally or even more like to articulate or share some kind of philosophy to the others” (F3).

Blogs are also successfully used for promoting own interests, being it membership in some organization or politics. The blogger has the advantage of already owning a popular web space with lots of readers. One of the informants was politically active and his blog was a combination of personal content and topics related to politics: „I have used it in connection with the elections to promote different topics and for doing polls” (M1).

Although advocacy is mostly used in blogger’s own interest, sometimes blogs can be also used for promoting someone else’s ideas. Blogger can also have use of the blog for giving back by writing about certain things:

It was when I went to India, because this program...then I felt a bit of moral duty as I felt that they had invested in me the money, like those trainings, they paid for those trainings and the life in India...and this blog was like an opportunity how to give back (M5).
Advertising

Bloggers are usually well aware of how many readers they have and can also use the blog for advertising. In personal blogs mostly things that the blogger likes or is interested in, are advertised: “And you see, before I used to advertise more too, but that has changed now, I used to do advertising for those things I liked myself” (M6).

This kind of advertising is done on a voluntary basis and does normally not bring any direct material benefit to the blogger. Hence, none of the bloggers offered any forms of paid advertising in their blog. However, one informant mentioned that she might start selling advertising in order to earn money with her blog: “Maybe even start selling some advertising, just to earn some money with it, I like that kind of web-business” (F1).

Entertain others

Offering interesting reading is also important to many bloggers. This shows that the blogger is very well aware of the fact that whatever he/she is posting is going to be read by others. This also shows that bloggers have the reader in mind and try to give something for them too.

When I start writing something, it is some topic that has been exciting enough for me so that I want to relate it somehow, hoping or knowing that there are like at least three people who might be interested in it and like three people who I know that are interested in it (M4).

Enlighten others

To enlighten someone means that the aim is to make some kind of positive impact on the reader. It differs from advocacy, as enlightening is mainly altruistic, while advocacy often represents more egoistic motives of blogging. Some informants mentioned that they feel a need to educate their readers and tell them about things they consider important and interesting. Introducing new material that is not available in Estonian, is one way of educating others. This can be for example writing about events that do not receive much media coverage otherwise.

The whole Estonian media wrote only about the Polish elections but nobody wrote about the Colombian elections. And...Then I felt that maybe it’s a bit like my moral duty because I have
been there and well, I followed the results and actually the electoral process was quite interesting and might bring far-reaching repercussions like /.../ (M5).

Writing about computer related topics, as these are often a novelty and there is no material in Estonian available yet: “It felt like there are no...Well, like internet- or photography-related...texts available in the Estonian language, so why not write about it if I think that I know enough about it myself” (M4).

Enlightening can be also in form of helping others by giving them support. Especially bloggers who like to write about their emotional issues or relationships feel that their readers might receive support from reading about their experiences. One of the informants discussed the reasons of her blog’s popularity and put it that way:

I’m not only an entertainer but I’m partially also a comforter because I dare to talk about things that are usually rather not talked about and many of my blog’s readers are people whose lives are a mess and they can simply get support from my blog (F6).

5.2.3. Social gratifications

Social gratifications were the most frequently mentioned type of gratifications that bloggers were looking for. These gratifications include immediate forms of interaction, such as starting a discussion or communicating with other people. In addition, blogging could also help finding friends, which is often a process that takes longer time. Moreover, social gratifications also include self-presentation and internet image management that represent bloggers’ attempts to influence the way they are perceived by other people. Satisfying one’s vanity is also considered a social gratification as it includes getting some kind of recognition by other people. Finally, bloggers are also motivated by getting either material or immaterial help from other people. An overview of social gratifications for blogging is presented in Table 10 and further discussed in this chapter.
Table 10  Social gratifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discussion</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
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<td>Communication</td>
<td>Communication with the world</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Keep in touch</td>
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<td>Enhance communication</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Address people personally</td>
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<td>Find friends</td>
<td>Find people like me</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Get in touch with old friends</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-presentation</td>
<td>Emotional self portrayal</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Practical self-presentation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Presenting accomplishments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Image management</td>
<td>Representation on the internet</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Social media hub</td>
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<tr>
<td>Satisfy one’s vanity</td>
<td>Fame</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Status</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Feeling of accomplishment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Get help</td>
<td>Get material support</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Get emotional support</td>
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Discussion

Discussion is a very important part of blogging for many as it helps to sort out one’s thoughts and also often results in the creation of new value to the original post. For some bloggers discussion is very important: “As for discussion, then for me it is very important, especially when it comes to problems of existential nature. I tend to over think a lot and sometimes I need somebody to add some aspects to it or argue back” (F4).

Some bloggers admitted that they sometimes even try to make intriguing posts in order to get more feedback and evoke a lively discussion: “/.../ and sometimes I have also exaggerated some things in order to intrigue others and make them join the discussion or offer a dialogue...or even provoke ”(F5).

However, discussion received mixed opinions by the bloggers and there were also some informants who admitted that they were afraid of confrontation and for that reason
tried to avoid touching any sensitive or provocative issues in their blogs. One informant told that she is avoiding confrontation but is still posting for getting feedback: “I have never wanted to cause a storm, and I’m so much afraid of confrontation that I have like wanted to know peoples’ opinions about some relationship related issues and those have interested me enough to post” (F1).

Communication

Blogs, as they form a part of social media, always have some communicative aspect to them. All the informants used their blogs in some way for communication. For some blogging was an important way of communicating with other people. For example for one of the informants, who was living in a small town and had limited possibilities for leaving home due to her handicap, her blog was her way to communicate with other people: “The world is open to me. I have a window to the world through my laptop” (F5).

Communication could also mean that blogs are used for keeping in touch with other people. Some bloggers have been in the life situation where they have moved to other town or even country. Others just have friends who live in different places than they do. Blogging is a good way to let your friends and family know about your life: “Why I’m blogging right now is that I think it is because I don’t otherwise keep in touch with many people on a daily basis, like with my friends with whom the communication has kind of come to a standstill” (F3).

Blogging is found especially useful when travelling because then there is of course a bigger need for informing others about your life. Moreover, there is usually much more to write about and the readers will be more interested too.

Now what I have also sometimes been practicing is that when I’m travelling somewhere, like my last trip was to Norway, and well, I wrote about it quite thoroughly just because my mom wished I would do this so that she would also know what I was doing there and what I saw, like it is much more interesting to find out about this immediately than later when somebody asks what I had done on my trip and I kind of don’t remember it that well anymore and then I wouldn’t write about half of the things either (F2).

Blogs are seen as a practical way for keeping in touch with people since everybody who is interested can read it. Blogs also replace s emails quite successfully: “I wanted to keep in touch with my friends but I didn’t bother to send emails to everyone so I wrote quite thoroughly about my life in my blog “(M5). Although it might look like the
quality of communication might deteriorate as a result, many bloggers thought quite the opposite. Blogging can even enhance communication as people can give all the basic information in the blog and then it would not be necessary to tell the same things over and over again: „I would rather write a decent story with pictures, put it in my blog and then we can meet and already talk further from that moment on” (M6).

Another aspect to using blogs for keeping in touch with people is that it often brings a certain obligation for the blogger to post. By this a blogger can develop a certain commitment in front of the readers. It might be because the readers want to know that everything is fine with the blogger: „At the same time this blogging also disciplines me, my friends and relatives start to worry when I haven’t written anything and even start calling me from abroad to assure that I haven’t fallen ill or anything” (F5).

On the other hand, commitment can also reflect more the entertaining aspect as the blog readers are expecting the blogger to come up with something new to read and the blogger feels an obligation to fulfil their expectations: “It’s a part of my life and sometimes when I don’t post for a longer time, then my friends would start to complain, like come on, write something, I want to read” (F4).

Communication can be also used in a sense of delivering a personal message to one or some of the readers. It could be used for sending some message that its recipient would not otherwise listen to: „Some posts are there maybe just to tell some people some things they otherwise wouldn’t like to listen to” (F3).

Personal address could be used more egoistically, by expressing bloggers own opinion of some conflicts, for example: „Sometimes I have also written impersonally about some person who has done something wrong and then the person reads it and recognizes that it was about him. And it’s like your way of telling him that he had done something wrong and what you think about it” (M3).

Similarly, a blogger could address somebody else in order to acknowledge this person: „When I feel that it might motivate this person, then I would write that I met him and he did this and his opinion was that” (M3).

