**Internet Cafes: A New Model of Information Access in Turkey**

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**Abstract:** Internet cafes are new media for reaching Internet in Turkey. Although they lack physical and educational adequacy they are among the mostly preferred ways of reaching Internet. This presentation deals with the current status of Internet cafes and how they should be connected to teacher education.

Internet, as global and democratic media, offers service twenty-four hours to everyone boundless of religion, language or ethnicity. However, the cost of accessing Internet can be a burden for some emerging countries and Turkey is one of them. The dream of reaching Internet is realized via “Internet Cafes” in Turkey.

Although the legal regulations for opening an Internet Café are the same as opening a public “tea house”, Internet cafes are somehow different in physical medium as well as the purpose they serve.

Internet cafes can be described as one room environments with 10-20 computers connected to Internet where the users can benefit a snack or a drink (non-alcohol) while connecting to the net. Although the registered number is given as 4,573 in official documents, the number of Internet Cafes in Turkey is estimated as over 10,000 with unregistered ones (Ayvali, 2000).

Internet cafes are seen as the most economical and easiest way of information Access for those who do not have a chance to own a PC and Internet connection (Deryakulu and Esgi, 2001). The cost of an hour changes between a dollar and a dollar and a half in different cities in Turkey. Most of the cafes use a dialup line.

**Internet Cafes: A New Research Area for Academicians**

Internet cafes are seen as social burst outs by many of the academicians in Turkey and research has been carried out concerning the Internet cafes. The related research can be divided into two groups concerning the sample;

- User profile, user views
- Internet cafe managers profile and views.

The research carried out in Turkey revealed that Internet cafes proved to be rather disadvantageous in some ways (Esgin, 2000).

These can be summarized as;

- Limited number of computers
- Inappropriate physical conditions
- Deviation from the purpose of information
- Illegal applications

**What Have Internet Cafes Got To Do With Teachers**

When the issues revealed by research are discussed on public forums, a dangerous issue arises such as forbidding and censoring everything on Internet use. So the disadvantages should be handled with care. One way of overcoming these problems can take us to teachers. Turkish higher education system started graduating computer teachers in 2002. The teacher candidates take School Experience course both theoretically and practically. Computer teacher candidates can be asked to carry their internship in Internet cafes thus raising awareness both in themselves and in the students attending Internet cafes. Observing the real condition may give them an opportunity to gain some insight on the educational and informative uses of Internet and thus they reflect that to their students in the future. In this
manner the gap between the theory and practice will also be narrowed for candidate teachers. Officials on the other hand might benefit from this application as
(1) obtaining the wanted results from the use of Internet
(2) providing a controlling mechanism withhold forbidding anything

This kind of an application may lead to the solution of another problem; unemployment of computer teachers in the future. If 10.000 cafes each employ a teacher to help them in instruction and pedagogy who does not benefit from it?

References