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Millennials of the world, surfing the Internet for @ better life

Abstract.

In 2011 the so-called *Arab spring* revolutions led to a profound change in the migratory flows of populations from the African continent, across the Mediterranean Sea and Italy, directed towards Europe. In the following years, similar phenomena occurred for the populations of the Middle East and Central Asia, directed towards the same destinations. Most of these migrants are the so-called *millennials*, i.e. girls and boys aged between 18 and 25 years. *Millennials'* characteristics vary by region and individual, and the group experiences a variety of social and economic conditions. They are however generally marked by their maturity in the information age and feel comfortable using digital technologies and social media. The research @ *better life* started from a simple question: do *millennials* in these developing countries think and act differently than their European and American peers? With a group of scholars and researchers from Italy, Tunisia, Pakistan, Ivory Coast, Nigeria and US we tried to answer this question.

Key Words: Migration, discrimination, education.

Introduction

According to the *Five W* principle, a matter can be considered complete only if it answers questions that begin with an interrogative word which in English always has the same initial *w*: “Where, When, Who, What, Why?”.

We started by considering some of the countries that in the last ten years have represented the ten nationalities with the highest number of migrants landed in Italy: Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Tunisia and Pakistan. Then we asked ourselves if the use of the Internet in these countries is familiar, common, natural or a privilege among *millennials*. Why we did so ?

Let's first consider *where* which countries we are talking about and the respective national *identity cards*, shown in the images below:



Plan 1 - Countries considered in the research

If we compare with US and Italy the *fundamentals* of the four countries considered – Tunisia, Pakistan, Ivory Coast and Nigeria, below in the text simply *the four countries* - we will immediately realize the different opportunities and perspectives that the *millennials* coming from North and West Africa or Central Asia have respect to their Italian and American peers:

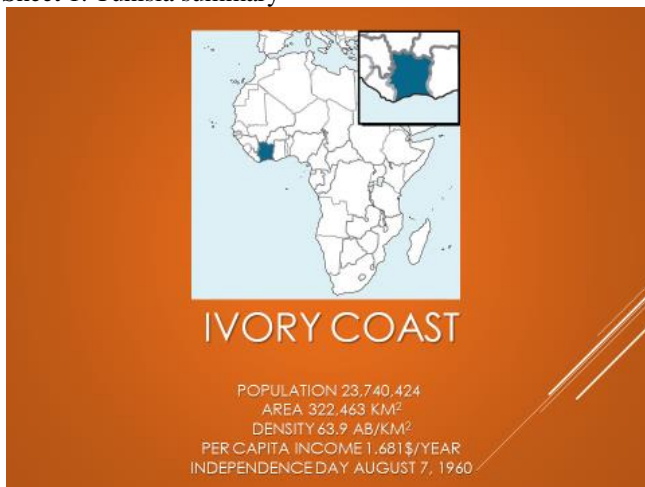
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Sheet 1. Tunisia summary



Sheet 2. Pakistan summary



Sheet 3. Ivory Coast summary.



Sheet 4. Nigeria summary



Sheet 5. Italy - United States summary.

Starting from these geo-political-economic assumptions, we therefore identified the *who*: a sample of about five hundred subjects, considering the audience of the interviewees who accepted to answer the questionnaire representative, joining the associations/organizations that offered their respective collaboration in its realization.

Let's state that there have been no significant deviations between the results of the research and those deriving from official analyzes of other national institutional subjects such as, for example, the NCC, the *Nigerian Communication*

Commission, or the ATI, the *Tunisian Internet Agence*, or the ISPAK, the *Internet Service Providers Association of Pakistan*, the ARTCI, or the *Ivory Coast Communications / ICT Regulatory Authority* or with the European Union-funded studies for the Ivory Coast for the mapping and analysis of social media in that country.

What has the research shown? First of all it has shown that 100 percent of the interviewees - or very near this percentage - in all the four countries declare to surf the Internet, mainly with a smart phone, to own a mobile phone. Generally speaking, they declare to study, work and have fun online ...

But let's go back then to *why* we did this research. People who arrive on the European coasts, perhaps after a rescue at sea, usually, begin to use their smartphone chatting immediately on the peers. Often, not to say always, the lecture of the mass media and of a part of the politics about these events lead to consider that, at the bottom, these people cannot be considered *refugees* looking for help, but wealthy scoundrels, if not delinquents full of money, who want to take advantage of the aid from the hosting State. *Why* then do public opinion sometimes think so ? Because the refugees have a smart phone considered as a *status symbol* for them, even if it's no more considered as such in our rich countries. Therefore, here it is the reason *why* we decide to start the research @ *better life*. We wanted to understand if these boys and girls, these *millennials*, who mainly land on our coasts are *privileged people* because they own a smartphone or, on the contrary, if the mobile they use it's just a necessity as it is in our countries.