It is important to note that about half of the informants found this kind of message-delivering useful and appropriate while others claimed that they would never do it. Some admitted that they used their blogs more for sending personal messages when they started blogging but after many years of blogging did not care about it anymore.
Well, it changes, I thought about it like this when I started blogging but now I have been doing it for 6 years and it comes so automatically that I don’t think about it anymore. And well, when I have those internal rules that I’m following when blogging, that I don’t write negative things about anyone and that I’m also ready to say those things in person, then I’ll write like this (F1).

Find friends

Blogs truly represent Social Media since it is even possible to form friendships through blogs or get in touch with some old friends again. However, bloggers had very mixed opinions about meeting new people through their blog. Those bloggers who were more widely known had also gotten more friends via their blog while the ones who were mostly blogging for their friends and family had not met many new people. One of the informants had six years of blogging experience and had increased her social circle significantly thanks to it: “I have got to know so many wonderful people and many of them have been there for me during tough times, it’s just indescribable” (F1)!

It is also interesting how blogging can make the process of meeting new people easier, as readers get to know the blogger to some extent beforehand. One of the respondents thought that this maybe helps her to find people that are be similar to her and would like the first impression of her, based on her blog: “It makes that first sorting somehow, if they think, based on my blog, that I’m an ignorant person, then they wouldn’t come to bother me in real life...and well that maybe saves me from getting hurt”(F6).

All in all, finding friends was usually more important to bloggers who also enjoyed communicating through their blog, while others did not bother much about meeting new people. Interestingly two of the informants also admitted that they had met their significant others through their blog: “On the other hand, my girlfriend found me through my blog, so it probably still brings something (new connections)” (M2).

Another aspect to finding friends is that blogging also makes it possible to find people from the past. Usually, people find the blogger. For example for one of the informants it was a surprise when one of her high school teachers commented on her blog.
Self-presentation

Not surprisingly, blogs offer a very good opportunity for self-presentation. One informant put it that way: “I think it’s like some self-conscious image management in a sense that how you would like the outside world to see you or as what kind of a person it would see you” (F3).

For some informants their self-portrayal was more emotional and less practical, as they created a digital character of them. This character has often some personality traits that are emphasized and the blogger probably wants to show to the readers. Female informants tended to be more emotional about their self-image portrayal. For example one of the informants had been compared to Bridget Jones by other people. Even though she did not agree with the comparison, her blogger-self was likable and relatable and this image was supported by writing about funny mistakes she could occasionally make: “Or like, in that sense that if I accidentally switched the shampoo and conditioner, I can still write about it, it doesn’t harm me in any way and it would again support the image that I have (F1)”.

The same informant also admitted that she feels like her blogger-self is more like a character she has created or a role she is playing.

Well, actually the blog-me is still...it's not like real me; she's like a character I have created. Actually I'm one person when I'm writing, other person when cooking, and the third one at home and for my friends...it's like people are playing different roles in their lives. Just that I have also this blogger-role added (F1).

For other bloggers, self-representation had a more practical meaning and was often used for portraying one as a serious and professional person. The blogger’s best skills and personality traits are presented carefully. Similarly, some bloggers liked to present their work-related accomplishments in their blog: “Or I like rather generalize and write about important accomplishments or developments in my work life” (F3).

The use of self-presentation strategies in blogging and its connection to different gratifications are further discussed in chapter 5.2. In this chapter there is a more detailed overview with concrete examples given of how blogs are used for self-presentation.
Image management

Managing one’s image is very closely related to the more practical side of self-presentation, but is implemented more systematically. Nowadays it is always possible to find some information about people by searching the internet. Some informants used their blogs for managing the impression someone would get when searching their name on the web:

Or actually, one has to be present on the internet and control.../.../ like I have to control what I am like on the Internet, and (that is) one of the reasons for blogging /.../ I’m making like a portfolio here, that people would end up here (in the blog) and the main benefit is that when somebody enters my name in a Google search then at some point he/she would find the first, second or third post here, and there are like every day a couple of people like this. So, this is the main benefit (M6).

Blogging could be also used as a platform for self-branding: „Well it is also a part of my public brand, thanks to it, well it sounds kind of like some ego boosting talk, but pragmatically it has kind of helped me at certain times“(M4).

Moreover, a blog could also serve as a quick reference to a person. One informant, for example, has added his blog to his email signature and thinks that it gives people who do not know him, an opportunity to check out who he is: „But maybe it’s also some kind of a quick reference to a person, so that they can check out who that jerk is that is writing to us“(M4).

Representing oneself and controlling the internet image involves often coordinating between many different social media channels such as a blog, Facebook, Twitter and different photo sites for example. Blogs can be used as a social media hub that connects all those different mediums. For example one of the bloggers explained how he has linked Twitter and his blog together and concluded that: „That actually a blog should be this central social media hub“(M1).

Satisfy one’s vanity

Vanity is certainly a personality trait that every blogger admitted to have, at least to some extent, and many even thought that vanity is something that can help a blogger to become successful: “Very many people try blogging but quit. But those who keep on doing it are mostly vain. Like me”(F6).
There is also a less practical reason why people like to share their thoughts and lives on the internet than archiving or keeping in touch. People like to feel famous and be recognized by other people: “One of the reasons (for blogging) is certainly that I’m vain. I like when people know me and when people talk about me”(F4).

Even most of those bloggers, who did not have that many readers, could remember at least some time when strangers had told them that they read their blog. In addition to satisfying one’s vanity, it also gives the blogger a certain feeling of recognition that they have accomplished something. For more popular bloggers it could be also a question of achieving a status of an expert, for example when they receive invitation to some events: “I have been invited to some bloggers’ events and some marketing agencies also organize some events sometimes…”(M1).

While bloggers with more readers had also been interviewed earlier for different blog-related projects, some of the informants found the fact that they were chosen to be informants for this study also as a kind of recognition: “Sometimes it gives me a really good feeling when I have made a good post and it has been recounted somewhere. That it has reached somewhere and somebody has contacted you, like you, for example. That’s very cool”(M3).

Another aspect of vanity, in addition to external recognition, is based on the blog’s content. A blog could be also used as show-off of some sorts. This topic was not discussed that openly at the interviews but some informants still mentioned it: “Well, it is like a connected to your…ego quite a lot. If I didn’t like this info about me to be out there (in the blog) then I just wouldn’t do it or I wouldn’t put it there, so it’s a bit of a vanity fair to”(F3).

Sharing travelling experience or one’s life abroad is also something that could have a small aspect of show-off to it. One respondent was blogging in English for a while, just to be able to let more people read about his adventures abroad: “And it was a bit because of vanity I guess, to let them also read, to give them a chance, so to speak”(M5).

**Get help**

A blogger can get help from the blog itself, for example writing and analyzing one’s emotions can function as therapy, as discussed before. On top of that, blogs can be also used for getting help from other people. Getting material support was not that
common, or at least there were not many who could report any successful results. Some bloggers have tried to ask for money when they have needed it, but have never raised any significant sums. One of the informants, though, could prove the opposite.

It (the blog) offers me an opportunity to ask for help and get it. Or there have also been occasions when people just send me some gifts or money. When I had an economically tough period, then there were occasions when people just sent me money (F6).

The help could be also immaterial, which is also much easier to get. This could be, for example, looking for an answer to a specific question:

Sometimes I have also asked about some things, when there is something that I don’t really understand or when there is something in English...when the internet doesn’t fix the problem either, then I’d like to ask people how something works (M4).

Help can also be in form of advice, when the blogger wants to get feedback on his/her actions: I have like wanted to get opinions on some relationship issues and they have interested me enough so therefore I have also been posting “(F1).

Bloggers can as well be looking for emotional support from their readers, which means that sometimes when releasing negative emotions and writing about the hard things in life, there is often also some kind of comfort or feedback from the readers expected: „A human being is still a social creature and when you are not doing well, and then you want someone to comfort you...or at least join to complain” (F4).

5.2.4. Communicative aspect of all blogging gratifications

“I can tell you this- it’s a bullshit that you blog for yourself, the main goal of blogging is being in contact with others, otherwise you would keep a diary”(F6

Blogging gratifications in this study have been divided into three groups: content, process and social gratifications. However, it is important to note that most, if not all, the gratifications have a strong connection to one or many other gratifications that can belong to some other gratification group. For example content gratifications, such as advertising, advocacy, entertaining others and enlightening others presume that there is somebody who would read the blog and receive the message that the blogger is sending.

Out of all gratifications there were the most social gratifications found and when it comes to blogging, even the process and content gratifications have some communicative or social aspects to them. For example a very interesting aspect of
blogging is the need for sharing that most of the bloggers have. This could be even named as one of the basics of blogging since without that need many bloggers could just write a diary, for example. In that sense, sharing could be also understood as an explanation or a social dimension of the process and content gratifications that were discussed before. *Life-documenting, expressing one’s opinion* and *emotion management* are especially close to sharing.

