# Hungarian Diasporic Websites and User Attitudes

## HUNGARY.COM

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# Abstract

This dissertation focuses on the websites designed for Hungarians living in diaspora. The main assumption is that Hungarian diaspora groups adopt the new media and utilise the Internet to access information about other diasporic groups and to get in touch with other Hungarians regardless of geographical boundaries.

The project aimed to find answers to the research question: What websites are available to the Hungarian diasporic community and how are they received? Building on established theories on nation, migration, diasporas and communities; a questionnaire was used to discover user needs, and a content analysis provided data about the websites.

The conclusion is that the currently available websites only partly meet the users' requirements and expectation. The group in question would like to see more diasporic online spaces, because they are considered to play an important role in helping them preserve their national identity. The users were in favour of regular online discussions, which was unavailable on the majority of the examined websites.

Using these sites is part of the participants' everyday experiences, which is in line with the assumptions and focus of Hungarian diaspora research. Further development would be possible with the planning of a national strategy and cooperation of all parties involved.

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# Introduction

Ethnic networks, migration and the use of computers in communication are all areas of social sciences frequently researched independently but rarely in combination. The relationship of Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) and ethnic networks creates a special research area with respect to international migration. Unfortunately recently attention is drawn to worldwide ethnic networks because of the fight against terrorism. (Sheffer, 1986, 1994 etc.)

This dissertation focuses on a specific issue: the websites that are designed for Hungarians who live outside Hungary, in diaspora. In the following pages I will explain the rationale and necessity of researching this topic area and give an overview of Hungarian diasporas. I will also describe some of the main theories and concepts in Hungarian research into diasporas.

Hungarians in Hungary and abroad

A country's population is greatly affected by movements across the borders: international migration. There are numerous reasons why people decide to relocate to a new country: natural, geographical, social, political and economic reasons all make people move. As there are serious problems with the population's ageing tendency in Hungary, the changes in population are important. The Department of Population Sciences within the Central Statistical Office (KSH) in Budapest has published research into the possible effects of international migration based on Hungarian population censuses (from the 1880's),[1] which historically show a negative impact although this impact is predicted to change in the future.

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[1] For estimates based on the past see Hablicsek-Illés, 1996. For future effects see Hablicsek-Tóth, 2000.

According to estimates by the Hungarian World Association (MVSZ), in 1996 there were approximately 15.9 million Hungarians around the world.[2] Hungary's current population is 10.2 million.[3] Table 1. shows the distribution of numbers by location:

Table 1. The World's Hungarian population by location

| Location | Population |
|---|---|
| Hungary | 10200000 |
| *Romania (Transylvania)* | *2000000* |
| *Slovakia (The Uplands)* | *600000* |
| *Serbia and Montenegro (Voivodina)* | *360000* |
| *Ukraine (Transcarpathia)* | *150000* |
| *Croatia* | *20000* |
| *Austria* | *10000* |
| *Slovenia* | *10000* |
| Australia and New Zealand | 60000 |
| Africa | 30000 |
| Asia | 230000 |
| South and Middle America | 130000 |
| North America | 1930000 |
| The rest of Europe | 360000 |
| **Altogether:** | **15,890,000** |

The 5.5 million people who live outside Hungary have different status and experiences. The differences are rooted in how these groups were formed. Hungarians living in The Uplands, Transcarpathia, Transylvania, Voivodina, Croatia, Slovenia and Austria (in Table 1. indicated with *italics*), are 'Hungarian minorities abroad'.[4] They live in territories that used to be part of Hungary. Those living in the other countries and continents (2.740.000) are people who left Hungary at different times in history or were born abroad. The relevant literature describes the latter as diasporas. Both groups' everyday experiences are determined by memories and ideas of Hungarian politics and economy as well. What link them all together are Hungary's cultural heritage and the language. But as generations grow up outside Hungary in the diaspora, their knowledge of Hungarian language is becoming less and less.

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[2] www.nemzetismeret.hu
[3] According to the population census in 2001. (Hablicsek, 2004)
[4] In Hungarian they are mentioned as 'Hungarians beyond the borders'.

According to an article by the Balint Balassi Institute[5], half of the diaspora does not speak Hungarian; therefore they can be reached only through different languages.

Living in Hungary as a Hungarian is a natural status. Hungarian identity is different for someone who lives in the regions formerly part of Hungary: it requires sacrifices to keep one's national identity as a minority, when the person didn't volunteer to change citizenship and country rule. Outside the Carpathian Basin Hungarians generally don't face political problems; but other difficulties (such as integration without giving up one's national identity) are as hard as for the people in minority status.

At the centre of this research is the phenomenon of life online of the diaspora. As we saw, not all groups of Hungarians living abroad are diasporas, but there are several key facts that gather them together under the umbrella of the 'diasporic lifestyle':

- They are all outside Hungary's current borders, living as part of a different nation's society
- Some of them live in groups of significant size; others live scattered, surrounded by other nationals
- They go through similar processes of making individual decisions day-by-day about their national and cultural identity

These three key factors can be illustrated with examples of questions that Hungarians face in their everyday lives: How can they keep their Hungarian identity? How can they teach their children to speak Hungarian properly? How can they fit Hungarian history, arts and literature in their children's education? How can they celebrate Hungarian remembrance days? How will the following generations have a clear idea of what Hungary is, from where they originate?

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[5] http://www.nemzetismeret.hu/index.php?id=7.11

Hungarian communities that were formed at different times in history and for different reasons, in most cases share one thing in common: interest in Hungary, their roots and keeping in touch with relatives, friends or simply receiving news of their home country. Talking to messengers, sending letters, reading newspapers and more recently watching satellite TV channels were the traditional ways of staying in touch. As Information Communication Technologies offer new ways to disseminate information and to communicate with others it is likely that diasporic communities will adopt these as well. It will be interesting to see if and how quickly these new media are adopted.