We can anticipate that the Internet and the smartphone are no more a *status symbol* also in those four countries where the Internet and the mobile phone is mainly a useful tool of communication and information. In this sense, when asked to express their opinion on the Internet and on the best or worst use of it, the Ivorian, Nigerian, Tunisian or Pakistani *millennials* responded exactly the same of their Italian and US peers: with absolute competence and knowledge of the facts they were talking about, claiming greater connectivity, lower costs for the Internet and smartphone, 5G, free wi-fi

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Methodology

Talking about *what* we did, we can say that the method followed in the research was characterized by a questionnaire, the same for each country, consisting of 25 questions, in French and in English, completely anonymous. The survey has been sent online in the different countries, or delivered by hand, via e-mail and whatsapp. Overall, a research population of about 500 people was therefore collected from mid-November 2019 until the end of January 2020.

Review of Related Literature

Manzan (2020) retain as main ideas that the Ivorian youth represent a real market of internet consumers and that the sociological and economic factors of Côte d'Ivoire remain influential factors in the growth or reduction of this consumption. Ivory Coast is still a developing country that aspires to emergence, which means that average household incomes are still low. In an indirect way, this gives an idea of the purchasing power of a young person from this country, especially since he depends on parents throughout his university career. Another somewhat paradoxical but non-negligible parameter to consider is the fact that these young people, often, tend to buy phones that are capable, offering more convenience and therefore more expensive. It is very often the iPhone, some last series of the Samsung brand.

Chawla (2020) reminds us that the Internet service has enabled the youth in Pakistan to benefit from Internet Services. The Pakistan youths from the age of 18 to 25 are keener for use. In the 1990s, there were only one or two service providers, but now there are several. Now the Internet Service providers have been providing a wide range of Services. Because of heavy traffic in the use of the Internet as mostly youth watch movies, dramas, etc., the service becomes slow, and sometimes it chokes.

For Finzi (2020) in Tunisia, from 2011 to the present day the Internet occupies an important time in the lives of students even if the craze for digital technology is no longer synonymous with active participation in the democratic transition of the country and has somewhat lost its role of resilience. We can therefore conclude that the Internet is now an integral part of their daily lives, but that financial situation and improved speed are two prerequisites for true digital democratization.

For Itua (2020) the rise in internet-ready smartphones in Nigeria is affecting daily life from consumption habits, to banking to social media behavior but there are challenges.

According to Bigi-Corvi each demographic generation exhibits character traits that distinguish one from another. Closer examination and understanding of these habits and preferences provide vital clues to communicate effectively with and to respond to the demands of the people within a particular demographic group. The study of consumer behaviour forms a core component in strategic marketing and branding. A deeper understanding of and a clearer insight into what makes the consumer "tick" can often decide the success of a marketing campaign, and ultimately the long-term success of any given company.

The sky in a room.

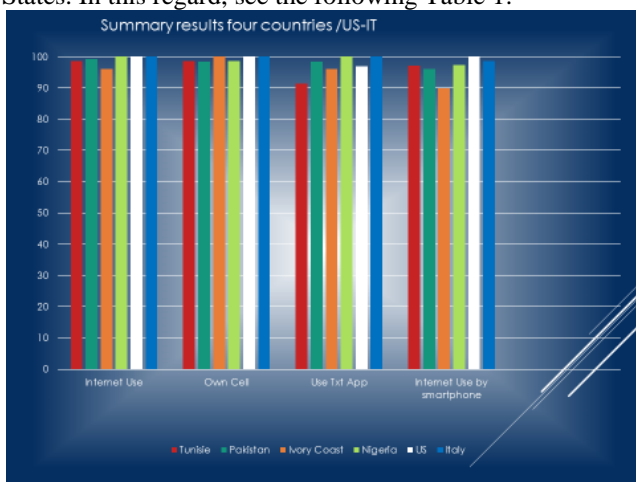
In addition to the numbers that will be commented on and commented on below, the questionnaire also allowed to consider attitudes, ideas, images, suggestions, experiences and subjective dispositions, concerning the use of the Internet in one's own country. These statements were made through the same words used by the people who agreed to

answer the questions. The comments and personal considerations of these girls and boys who consider the Internet the best thing that has happened to their country and are confident that things can improve for it too it has been the most touching part of the research. Here *what* these millennials said.