Many bloggers admitted their need for sharing their life with others:

> On the other hand it gives me so many new impulses that I need to let them out somewhere and I’m a person who needs to share. It’s like...I like to...I just have that feeling that I get something from sharing some things with others. M4

It is also interesting that communication through blogs is not limited to other people who also blog but all blog readers can be part of it. Many informants admitted that they receive much more feedback through other channels than blog comments. These channels include email, messenger, phone and meetings in person.

### 5.3. Use of self-presentation strategies in blogging

Before each interview the informant’s blog was studied and questions about the use of different self-presentation strategies were prepared accordingly. Bloggers engage often in the use of different self-presentation strategies and most of the informants’ blogs included at least half of the strategies that were presented in the theoretical framework. In this chapter the use of the self-presentation strategies that were described in chapter 3.1.1, is presented. Moreover the connection between self-presentation strategies and their connection to blogging gratifications is discussed.

**Ingratiation**

Ingratiation is a strategy that has an aim of being liked by others and it is used in blogs by mentioning other people there and saying good things about them, but also by the use of self-humour. Mentioning other people, however, was a very sensitive issue for the most of the bloggers and many tried to do it as little as possible. Privacy is important for most of the bloggers and therefore writing about other people is often avoided:

> I try to write about other people as little as possible. Firstly I don’t ask people if I can write about something or not, because I’d rather not write about some aspects or some activities like who I was drinking with or something. Or well, sometimes I use initials rather than the name or like, normally or not at all, don’t use (M2).
Since writing about other people also often involves personal life, it is an activity that is discouraged, since all bloggers told that they do not like to write about their personal relationships, especially romantic ones. Some bloggers have done it but it has often resulted in causing problems.

However, family members seem to be an exception to this avoidance mentioning sometimes, but not very often though. One of the informants posted photos of his brother’s children quite often to his blog and told that the kids were happy about it: “Yes, they are happy that they can see their pictures there. Although they are in Tartu, we meet quite often and kids are actually quite happy, that look, I’m in the picture.” M4

It is also common to some bloggers that they copy their messenger conversations to their blog. This is, however, usually not done with purpose of acknowledging the other person but rather for showing the course of the conversation. The name of the other part in the conversation is often hidden, so this behaviour is not considered ingratiating:

I have rather tried to show the course of the conversation and what somebody had said and what there was, yes, more like the content of the conversation, not about that person, it has nothing to with the person (who wrote it) (F3).

Privacy issues and avoidance of writing about other people can even lead to the other extreme were friends and family start to complain why there was nothing about them in the blog. One informant even told that his family has been sometimes jokingly complaining about why he never wrote about them.

No, I try not to mention the people who are close to me, but it has led to different problems, like some have told me, that well, did you do everything on your own again? Alone again, did you break down the kitchen in the country house alone? But it’s more like teasing or just like that, that at certain times yes, I’d rather try to avoid writing about people because this might interest too many of them in some wrong contexts (M6).

On the other hand, writing more neutral things about other people can be a good strategy to attract more readers to the blog:

And then I wanted so badly that all my friends would read my blog and I was so disappointed when they didn't. And then at one point I realized that writing about them would help best. And then when I wrote about how I did some fun stuff with my friends, then they also started to read, because they also wanted to find out what I was writing about them (F1).

As discussed earlier, bloggers can also address people personally through their blogs. Friends can be mentioned with purpose of acknowledging them and this is an example
of using the strategy of ingratiation: “When I feel that it might motivate this person, then I would write that I met him and he did this and his opinion was that” (M3).

For bloggers it is more important to be linked than be written about: “I mention some friends there and then I refer to their blogs too, the ones that are my closer friends” (M3). However, linking is also considered to be a part of common blogging etiquette, which means that linking is not necessarily an example of an attempt of being likeable: “Well, about this there is a golden rule that if you get inspiration from somebody else’s blog, then you would write about it and refer, in other words you would also have to indicate who the author was” (F1).

Another aspect of ingratiation is using self-humour and this was very closely related to self-presentation. Nevertheless, using self-humours is not something that is revealed that easily during the interviews because bloggers might do it unconsciously or simply do not admit it.

### Supplication

Supplication means writing about negative things in order to get comfort and support from the readers. Only less than half of the informants wrote about their negative feelings in their blogs. As also discussed earlier, some informants released their negative emotions for therapy, but as far as the blog post is available for everyone to read, it means that some sort of feedback would be also encouraged. One of the informants had a very interesting system for labelling her blog posts. The label names were original and often indicated very precisely what the blog post would be about. One of the tags had a name that means “I need to be caressed”, which sounds like a call for support or comfort.

Interestingly, not using supplication could be also seen as a separate self-presentation strategy since expressing negative emotions in blogs definitely affects the way the blogger is perceived by others. For that reasons many bloggers either avoided writing about negative things completely or made those posts available only to chosen readers who have the password for accessing the post: “Of course I edit in my blog, for sure. Like, as I said, I put such things under a password like this...serious wail, that I just could let it out and go on with my life...but in order to write it in my blog, I should be really pissed off or hurt” (F4).
Competence

Showing competence by expressing own viewpoint, commenting on current events, sharing expertise and mentioning professional accomplishment was widely used, especially by male bloggers as their blogs tended to be more professionally oriented. Both gratifications of image management and the more practical aspect of self-presentation were closely related to showing competence. Moreover, the content gratifications of expressing one’s viewpoint, enlighten others by educating and also advocacy are closely related to the same self-presentation strategy.

Writing and discussing something can have the aim of showing blogger's analytical abilities. One of the informants commented of why he liked to write about different conflict situations: “Not to use it as a tool for propaganda, but show that you also have analytical abilities”(M3).

Many bloggers often express their opinion about the issues that are related to their work or the branch of their work or studies. The blog represents the blogger and writing about some topics can support the blogger’s image: “My first blog...I had it like for half a year and there I wrote a lot, as I studied politics, then I also wrote about such daily events and expressed my opinion about some societal phenomena”(F3).

Social association

Social association is a self-presentation strategy where the blogger associates him/her with other people for self-presentation. This strategy was not discussed much during the interviews. The informants did not write too much about other people in their blogs, as discussed earlier, and the blog rolls were not very important to the most of the bloggers. Usually bloggers put all the blogs they are reading in their blog rolls, if they have one. However, at the time of interviewing, most of the bloggers admitted that they had not updated their blog rolls for a while. This shows the relatively low importance of blog rolls and other external links.

Many bloggers also collect the blog addresses in their blog roll in order to make it easier for themselves to keep track of all the blogs they like. However, blog rolls can sometimes have some importance when it comes to forming relationships. Bloggers can also add others’ blog to their blog roll on a reciprocity basis:
“I have a long list of those of my friends’ blogs there on the side. That there has even happened something like somebody says that we should make an exchange, that you put my blog and I put your blog there to the list, things like that” (M3).

Feedback mechanisms

The use of feedback mechanisms in one’s blog is naturally related to the fact that the bloggers expect some kind of feedback to his/her blog. The social gratifications of discussion, communication, finding friends and getting help are closely related to the existence of feedback mechanisms in one’s blog.

All the informants liked receiving comments although it was clearly not the most important part of blogging for them. Some told that because of their blog format it was inconvenient to either write comments or read them. Most of the informants had been blogging for a long time already, and many admitted that receiving comments was more important when they first started blogging. Hence, the use of feedback mechanisms as self-presentation strategy was not found to be very relevant in this study.

Technical features and aesthetics

Aesthetics and different technical features of a blog are strongly connected to the self-presentation gratification since the blog’s appearance is usually considered to represent blogger’s personality and the blog itself. It is mostly not a question of very complicated programming skills though and for some informants a decision between Blogger or Wordpress standard templates was enough. However, every blogger had thought about its blog’s appearance at least to some extent.

Some informants had put some effort into blog design by making hints about the blogger’s personality in different parts of the blog. One of the informants, for example, had put a picture of a rose hip bush she thought that represented her personality, in her blog banner.

I totally love this picture because it is exactly like I really am...that I sum up to this wonderful average, but it comes from extremes that always coexist. It’s---like you can see, on one side there is this beautiful picture from late summer and on the other side there it’s bare and rotten and well, that’s what I’m like-- sometimes I’m like this bubbly-bubbly wheee and then...then it’s just this black hole (F4).
Another blogger had hints of her favourite movie, Fight Club in her otherwise simple and text-oriented blog.

And there next to it there are also references to Fight Club, up there is „his name is Robert Paulson”, it’s from Fight Club, and down there is this pink soap bar that says „I’m Jack’s RSS feed.” Fight club is a movie that has influenced me a lot, it’s like a hint for me. It’s like I…the blog’s tagline is also „I want you to hit me as hard as you can”, that’s also from Fight Club, so that it has a bit like a Fight Club theme (F6).

The tagline text that often functions as a heading for the blog, usually describes the blog itself but sometimes it also carries a message about the blogger and his/her life situation. One informant had humorously named his blog “frequently asked questions” and in the tagline he kept a list of questions about his life that people were constantly asking him, but he could not answer to. Another informant was changing the tagline occasionally and thought that it was representing the way she saw herself at certain times: “Yes, I have had this that sometimes I like change them, as it is also a bit like a question of giving sense to your own identity...like what I’d like to emphasize at some specific moment” (F3).

Blog’s appearance also indicates how seriously the blogger would be taken by others. For example if someone wants to show expertise in internet related topics, it is also advisable to have more advanced blog design. One informant thought that a blogger with advanced blog design would be taken more seriously. However, he himself had not made the effort of making the blog’s design better and he admitted that blogging was not that important to him anymore.

Well, in some sense you could also say that if you have a good and unique design then you would be taken more seriously. If you have some random Blogger template, the same one as hundreds of thousands other people have...according to this it should be also important, but maybe it also indicates that all this blogging has become less important to me and therefore I haven’t been pushing it that much, that it’s (the blog design) like good enough...(M4).

Disclosure of personal information

None of the informants had any secrecy about their person and did not blog anonymously. Being popular means also that everybody knows your name and how you look like and what do you do for work. Presenting personal details in blog has also a connection to various gratifications. Since most of the bloggers admitted that they were vain at least to some extent and loved to share their lives, they would also want people to know them.
Many informants were quite happy when people recognized them on the street and complimented them on their blog: “And it also shows that people, as I’m vain as well, they sometimes come and talk to me in the street, I don’t know who they are but they come and talk to me as if they knew me” (M1). It means of course that in order to gain some fame and status it is necessary to include some personal information to one’s blog.

In addition, bloggers usually write a lot about their likes and dislikes in their blogs. Two female bloggers had even added longer lists of things that they like and do not like. However, displaying one’s likes and dislikes can be also very selective and might not always give the 100% correct impression of the blogger. For example one informant thought that since he was mostly writing about his interests, the readers might think that this is all he is doing.

And of course it’s also that I choose what I’m writing about there and some very important things in my personal life or work-related life might not be reflected at all and then the readers might think that I’m some guy who is a traveller and also a crazy athlete but he’s not doing anything else, especially now (M4).

It was also interesting that about half of the bloggers thought that a reader who did not know them personally would get a correct impression of them, just by reading their blog while the other half thought that it would not be possible. Surprisingly, many bloggers who seemed to be very open and used to write about their emotions and personal issues, thought that they actually would not give a correct picture of themselves in their blog.
6 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter summarizes the key findings and presents the discussion about the connection between the results of the empirical study and the existing theoretical framework. To begin with, the similarities and differences between the construction of personal web pages and blogs are discussed in chapter 6.1. This discussion concentrates mainly on the model for blogging that was presented as a result of this study, and its comparison with the model for constructing personal web sites (Schau & Gilly, 2003:392).

Next, the division of gratifications into process, content and social gratifications (Stafford, Stafford and Schkade, 2004:268) is discussed in chapter 6.2. This discussion is necessary because of the high share of social gratifications that were found in the empirical study. The gratifications for blogging that were found as a result of an inductive analysis of the interview data are analyzed in relation to the existing gratifications in blogs and internet research. The gratifications are discussed in chapter 6.3. Furthermore, in chapter 6.4., a possible connection between blogging gratifications and other gratifications that are related to producing User Generated Content is further explored. Chapter 6.5 gives an overview of combining self-presentation strategies with Uses and gratifications research. This discussion will focus on the connection between the use of self-presentation and bloggers’ motivations.

Last but not least, the implications of this study are presented in chapter 6.6. Contribution to the theory can be found in chapter 6.6.1 and managerial implications in chapter 6.6.2. Finally, the limitations of this study along with some recommendations for further research are presented in chapter 6.6.3.

6.1 Blogs and personal web pages

The results for this study were presented as a model for blogging that was initially adapted from a model for constructing personal web sites by Schau & Gilly (2003:391). The findings of the study supported the assumption that blogs and personal websites have many common traits as the personal web sites model could be applied to blogging. However, there were also some modifications made to the original model as some things proved to be different in blogging context. Firstly, the communicative aspect of blogging was found to be more important than it was with the personal web sites and secondly the relationship between gratifications and the use of self-presentation
strategies was found to be different. The latter depends also on the aim of this study that has the focus on motivations. On the other hand, there were also similarities found with the Schau & Gilly (2003:391) personal web page model. The processes of starting a personal web site and a blog were found quite similar and the motives for blogging are constantly evolving and changing, as was also found to apply for personal web site owners (Schau & Gilly, 2003:392). All these differences and similarities are discussed in detail in this chapter.

It was found that many bloggers used their blog directly for communicative purposes such as discussions or finding new friends. Also with personal web sites there always exists some communicative intent since they are open for anyone to read, as Schau & Gilly (2003:391) say. However, the social aspect was found to be even much more important with blogs than it was with web sites. The personal web sites were not as interactive as blogs and their main purpose was not communication.

In the model by Schau & Gilly (2003:391) there is a dimension that is called “observation of others’ web spaces”. The purpose of this dimension was to demonstrate the communicative aspect of personal web pages. When the model was initially adapted to blogging, this dimension was replaced by a very similar dimension called “observation of other’s blogs”. This change was motivated by the assumption that bloggers would be active readers and commentators of other’s blogs. The empirical study, though, indicated that bloggers are also using their blogs for communicating with many other people in addition to other bloggers. As a result, the “observation of other’s blogs” was replaced with “communication with other people”. This also illustrates the importance of the communicative aspect of all blogging gratifications. Moreover, this change is also supported by the fact that many informants admitted that they did not have time to follow other people’s blogs and were getting feedback to their blog from different channels, like instant messaging or also in person.

The main motivations for starting a blog were found to be moving to another place, trying out new things and influence from other people. It was found that the first motivation for starting a blog does not differ much from starting a personal web site. For example, some kind of a triggering event can make somebody to construct a personal web page (Schau & Gilly, 2003:392). This triggering event for blogging is often moving from one place to another, while for personal web pages it is more often a change in life situation like getting married or getting a new job (Schau & Gilly, 2003:392). However, even this illustrates the finding that blogs are more
communication-oriented, as moving to another place creates the need for staying in touch, while personal web sites are more static as they are used more for compiling and presenting information, like presenting one's career accomplishments.

The model for blogging received a somewhat different structure from the model for personal web sites by Schau & Gilly (2003:391). The web sites model indicate that an initial impetus for constructing a web site leads to the use of different self-presentation strategies that lead to different evolving motivations. However, in blogging context the places of the motivations and self-presentation strategies were switched, so that the initial impetus leads to more motives that in turn lead to different self-presentation strategies. This change was done since bloggers engage themselves in different self-presentation strategies because they are seeking some specific gratifications that they can obtain by using the self-presentation strategies. The relationship between gratifications and the self-presentation strategies are marked with a double arrow as they influence each other continuously, rather than being in a causal relationship.

However, the changes that were made to the model also depend on the perspective of this study, where the main focus was on motivations. The use of different self-presentation strategies was viewed as an activity that supports the blogger when looking for specific gratifications. On the other hand, Schau & Gilly (2003) studied how personal web pages were used for self-presentation and the motivations had secondary importance in their study. This could also explain the fact that I found it necessary to make those modifications to the model. A study about blogs with focus on self-presentation might have led to a different interpretation of the model.

It was also found that bloggers can have different motivations for blogging in different times. When new needs arise, the blog could be used accordingly, in order to seek new gratifications. This is also applied to web site owners’ motivations, as Schau & Gilly (2003:392) describe their motivations as evolving and changing in time. Hence, this is definitely one of the similarities between bloggers and personal web site owners.

To sum up, the blogs and personal web sites proved to be similar enough, so, a model for constructing personal web sites (Schau & Gilly, 2003:392) is also applicable to blogging. However, blogging was found to be more interactive and different from the personal web site owners. For bloggers, one of the main motivations is communication with other people. The communicative aspect of blogging is also discussed in next
chapter and the use of self-presentation strategies, which was also the main focus of the study by Schau & Gilly (2003), is further discussed in chapter 6.5.