During meetings held at the University of Miami, Florida, for the anticipations of the research results, some Brazilian students commented the research, highlighting how an expansive internet use policy was practiced in their country by making the Whatsapp application available for free. To the question "do you have internet" all the Brazilian interviewees answered affirmative, even if they had only WhatsApp, associating this application to the Internet and vice versa.

The research @ *better life* provided a first important indication on: the use of the Internet in general and through the mobile smartphone and the use of messaging applications, such as Whatsapp, Telegram, Messenger. It is no coincidence that we focused on these profiles, rather than others, as they are suitable for capturing the real penetration of the Internet in the social life of teens and young adults aged between 18 and 25 years.

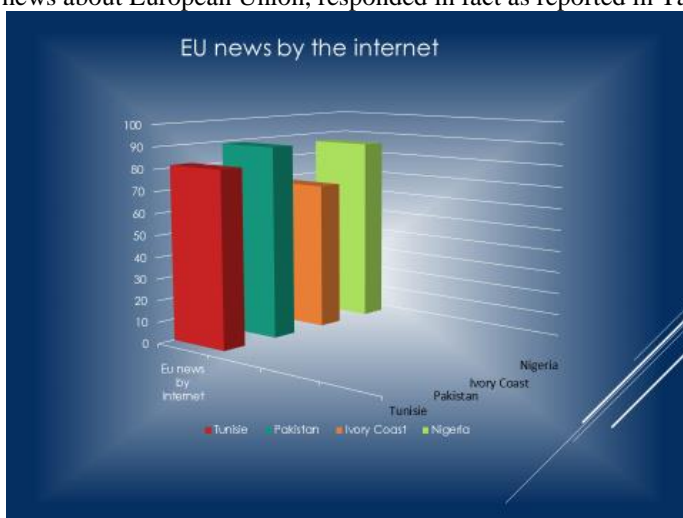
From the official statistics, easily available online, it appears for example that out of 11 million inhabitants of Tunisia there have been 7 million Facebook profiles, at the end of 2019. , Among the various possibilities, girls and boys declared to use Internet primarily for entertainment (in a percentage of more than 90 percent in all the four countries). The research showed also that study and work are among the main activities for which young people connect to the network. The level of the use of the Internet in these countries is very close, if not identical, to that in Italy and United States. In this regard, see the following Table 1:



As showed in the Table 1, in all the four countries the use of the Internet - and in particular the use of the Internet by smartphone -, owning a mobile phone, or messaging with text applications have percentages similar to those in US and Italy, close to 100 percent.

Tab. 1. Internet and smartphone: four countries, Italy, US.

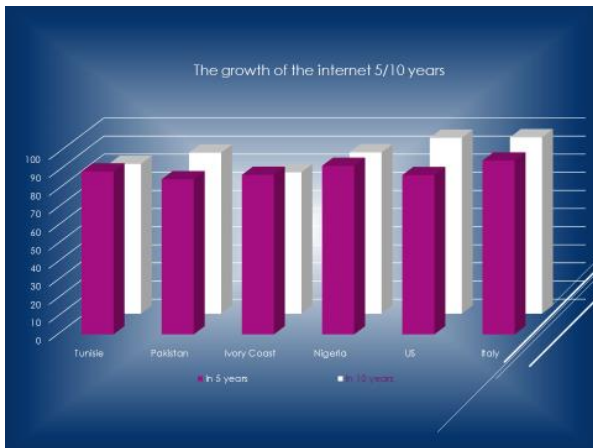
The window on the courtyard of the world, the Internet, opens quite the same in Tunis, Abjdjan, Lahore or Lagos such as in Portland, Sacramento, Rome or Florence. And it is a glimpse that makes you go beyond the borders of your reality, beyond the frontiers of your country. The respondents who were asked if from their smartphones they were able to get news about European Union, responded in fact as reported in Table 2 below.



Apart from the Ivory Coast which, however, reaches in any case a percentage close to 70%, in the other three countries a percentage of the interviewees between 80-90 points declares to surf the Internet acquiring news about the European Union.

Tab. 2 - Acquiring news on the internet about EU.