6.2. Division of gratifications

The gratifications in this study have been divided into three categories that are process, content and social gratifications. It was found that bloggers are looking for all three types of gratifications but social gratifications outnumbered both process and content gratifications. For bloggers, communicating with other people was found to be very important and the blogs were used for different communication-related motivations. This division of gratifications into three groups was originally suggested by Stafford, Stafford & Schkade (2004:268) for internet Uses and gratifications research. Social gratifications were presented as a third, novel and potential category of gratifications that would be necessary in order to explain motivations for internet use (Stafford, Stafford & Schkade, 2004:268). The results of this study confirm that the category for social gratifications was necessary, but also indicate some weaknesses with the division of gratifications into three groups.

When determining gratifications for blogging, the division into content, process and social gratifications proved to be hard to follow sometimes since most of the gratifications had some communicative aspect to them. This suggests that in social media research the traditional division of gratifications in content and process (Stafford, Stafford & Schkade, 2004:267) is not always possible to follow without acknowledging the social aspect of all the gratifications. This could mean that social gratifications are not just one additional category but that there is a need for rethinking the way of looking at Social media gratifications in the first place.

Stafford, Stafford & Schkade (2004:268) criticize internet Uses and gratifications research because it often tests old gratification sets that were applicable to television, thus ignoring the social usage dimension. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the research from Stafford, Stafford & Schkade also dates back to year 2004 and it did not consider social media that has brought new and significantly more social dimensions to the internet than any of the web 1.0 applications had.

Moreover, in the internet Uses and gratifications research the aspect of the audience being the producer of the content is still mostly overlooked. The problem is that the classical division of gratifications according to content, process and social becomes
questionable when the whole perspective of the consumer and producer becomes reversed. In blogging context the content gratifications do not represent the content that the audience is consuming, but the content the audience decides to produce and share with others. This gives the audience many new opportunities than before and it remains questionable if we can still divide the gratifications into content, process and social as before. Next, in chapter 6.3 there is a general discussion about blogging gratifications. In addition, chapter 6.4 presents another viewpoint of how to divide internet gratifications, that is according to the level of user's activity (Shao, 2008:15), which means acknowledging the fact that the audience can become a producer of the content.

6.3. Gratifications for blogging

In order to find out as many motivations for blogging as possible, the empirical data in this study was first analyzed inductively in order to detect all the occurring gratifications for blogging. As a result, a list of blogging gratifications was composed. Some of the gratifications that were found have been also mentioned before in blogging research, while other gratifications that I found have not been connected to blogging before. These gratifications are for example advocacy, advertising and internet image management. For some reason many gratifications that are less practical but have an emotional connection to the blogger’s self and personality, have not been mentioned as blogging motivations before. In this study there were gratifications self-presentation and satisfy one’s vanity found, for example. This chapter presents a more detailed discussion of the found gratifications and the blogging gratifications from the existing theoretical framework presented in chapter 2.2.3.

Two gratifications that are connected to the process of writing or posting content to a blog, namely emotion management and self-improvement were often mentioned by the informants. Similar motivations were also described by Nardi et al. (2004:44) in a study about bloggers’ motivations. In addition, in this study, another gratification that was related to the writing process, namely enjoyable activity, was found. This gratification has not been named in connection to blogging before but in the internet research there is a gratification mentioned often, called enjoy myself (Nonnecke et al. 2006:13; Grace-Farfaglia et al. 2006:91; Leung, 2003:116; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000:186). This gratification means that people seek out a specific medium, for example internet discussion boards, in order to relax and have fun. In the blogging context
however, the enjoyable activity was connected more to the pleasure of writing and how posting can be exciting.

_Life-documenting_ was found to be a gratification in this study and also Nardi et al. (2004:43) found a similar motivation. However, Nardi et al. (2004:43) found that bloggers who are motivated by life-documenting had also an intention of communicating with other people. This was also confirmed by Huang et al. (2007: 476), as their results showed that there was a strong connection between life-documenting and interaction-oriented behaviour. I found that life-documenting has two sides, one serves blogger’s interest of keeping a journal and archiving his/her life events and the other side is about keeping in touch with friends and relatives. Since the empirical data proved that there are more aspects to communication than keeping in touch, that motivates bloggers, a new gratification called _communication_ was created. This gratification involves keeping in touch that was mentioned by Nardi et al. (2004:43) but also communication with people in general and addressing people personally. The latter is partly the same as the internet gratification called _affection_ (Leung, 2003:115) but addressing people personally has a broader meaning as bloggers can send very different kinds of messages. It was found, for example that some bloggers occasionally use their blogs for saying things to people who would otherwise not want to listen.

Another gratification that was found, was _commenting_ and the same was also mentioned by Nardi et al. (2004:44) as a motivation for blogging. Huang et al. (2007:476) found that commenting is a motivation for bloggers who are looking for discussion. However, in this study there was found a difference between wanting to express one’s viewpoint and wanting to start a discussion. Therefore, another gratification called _discussion_ was added. This is supported by the interview data as there was one type of bloggers who admitted that they liked to comment on current events but did not necessarily wait any feedback to it. Moreover, many bloggers were mainly interested in starting discussions, and their way to do it could also be posing philosophical questions or writing provocative texts.

_Entertaining others_ can be seen as an altruistic version of commenting since it has the reader in focus. It was evident that bloggers also try to make their blog post interesting and entertaining for their readers to follow. This has not been mentioned as a motivation for blogging before but Nonnecke et al. (2006:13) mentioned _entertaining others_ as one of the reasons for posting content to internet discussion boards. Both
blogging and contributing to online discussions are a way to produce User generated content.

There were found also two slightly similar gratifications, advocacy and enlightening others, found. The first one is more egoistic and the second one has an aim to benefit the reader. Enlightening others could mean both supporting and educating blog readers and this gratification has similarities with the motivation called sharing information that was found applicable to blogging by Huang et al. (2007:474). Moreover, sharing information in order to help others was also mentioned by Chung & Kim (2008:301) in their study among cancer blog writers and readers.

Advocacy, in the contrary, has not been mentioned among the gratifications and motivations for blogging or other internet activities before. Furthermore, advertising, that is similar to advocacy since it is also about promoting something- an idea, event or a product, has neither been mentioned in the theoretical framework. The reason for it could be that the studies by Nardi et al. (2004) and Huang et al. (2007) did not specify for how long time their informants had been blogging. It is possible that those gratifications apply only to those bloggers who have a larger and already established reader base because otherwise an attempt to get some message through would not have the desired results. Moreover, both advocacy and advertising are something that can be discouraged in many other forms of internet applications, for example in discussion boards and forums, and this might be the reason why the studies about participating in internet communications (Grace-Farfaglia et al., 2006; Nonnecke, Andrews & Preece, 2006) did not mention those gratifications.

Bloggers are also motivated by meeting new friends or taking up contact with old friends through their blogs. This has not been explicitly mentioned as a gratification for blogging before but is not a new thing in connection to internet use. Grace-Farfaglia et al. (2006: 90), Leung (2003:116) and Papacharissi & Rubin (2000: 186) all mention a gratification for meeting new or similar people in relation to the use of different internet applications.

It is surprising that none of the three studies with focus on bloggers’ motivations have mentioned self-presentation as a motivation. In the study by Chung & Kim (2008) the self-presentation aspect might not be applicable though, since the research had focus on blogging among cancer patients and their relatives. However, Grace-Farfaglia et al. (2006: 91) and Leung (2003:116) have mentioned gratifications that are related to
construction of social identity for internet community members and internet use in general. Blogging, however, provide many possibilities for self-expression and influencing the way others perceive the blogger as a person. Both Bortree (2005) and McCullagh (2008) have found that bloggers engage in the use of self-presentation strategies. There was lots of evidence of self-presentation being a gratification for bloggers, found in this study. Moreover, also internet image management, that is similar to self-presentation, was found to be a motivation for blogging. This gratification is more specific for blogging since the blogger “owns” the blog space and it gives him/her more freedom in deciding how it looks like and how easily it is found in connection to the blogger’s name, for example. Discussion boards and online communities tend to be much more anonymous in that sense and it is probably an explication why internet image management has not been mentioned as a gratification before.