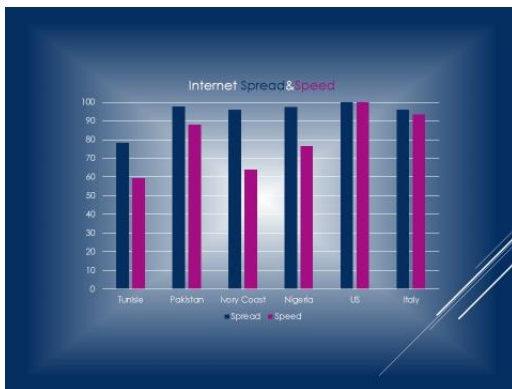
The Ivorian, Nigerian, Tunisian or Pakistani *millennials* therefore live of the same aspirations. ambitions, hopes, dreams as their European and American peers. They too *have a dream* and work to change their lives. Many of them spend several hours on the internet, often staying nearby wi-fi areas and the cost of the internet is often considered too high, as it is showed in the graphic below (see below Tab. 4).



Compared to 5-10 years ago, in their countries the Internet is today more widespread. Also in this case, in comparison with the indications coming from Italy and US, the percentages are completely similar, as shown in Table 3, on the side.

Tab. Internet’s growth 5-10 years

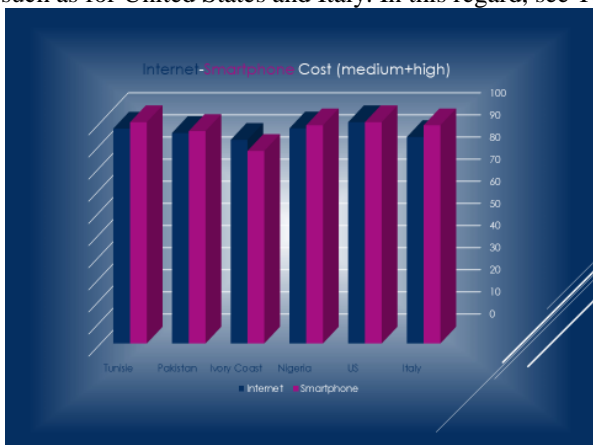
At the same conclusions it comes about the Internet spread. When asked if the Internet is highly diffused in their country, the interviewees answer affirmatively in a percentage of 80-100 points. On the contrary, the percentages differ visibly between the individual countries and in reference to the US and Italy, talking about the Internet speed. In this case in particular in Tunisia and Ivory Coast Internet speed is considered adequate in a percentage of around 60 percent: slightly below for Tunisia and slightly above for the Ivory Coast; and also in Nigeria the percentage does not reach 80 points (precisely 77 percent).:



Only in Pakistan the 88 percent of respondents are satisfied of the Internet speed, although not reaching the percentages of the United States (100 percent) and of Italy (92 percent).
See Table 4 on the side

Tab. 4. Internet Spread-speed four countries/US-Italy.

The percentages return to realign among all countries in reference to what respondents think about the cost of the Internet and the smart phones. Let's not forget the proportions between the average annual per capita income of the four countries respect to Italy and US that we summarized above with the Summary Sheets 1 to 5: it goes from about 1600 dollars in Ivory Coast to over 67,000 in the United States. The high demand, moreover, means that proportionally also in Tunisia, Pakistan, Ivory Coast and Nigeria the price of the Internet and mobile phones is considered medium-high, such as for United States and Italy. In this regard, see Table 5.



That respondents from all the six countries consider medium-high the cost of the Internet and the smart phones for the 90 percent. The only exception is represented by Ivory Coast where the percentage is around 80 points.

Tab. 5 Internet-smartphones in the six countries
Voices, whispers and shouts.

In our opinion, the most interesting result coming from the research has been the *recording* of the interviewees’ personal considerations. From the following Reports, it is possible to have an idea, albeit essential, of what the occasion

of this research represented for these girls and boys. It's a minimal part of the numerous reflections and considerations expressed. The sentences written by the interviewees have been reproduced in full and faithfully - even with errors - in order not to take anything away from their authenticity.

In Tunisia, for example, not only Arabic comments such as those reported in Report 1 have been included, but also emoticons, testifying the familiarity of the writers with the most expressive language used worldwide by the of *millennials*.

In terms of content, the requests are alike, from country to country. Ivorian, Tunisian, Pakistani and Nigerian *millennials* know that adequate infrastructure and resources are required to have a higher speed, a better optical fiber, the 5G, and so on. They are worried also about corruption, pornography and *immoral use* of the Internet, and they claim for educational program to learn how better use the Internet. They ask for the creation of more WI-FI areas. A common request from Pakistan to the United States, passing through Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Tunisia and Italy, is to have a better connection in rural areas:

The Internet is as important to Ivorian, Pakistani, Tunisian or Nigerian *millennials* as to their European and American peers. The Internet in Nigeria is considered *the best thing that has happened* to that country and it is considered a resource in despite of the problem of corruption, which in Nigeria is so deeply felt as it emerges from the statements of the interviewees. Different only in quantity, not in quality, are the set of answers from the countries of the western world. Millennials from US require better internet connection, more coverage, lower costs, introduction of technologies that bring at home the same quality of Internet as in universities and in Rome, Milan or Florence it's the same.

A focus on Pakistan whispers.

In some cases, as in Pakistan, it's literally a spread of expectations, complaints, aspirations, precautions, from those who every day, at least for half the time available, surf the Internet from their country over the borders of it. It is required, almost in the same way, greater involvement of the government authorities, in the development of network and infrastructures, starting from a greater use of optical fiber and a reduction of the costs charged by the telephone companies. There are many expectations and warnings. Millennials from Pakistan consider the different level of Internet spread caused by a *lack of technology, over loading*, because "people do not take stop use internet too much for entertainment that's speed low". They claim for an *upgradation of system* and denounce the *poor quality of service providers*, the *rush of Internet users* and a difference compared to the resto of the world.

There's not really agreement about the Internet speed: for some of them it is *very low speed* for some others the reason why it's referred to technical matters, *signal problems, ruffat bano, coverage*, and *the high rates of more internet speed, lack of innovation in internet and advanced technology or poor technology and management and the systems are outdated and old*. There's a *poor-quality cable used for providing internet* and "One reason is not having good quality wifi adopters". Some of them justify the problem of low Internet speed "Because number of people connect to one modem. There are many people who even can't afford the internet cost". Others refer the difficulties to the *weather (sic!)*, or because "Users are use the internet very large number of people because number of poles(company) less than use subscriber internet", "here are very high population in Pakistan in the cities" "may be Pakistan is a developing country and right now it doesn't have that much resources". Some articulated response affirm then that "The main reason for slow speed internet is that most of Pakistanis are usually left with aging copper media of PTCL that has lived twice its life, resulting into slow speeds or disconnections if your speed are above 2Mbps. FTTH is still an alien concept in the country and only few thousands out of 200 million people have FTTH deployed and for the rest, internet is as unreliable" or "It depends on where you are and what service you're using. Because I think the devices or the network through which internet is distributed among the masses is not reliable enough. The connections are very weak that they got disturbed by a wind blow. Or one more reason for having a slow internet because we don't have enough money to pay for a good speed of internet".

But the great majority of the them, more than 80 per cent declare that there's *not slow speed, it's pretty much of average speed from the connection I use, although some networks and connections doesn't give that much of speed in some areas; Internet is fast enough in Pakistan*

What they ask for? Free internet and fast speed, add more powerful software and hardware tools by companies which "should introduce free wi fi up to a limit and aware people with other packages and there should be more mb's package available as it is in other developed countries", *More speed low cost, Better service and public internet, reducing the charges of mobile data and make public wifi with extra security*. There is so the evidence of a need of a check and balance system on the type of content circulating among different social media accounts.

It's certainly true that as many other countries, in most areas of Pakistan 4G internet has yet to reach and that it's getting better with the passage of time as it has just been introduced 5G

and the Cybercrime and other aspects from the *dark web* should be monitored too: "total Ban on the porn sites and more access to educational journals plus the speed could have been better. Instead of promoting the raw and useless apps, tech gurus should teach the positive use of internet to generate a good workforce and employment pool via internet.". In this sense, Cyber laws are considered not very often known to common people and a better regulation could be introduced. The technology must be updated according to the current standards: "The nation must be taught the ways in which they can use internet for their betterment, their community's and for humans all over". There's the request to the I.T companies to ensure the freedom of internet usage and communications for citizens of Pakistan. Companies should work on their coverage for internet and the machinery that should be able to provide

uninterrupted internet without any line losses. States take proactive measures to ensure that Internet connectivity is available on an individual or communal level in all inhabited localities of the State, by working on initiatives with the private sector, including in remote or rural areas. Such measures should involve the adoption and implementation of policies that facilitate access to Internet connection and to low-cost hardware, remote and rural areas, including the subsidization of service, if necessary.