There was also another gratification found that was not mentioned in the studies about bloggers motivations at all. It was satisfying one’s vanity. Grace-Farfaglia et al. (2006: 91) however, mention a similar gratification, fame and aesthetics, for internet community members. It is possible that the issues of vanity and self-presentation were not mentioned by Nardi et al. (2004) due to the choice of informants. All people do not like to admit that they are seeking fame or trying to alter the perception of how they are perceived by other people. Nardi et al. (2004:42) also mention that their informants were blogging for a small audience, that is often only friends and relatives, who know the blogger well enough, so there is no need for self-presentation. Moreover, the internet search engines and other types of social media such as Twitter and different social networking sites have developed a lot since 2004 when the research about bloggers’ motivations was conducted by Nardi et al. This could also explain why there was no evidence of internet image management found.

Finally, it was also found that bloggers are sometimes motivated by getting help from others. This gratification has not been mentioned in relation to blogging before, but getting emotional support, however, was also mentioned as a gratification in relation to posting on internet discussion boards (Nonnecke et al., 2006:13).

There were also some gratifications, mentioned in the theory, that were supposed to be applicable to blogging but were not confirmed by the empirical study. Escape, for example, was mentioned by Huang et al. (2007: 482) as a possible motivation for blogging and also Leung (2003: 115) and Grace-Farfaglia et al. (2006: 91) mention it in
connection with internet research. Grace-Farfaglia et al. (2006: 91) describes it as *trying out new identities* that is close to *emotional self-presentation* as some bloggers also tend to create themselves a digital character. Nevertheless, there was too little evidence of escape as all the bloggers who participated in the study were very open about their real identity and did not blog anonymously.

*Reciprocity* was also presented in chapter 2.2.3 as one possible blogging gratification as Lee (2006:296) mentions it as one of the reasons to write comments to discussion boards. This gratification, however, was not found from the empirical data. Most of the bloggers did not feel any obligation to post because other bloggers were expecting them to do so. Some bloggers felt some commitment in front of their friends and family to post though, but this is not the same as reciprocity.

### 6.4. Gratifications for producing User generated content

Blogging is only one example of producing User generated content and thereby the results of this study cannot be generalized to all different types of user generated content. However, it is still possible to draw some conclusions about the producer-oriented gratifications based on the results. Interestingly, it was found that many other internet gratifications, which had not been mentioned before in connection with blogging, were also applicable to bloggers. For example bloggers share quite many gratifications with discussion board posters, for example *getting emotional support* and *entertaining others* were found to be the same for both. As both bloggers and discussion board posters produce UGC content, it can indicate that there are some gratifications that are connected to the activity of producing and that does not depend that much on the concrete type of medium. This is in accordance with the idea that was suggested by Shao (2008:9), that readers, commentators and producers of user generated content are looking for different gratifications, depending on their level of activity.

Moreover, the empirical data indicated that self-presentation is one of the main motivators for bloggers to post. This applies also to online community members according to Grace-Farfaglia et al. (2006: 91) and other internet uses (Leung, 2003:116). Bloggers can also express themselves by commenting, expressing their viewpoints, writing about their life and managing the way they are perceived on the internet. It was also found that bloggers are looking for fame and recognition by their actions. The same applies to internet community members (Grace-Farfaglia et al 2006:...
These findings are in accordance with Shao (2008:15) who argues that people, who are producing user generated content, are mainly looking for self-expression and self-actualization by their actions. However, since the existing internet gratifications research does not make a difference between the levels of activity, it is not possible to draw any further conclusions about these two gratifications being general UGC producer-related gratifications. That means that we do not know exactly which gratifications that are sought by community members, for instance, apply to those who are posting their own content or who are just commenting on others contribution.

Bloggers are producers of the UGC and arguably one of the easiest types of UGM users to classify in the way that Shao (2008:15) proposes. There were, however, much more motivations than self-expression and self-actualization found for bloggers, although these two were found to be important. For example, a great deal of blogging gratifications were found to be about communicating with other people and some were concentrated on the process of writing. This indicates that the idea of dividing the UGM users into three categories according to their activity and connecting some specific gratifications to it, (Shao, 2008:15) is extremely simplified. It was also noted by Shao (2008:19) though, that there are probably more factors that influence people’s motivations. Nevertheless, if the model is simplified too much, it might not provide adequate explanations.

Moreover, there is also clearly a need to synchronize the existing uses and gratifications research with the idea of dividing users by their activity. Making difference between levels of activity is what the traditional way of dividing the gratifications (Stafford, Stafford & Schkade, 2004:267) is lacking. Shao (2008:15), on the other hand, does not place enough importance on the practical aspects of producing content, like keeping in touch with people or getting help. In other words, the findings of this study indicate that there are so many more gratifications that UGC producers are looking for, besides self-expression and self-actualization related ones as Shao (2008:15) suggested.

Shao (2008:19) does mention, that there are always some motivations that are medium specific and do not apply to all kinds of user generated content. However, there is more research needed in order to find out whether it is possible to distinguish which activity-based gratifications apply to all types of media and which ones are one medium specific.
6.5. Combining self-presentation strategies with gratifications

The use of self-presentation strategies was explored in this study in order to gain some more insight into what motivates people to blog. The results showed that most of the strategies that were presented in the theoretical framework (in chapter 3.1.1) were widely used by bloggers. Most of the strategies were used by all bloggers at least to some extent, although some were clearly more popular than others. It was found that working on blog’s technical features and aesthetics was the most popular strategy, although it has not gotten that much attention by blogs research before. Evidence was also found of many other self-presentation strategies that too have been connected to blogging before. However, the use of feedback mechanisms was not found relevant, although it has been reported earlier as a popular self-presentation strategy among bloggers (Trammell & Keshelashvili, 2005:975). Moreover, supplication as a strategy was not found to be popular but on the other hand, avoidance of supplication was widely used by many bloggers for modifying their image. The findings about the use of self-presentation strategies and their connection to blogging gratifications are discussed in more detail in this chapter.

Concentrating on blog’s technical features and aesthetics (Schau & Gilly, 2003:394) was the most common strategy because all bloggers thought that the appearance of their blog was important. This strategy has been traditionally connected to personal web sites (Schau & Gilly, 2003:394) but has been overlooked in blogs research. However, the results of this study proved that blogs appearance and technical features provide different ways for managing the way the other people perceive a blogger. For example, more advanced blog design indicates that a person is serious and professional, but some bloggers also liked to add some hints about their personality and preferences to their blog in form of tagline texts or photos. Nevertheless, most of the studies that have concentrated on the use of self-presentation strategies in blogs have used either content analysis (Papacharissi, 2002; Dominick, 1999) or ethnographic observation (Bortree, 2005) as research method. It is not possible to find out about the hidden meaning of a photo by just observing. This could also explain the importance of blog design that has been overlooked by the blogs researchers before. I interviewed the bloggers and could ask questions about different features of their blogs. Moreover, Schau & Gilly (2003:294) who had found that personal web site owners use the same self-presentation strategy also came to this finding by interviewing.
It was found that bloggers tend to include personal information in their blogs and are not secretive about their identity. Moreover, adding personal information to one’s blog also helps the blogger to become more popular and even famous. Trammell & Keshelashvili (2005:975) came to similar conclusions when they found that A-list blogs usually contain lots of personal information. This suggests that the use of this self-presentation strategy has a strong connection with satisfying one’s vanity that was found to be one of the blogging gratifications.

The strategy of showing competence (Dominick, 1999:652; Trammell & Keshelashvili, 2005:977) was found to be used in connection with different gratifications such as commenting, internet image management and enlightening others. Many bloggers use their blogs for promoting themselves career-wise, which was also found to be the same for A-list bloggers (Trammell & Keshelashvili, 2005:977). Interestingly, the self-presentation strategy of supplication, that means self-depreciation in order to get emotional support (Dominick, 1999:652; Bortree, 2005:36), proved to have a very strong negative connection with the strategy of competence. Namely, bloggers who were showing much competence were also extra careful about avoiding supplication. This finding is also in accordance with previous blog research findings as supplication has been found to be used only by teenage girls (Bortree, 2005:36) who are more emotional and less interested in appearing professional.

Some self-presentation strategies, like the use of feedback mechanisms, were not found to be very important, although both Trammell & Keshelashvili (2005:977) and Dominick (2003:651) have mentioned them. This finding seems to be also somewhat contradictory as a great deal of blogging gratifications had some social aspect to them and one would expect the bloggers to be encouraging commenting on their blog. However, it is important to note that feedback mechanisms meant the availability of possibilities of contacting the blogger through their blog. It was mainly commenting that was not found to be very important. This could be explained by the increasing amount of other different social media applications and advances in technology that make it possible for people to contact each other in many other ways than through a blog’s comment space. Furthermore, the research method for this study was qualitative interviewing that might not be always the most suitable method for studying self-presentation strategies. It is possible that bloggers do not want to admit how important the feedback is for them.
In this study it was assumed that self-presentation strategies are used by bloggers in order to obtain different gratifications. It is important to note that this perspective was chosen because the aim of the study was to find out what motivates bloggers. There is also another perspective for studying blogs and it is by taking a viewpoint that blogs are a medium for self-expression and other motivations depend on the use of self-presentation strategies (Trammell & Keshelashvili, 2005; Bortree 2005). The selection of the viewpoint and focus of this study should be regarded as a limitation to the discussion about the self-presentation strategies.