The distribution network it is improved, it should become more powerful and reliable. And it also should become cheap to be affordable. Millennials from Pakistan ask for “better internet cafés with decent and healthy environment”, to improve Internet in backward areas, because “first Internet provider launch 4G in All Over Pakistan's Rural & Urban Areas”. In conclusion, “the world is progressing pretty much at a fast pace, while we are still using 3G-4G, china and other countries are working on 5G-6G. furthermore, even in our security and government use, the Internet and technology is not that much reliable and good as if compared to other countries.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The main conclusion achieved by the research @ *better life* is an answer with an anthropological flavor: there is no difference between millennials from the Western, rich world and those from Africa and Asia. A part of opportunities, boys and girls of the so-called developed countries and those of developing countries are very similar. *Millennials* think and act the same way, on either side of the oceans and deserts. They claim for *a better life* and they surf the Internet to achieve it.

The hierarchy of needs originally elaborated by Abraham Harold Maslow (1908-1970) in his 1943 article "A Theory of Human Motivation" changes in another way. Mainly for *millennials* – but not only for them – at the base of Maslow's pyramid appears another *super primary* need, even before food and water: free WI-FI! It is therefore impossible to consider the Internet and the smart phone, in the developing countries, as a privilege or a *status symbol*, in the same way they aren't in the developed country. The Internet and the smart phones became necessary as lighters for the smokers, glasses for shortsighted and presbyopic or tissues for cold.

Just turn a little in the streets of Tunis or the bazaars of Lahore, or inside the universities of Abidjan and Lagos, to realize that, without prejudice but with an objective and frank verification on the field, people use smart phone and surf the Internet commonly. There's no difference with the Campus in Gainesville or the Starbucks of UM at Coral Gables. It's the same tool in the hands of girls and boys who crowd streets, cities, countryside, despite the many differences and peculiarities and want to realize their dreams for *a better life*. The Internet has revolutionized the computer and communications world like nothing before. The Internet is at once a world-wide broadcasting capability, a mechanism for information dissemination, and a medium for collaboration and interaction between individuals and their computers without regard for geographic location. People and *millennials* above all from all the countries literally love Internet. For example, in the United States of America, most citizens now use the Internet and an overwhelming percentage think it's been a good thing for society (76 percent). Despite all the worries about privacy, targeted advertising, and shallow connections, Pew finds that, overall, Americans are in an unmitigated love fest with the information superhighway Internet use over two decades change really a lot, has gone from geeky hobby to the norm. There is no longer an ethnic or gender divide in Internet use, but it persists a generational and class gap. Only 65 percent of low-income people use the Internet, whereas it's nearly universal for those making +\$50K a year.

In US, also Smartphone company has grown steadily over the last 10 years but unfortunately, these relatively expensive devices price grows up exceptionally too, but Americans love internet, in all the possible uses, work, fun etc. The only huge concern is about price, all American complaints about internet cost, so the question is why is internet so expensive in America? The major reason is a lack of competition among Internet Service Providers. It's simple economics: there's high demand for internet and only a few providers in the market, limiting the supply. The result is higher prices for consumers. According to data from the FCC, half of American homes have only two options for an Internet Service Provider for basic broadband. If they want faster speeds their choice goes down to only one. At the end, we can say that the positive things are more than the negative, this is the reason why internet is today part of our life.

Conclusion

Above all in this emergency period in which the Covid-19 changed our life, all over the world and mainly for *millennials*, the Internet is a necessary source. Now, what we can do when we think about economy and jobs, mainly through the Internet? I'm a restaurants owner with a coming season, so of course I hope to reopen soon as possible, but if we look the situation at 365 degrees, we must be careful because whether or not to reopen the economy and to what extent is the debate that is top of mind for policymakers, the coronavirus pandemic is not fully under control. Fears of a second wave of infections, an economic relapse, more deaths, and no vaccine add to the uncertainty of what life will be like after the initial lockdown is lifted. Public opinion on this action is also divided, where most respondents in eight out of 14 countries are against opening the economy and businesses if the virus is not fully contained. Also, what is very interesting is that people in high income households are most likely to want the economy and businesses to reopen despite the virus. That compares to just over a third of low-income households. With the publication of federal guidelines, some states have received mixed signals from high-level officials on the proper timing of reopening. There is a vocal segment of the population pushing their states to reopen and a handful of states are moving in that direction, despite public health warnings of a prolonged outbreak in their states because the final question is: how long the system,

family, people, company, can resist without a running economy? The Internet, probably, will be the main way, our path away from this situation.

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