6.6. Implications

To conclude the study, there are the main theoretical implications presented in chapter 6.6.1. There are also some managerial implications suggested in chapter 6.6.2. Last but not least, chapter 6.6.3 gives an overview of the recommendations for further research.

6.6.1. Theoretical implications

The empirical research showed that many gratifications for blogging were the same as other internet gratifications that involved activities of producing user generated content. This contributes to the theory that User generated media could be studied from the perspective where the media usage could be seen on different levels of activity (Shao, 2008:15). However, the findings indicated that the idea that producers of UGC would be only looking for some specific gratifications (Shao, 2008:16) was too simplistic as in reality a whole variety of communication related motivations for bloggers was also found.

Moreover, in the empirical research there were some new gratifications for blogging identified. Gratifications like advocacy, advertising and internet image management had not been mentioned as internet gratifications before at all. In addition, it was found that also gratifications self-presentation, satisfy one’s vanity, get help, entertain others and enjoyable activity, apply to blogging. These gratifications have not been connected to blogging motivations before but are not new to Uses and gratifications research. Finally, more variety to communication related motivations for bloggers was also found.

The findings of the study as well supported the idea of adding a new category of social gratifications to the traditional content and process gratifications. This idea was
initiated by Stafford, Stafford and Schkade (2004:268). Moreover, the results indicated that in social media research all the gratifications have some communicative aspect to them. The results also showed that incorporating the idea of different levels of activity (Shao, 2008:15) in the existing division of internet gratifications would help to explain this new communicative aspect better.

Furthermore, the personal web sites model by Schau & Gilly (2003:392) was adapted to blogging with some modifications. The results of this study confirmed that blogs and personal websites have many similarities. However, it was found that blogs are used more for communication purposes than personal websites.

Last but not least, it was found that bloggers use blog's technical features and aesthetics as a self-presentation strategy. This strategy has not received much attention in relation with blogs research before. It was also found that the importance of the feedback mechanisms self-presentation strategy was not that extensively used by bloggers, although it had been found to be important before.

### 6.6.2. Managerial implications

There are four important managerial implications: companies could give recognition to bloggers in order to get them to reflect certain topics, more attention should be paid to the interests of personal bloggers, bloggers could be employed in social marketing campaigns and they could be learned from regarding the topic of how to write a good blog.

Firstly, personal bloggers are very good at using their blogs for promoting or advertising if needed. They could probably also promote a product, service or an event in their blogs if they were interested in it. However, bloggers use their blog primarily for their own benefit and thereby advertising somebody else’s product is usually not of interest. They would probably do it, if a company or an organization gave them something that they are looking for. As one of the motivations for blogging was found to be satisfying one’s vanity, then a company could offer recognition to bloggers. This could be by acknowledging the most popular blogs or sending invitations to different events. Moreover, since many bloggers are passionate about writing and usually also are quite good at it, another option would be to specially create posts like blog correspondents during different events. This has been also done before, during film
festivals, for example, but also private companies could make use of it. Apart from that, since many bloggers like to comment on current events and express their viewpoint, they could be also asked to write about certain topics that are of interest for the company. This could be done as a smaller formal competition, so that every week would have a different theme and the best blog posts would be acknowledged.

Secondly, even personal bloggers could be turned into hobby bloggers in the eyes of a marketer. Most of the personal bloggers have also something they are interested in, be it arts, technology, travelling, cooking or fashion. They like to write about their hobbies but often do not get the same recognition for it as bloggers who are solely concentrated on one topic. Encouraging personal bloggers to write more about their hobbies and interests would mean that a wider reader base would got to learn about some topic.

Thirdly, bloggers could be employed for different campaigns for social marketing. They are used to writing in advocacy for something and would also write more likely about things they feel strong about. Most of the bloggers wanted to help others in some way, and promoting social marketing campaigns could be one way to do it. From a more egoistic perspective, the blogs are used for image management and promoting good causes would also give one a way to show him/her in a positive light.

Finally, it is also possible to learn from bloggers. Nowadays many companies and public personalities have their own blogs, which are often not very interesting though. Personal bloggers are very good at using self-presentation strategies in their blogs and know how to manage their blogs so that they would be also attractive for the readers.

6.6.3. Limitations and further research

This study was limited to personal bloggers only, so it is not possible to assume that other types of bloggers, such as fashion bloggers or culinary bloggers, would be looking for exactly the same gratifications. In order to find out what motivates different types of hobby bloggers, the same kind of research could be repeated with a sample of different types of bloggers.

In the future the gratifications found in this study could be also tested with quantitative methods in order to find out which gratifications are the most frequent and if there are any differences between male and female bloggers. In addition, these gratifications could be also tested among bloggers with different blogging experience in order to see
whether there are any differences. Moreover, quantitative methods, like cluster or factor analysis could be used in order to see which gratifications are correlated and could be further grouped together or whether it is possible to determine blogger types based on their motivations. These blogger types also could be useful for business purposes as this would ease the process of finding the right kind of bloggers if a company wants to use their help in promoting some product or event.

This study concentrated only on blogs but it would be interesting to examine even other forms of user generated content, such as YouTube videos or Facebook users in order to see if it is possible to find common gratifications for producing content. By this, it would be possible to contribute to the theory of different levels of activity on UGM that was proposed by Shao (2008:15). In this study it was found that many gratifications from for example posting to internet discussion boards were also applicable to blogging. These findings should be further explored and tested.
SVENSK SAMMANFATTNING

Inledning

Sociala medier har fått mycket uppmärksamhet under den senaste tiden och dess möjligheter och utmaningar har diskuterats mycket. Det sägs att för företag är det nästan obligatoriskt att vara med i sociala medier. Att dra nytta av sociala medier i affärssyfte är dock inte så lätt och många företag har inte lyckats med det.


Problemområde


Enligt Shao (2008:15) konsumerar de flesta människor innehållet, dvs. bara läser och bidrar inte med något annat. En del människor deltar mera aktivt eftersom de också kommenterar innehållet och dessutom finns det sådana medieanvändare som engagerar sig i innehållskapande. Detta är ett nytt sätt att se på forskning med

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1 Användarteorin eller Uses and gratifications teori är en medieteori som går ut på att människor väljer att använda ett visst medium eftersom de söker vissa tillfredsställelser. Användarteori är en fri översättning, eftersom det inte finns någon officiell term för Uses and gratifications.


**Avhandlingens syfte och angreppssätt**

Syftet med detta arbete är att ta reda på vad som motiverar bloggare i samband med innehållsskapande till medier med användarskapat innehåll. För att kunna svara på forskningsfrågan har jag valt att använda Användarteorin som är ursprungligen en medieteori men har använts även av marknadsförare för att undersöka reklam eller
sociala medier. Ytterligare har jag valt att kombinera denna teori med användning av intrycksstyrningsstrategier (self-presentation strategies) för att få en bredare bild av de sociala aspekterna av bloggnig.

Denna studie är begränsad till bloggar som skrivs av en bloggare, är öppna för att läsas av alla och inte skrivs med kommersiellt syfte. Denna begränsning görs för att säkerhetsställa att de undersökta bloggarna hörs till användarskapat innehåll. Arbetet begränsas ytterligare till personliga bloggare på grund av studiens omfattning. Personliga bloggare avses att söka olika tillfredsställelser än t.ex. temabloggare och därför måste undersökningsobjektet begränsas.

**Den teoretiska referensramen**

Figur 2: Sammanfattning av den teoretiska referensramen


En annan strategi att styra sitt intryck handlar om att visa kompetens genom att kommentera olika händelser och uttrycka sin åsikt. Denna strategi har använts mycket av populära bloggare (Trammell & Keshelashvili, 2005:976) och ägare av personliga


De tänkta tillfredsställelser som kan anpassas till bloggare finns i Figur 2. Innehållstillfredsställelser handlar om tillfredsställelser man kan få genom att utnyttja


**Forskningsmetodik**

Tidigare har oftast kvantitativa metoder använts inom forskning med användarteoretiskt perspektiv, men eftersom det finns lite kunskap om vilka tillfredsställer bloggare söker, valdes kvalitativa intervjuer som metod. Intervjuerna gjordes med hjälp av en intervjuguide som handlade om olika tema kring bloggar. För att få mera information om varför man bloggar, studerades informanters bloggar på
förhand för att se vilka intrycksstyrningsstrategier som användes. Vid varje intervju ställdes det också frågor om saker som var tecken på någon intrycksstyrningsstrategi.

Urvalet bestod av 12 personliga bloggare i Estland som var mellan 22 och 50 år gamla, varav hälften var kvinnor och hälften män. De alla hade haft sin blogg i minst 3 år, men många hade även mycket längre erfarenhet av att blogga. Intervjuerna gjordes i juli 2010 i olika delar av Estland.

Resultat av den empiriska undersökningen


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Processstillfredsställelser var behandling av känslor, egenbättring och underhållande aktivitet. Med behandling av känslor menas det att bloggaren har en möjlighet att skriva om sina känslor och därmed känna sig bättre. Bloggarna brukade oftast uttrycka
sin frustration och negativa känslor i bloggen och bland några upplevdes det som terapi. Egenbättring handlade mest om att förbättra sina skrivkunskaper och sitt verbala uttryck. Det var många bloggare som var skrivintresserade och för dem var bloggen ett bra sätt att öva och förbättra sig. Att blogga upplevdes även som ett underhållande aktivitet och vissa informanter erkände sin passion för att skriva.


Bloggen kan också användas effektivt för att få fram sina idéer och påverka de andra. Bloggarna var oftast motiverade av att befrämja sina tankar och intressen. Ibland användes bloggen också i syfte att främja någon annans verksamhet eller ideologi. En del av de intervjuade använde även sin blogg för att göra reklam. Även om befrämjande och reklam har mer som avsikt att ge nytta till bloggaren, finns det även mera altruistiska motiv till att blogga. De intervjuade bloggarna ville också erbjuda underhållande och intressant innehåll till de andra. Dessutom ville många av bloggarna upplysa sina läsare på något sätt. Detta kan göras genom att erbjuda sitt stöd genom att prata sina erfarenheter eller genom att utbilda de andra.


Studien visade att självpresentation var en viktig tillfredsställelse för bloggare och vissa använde självpresentation på ett mycket emotionellt sätt var bloggaren skapade sig
själv en slags roll. För de andra handlade självpresentation mera om att presentera sig själv som en professionell människa och presentera sina arbetsrelaterade prestationer. Bloggare ville också kontrollera sin image på internet och påverka det vilken bild man får av en genom att använda olika sökmotorer som Google. Utöver detta medgav alla informanter att de var lite fåfänga och ville känna sig berömda och få uppmärksamhet. De var t.ex. väldigt glada när någon främmande människa kände igen dem på gatan.

Bloggare var också motiverade av att få hjälp från sina läsare. Att få materiell hjälp var dock inte så vanligt, även om flera hade försökt be om pengar. Att få svar på sina frågor eller andra människors åsikter var däremot väldigt vanligt. Några bloggare erkände också att de hade fått stöd av sina läsare under svåra tider.

Det kom fram att alla tillfredsställelser som bloggare sökte, hade något samband med kommunikation. För det första hörde de flesta tillfredsställelser till gruppen sociala tillfredsställelser som handlade direkt om mänskliga relationer. För det andra hade även innehålls- och processtillfredsställelser oftast något med kommunikation att göra på det sättet att bloggen är alltid öppen för läsare. Dessutom erkände många informanter att de vill dela sitt liv med andra människor.

I bloggarna användes flera intrycksstyrningsstrategier. Den vanligaste strategin var att fästa mycket uppmärksamhet vid bloggens utseende. Några bloggare hade gömt olika vinkar om sig själv i sin blogg, t.ex. hade de en bild som representerade sin personlighet. De flesta bloggare tyckte också att när man satsar på design, tar de andra en mera seriöst. Bloggare brukade också sätta ganska mycket personlig information och bilder av sig själv i sina bloggar. Detta kan förklara med att när man söker berömmelse, vill man att de andra ska veta mycket om en.

Bloggare brukade också visa kompetens genom att skriva om aktuella händelser och arbetsrelaterade prestationer. Å andra sidan var det inte så populärt att skriva negativa saker om sig själv och detta undveks av de flesta. Dessutom tyckte bloggarna att det var trevligt att få kommentarer, men ingen ville erkänna att det var viktigt för dem.

**Kontribution och slutsatser**

Många tillfredsställelser som bloggare söker gäller också för andra former av användarskapat innehåll, till exempel internetforum. Detta resultat stödjer det
antagandet att liknande aktiviteter i medier som består av användarskapat innehåll också har liknande tillfredsställelser (Shao, 2008:15). Det går dock inte att generalisera på grund av det att vi inte vet vilka tillfredsställelser som användare på nätmötesplats eller internetforum söker när de själv skapar innehåll, eftersom de tidigare studierna med användarteoretiskt perspektiv skiljer inte mellan olika aktivitetsnivåer, d.v.s. de skiljer inte mellan motivationen att läsa, kommentera eller skapa. På grund av detta föreslår det fortsatt forskning om olika aktivitetsnivåer och dess koppling till tillfredsställelser.


Dessutom kom det fram att bloggare söker några tillfredsställelser som inte har nämnts tidigare. De är befrämjande, reklam och internet image management. Det är möjligt att dessa tillfredsställelser representerar bloggar som en skild typ av media och därför har samma motivationer inte kommit fram i studier om andra typer av medier. Internet image management betyder att man kan själv styra sin image på internet och påverka den bilden som de andra får av en när de använder olika internet sökmotor, till exempel Google. Bloggar i motsats till olika typer av nätmötesplats, brukar ofta inte vara anonomy, så detta kan förklara uppkomsten av denna tillfredsställelse. Dessutom antas reklam och befrämjande vara mera effektiv när källan inte är anonym.

Resultat av den empiriska undersökningen visade också att bloggare använde olika intrycksstyrningsstrategier. Den mest populära strategin var att fästa uppmärksamhet vid bloggens utseende, vilket tidigare har nämnts som en strategi som används i samband med personliga webbsidor, men inte har nämnts som en strategi för bloggare. Det hittades också att sådana återkopplingsmekanismer som kommentarer inte var så viktiga för bloggare, även om tidigare studier om intrycksstyrningsstrategier har nämnt det.

För företag föreslås mer uppmärksamma personliga bloggare, till exempel i form av erkännande. Alla bloggare medgav att de var fåfänga och motiverade av berömmelse. Detta innebär att företag kan ha nytta av personliga bloggare för att främja t.ex. olika evenemang, genom att uppmärksamma de bästa bloggarna genom att skicka dem en inbjudan. Dessutom rekommenderas det att använda bloggare i samband med sociala marknadsföringskampanjer eftersom de flesta bloggare också är motiverade av att upplysa och hjälpa de andra.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX 1  INTERVIEW GUIDE

WARM-UP QUESTIONS

For how long time have you been blogging?

How many blogs have you had?

PART 1

Blogging in general: Why did you start a blog? What are the advantages of having a blog? What is the practical value of blogging for you? How is your blog related to your personal/social/professional life/hobbies? What are the disadvantages of having a blog? Have you ever had any negative incidents related to your blogging? Have you ever erased a blog? Why did you do so? Have you ever thought about closing your current blog? If so, then why?

Blog content: What is your blog about? What topics do you usually cover? Why do you want to talk about these topics? What are the most important topics to you? Are there any topics that you would not write about in your blog?

Social aspects: Do your friends have blogs? Do you read their blogs? Do you know who are reading your blog? How many of your blog’s readers do you know personally? Do you expect feedback on your comments? In what form do you expect feedback?

Self-presentation: How do you think your readers perceive you as a person? Do you think readers who do not know you well in real-life know you well based on your blog? What does your blog say about you? What does your blog name say about you?

PART 2


Social association: Who are the people you have on your blog roll? Do you know all these people? How do you choose who to put on the blog roll? Do they put a link to their blog roll as well? Are there bloggers you know but who are not on the blog roll? If yes, then why?
**Ingratiation:** How much do you usually mention other people in your blog? Do these people read your blog? You mention xyz often in your posts, why is that? Do you have some specific readers in mind when you post?

**Technical features and aesthetics:** Where did you get your blog template from? How often do you change it? What does this template say about your blog? How carefully do you pick pictures that you publish in your blog?

**Disclosure of personal information:** How much do you reveal about yourself to your readers. Why do you have/don’t have your pictures displayed. What kind of information would you not publish in your blog?