## The new media and Hungarians living abroad

Websites can be accessed without limitations of geographical borders. Diasporic websites are cultural spaces where the physical location of Hungarian individuals and groups becomes less important. However, due to the defining criteria of the diaspora (which is detailed in the Literature review) this dissertation will analyse websites designed for the diaspora only, and not the websites used in areas that used to be part of Hungary.

There are several websites that claim to exist in order to help and support the diaspora in different ways: providing information, organising charity campaigns or sending Hungarian teachers or books to wherever they are needed. The main roles of diasporic websites include providing information on current issues that might interest long or short-term migrants. Besides, facilitating intra-diasporic, inter-diasporic, diaspora-homeland communication was proven to be of great importance. Academic discourse points out the significance of preserving cultural and national identity and slowing down assimilation.[6]

## Researching diasporas – the international and the Hungarian perspective

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[6] One example is the planned conference in August 2005 in Debrecen, Hungary.
www.hungkong.unideb.hu Website of Conference for Hungarian Culture.

Research is vital for solving these problems and for understanding how to handle the difficulties of both sides: hosts and migrants.[7] Mátyás Szabó (Szabó, 2004) argues that when diasporas are formed, those living there do not want to abandon the culture (most of the time), but they find living conditions dangerous, oppressive, or economically undeveloped. Migrants choose a country where they think they can live according to their own individual values and so the migrant feels loyal to the country's *institutions*, security and economy, not to its inhabitants. The migrant's relationship can also be difficult in the home country as those who stay often question their reasons for leaving requiring the diaspora to justify its actions.[8] This is a common source of difficulties in Hungarian-Hungarian relationships.

When researching diaspora communities, the following two questions are always central: How does international migration change the lifestyle and values (beliefs) of a migrant? Do they keep their values or do they adapt to the host system? In most cases, there are two extreme ends of a line of scenarios: 1. When the system of values and identity changes, and doesn't survive migration, 2. When the system of values remains the same if the related processes keep on going (the migrant is in contact with people who share his/her ideas). This means that parts of one's identity and values change, according to the individual's situation.

Hungarian researchers usually focus on the keeping of national character and identity.[9] According to Szabó, it is now accepted that national identity is based on 'feelings' for everyday life's experiences. In terms of this dissertation it is an important question, whether the Internet, and especially diasporic websites are part of the people's everyday experiences.

What is needed for research?

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[7] Szabó, p. 25.
[8] Szabó, p. 26.
[9] Szabó, p. 28.

In his paper on the barriers of diaspora research, Szabó mentioned two things that are regarded as essential for research:[10]

- Databases: creating new ones and organising the existing ones
- Co-operation (clearing rights and responsibilities).

The Internet has a lot to offer in respect of these essentials. Online databases could lower the costs, after the initial investment to build the infrastructure to enable them, and increase effectiveness and accessibility to data. Regarding co-operation, diasporic websites that feel responsible for taking care of diasporic communities could have their share in the work and the glory of the results.

Therefore the <u>research question</u> for this project is two-fold:

- What kinds of websites and online services are designed and available for diasporic Hungarians that can help them keep their identity?
- What are the Hungarian diasporic communities' attitudes to these sites and services?

In the following chapters I provide background information to international migration and the definition of diaspora in relation to concepts of the meaning of nation. This is followed by the presentation of the results of my research into user attitudes of a group of diasporic Hungarians and an analysis of websites available.

Present research project is conducted and written in the spirit of the very meaning of research: „[E]xtending the sum total of knowledge in society" (Oliver, 2003, p16). Naturally, the scope of the research applies limitations in drawing conclusions for society as a whole. The results of this project are valid for the examined individuals and websites, and benefit these groups. However, the findings may apply to a broader group of the Hungarian diaspora and their websites as well.

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[10] Szabó, p. 29.

# Chapter I.
# Literature review

Diasporic processes are closely linked to international migration and its effects. Distance shrinking technologies, communication tools and the changing understanding of national identity and the sense of community are factors that influence people's experiences outside the homeland. International migration changed the ethnic and demographic map of Europe.

Globalisation influenced international migration, which in turn causes problems of hierarchy and rights in economy, culture and politics. In the literature review I would like to present significant theoretical approaches on the following areas:

- Characteristics of international migration
- Nation and national identity
- Definitions of diaspora
- Communities and online spaces

## International migration

The possibilities of analysing international migration are very limited as it is a phenomenon that is difficult to capture in statistics. The data available are

neither complete nor precise; therefore it is only possible to gather a generalised view of the trends of numbers, destinations and other details. Certain trends can be understood as permanent directions, such as economic migration. Workers of less developed regions will usually aim to move towards more developed regions; but to get a deeper understanding of the different motives behind migration, more data should be available.

There are three main sources of statistical data to measure external migration: data from the country of departure, data from transit areas and data from the destination countries. Of these the most credible are the data from the destination countries, because immigration regulations are usually closely linked to employment and cultural issues.[11]

## What is a nation?

In his lecture at Mindentudás Egyeteme „Of nations' life and death", Gábor Gángó argues that it is impossible to prove 'bloodline' in scientific ways. But in national identification subjective beliefs matter more than science. A 'family member-feeling' is not only relevant to people who live at the same time as we do, but to our 'ancestors' as well. It means, our perception of a nation is of a timeless scale. It is supported by sentences of the Hungarian national anthem, the Hymnus.

> „...You have brought our ancestors
> Onto the holy crag of the Carpathian..."

Gángó's theory seems to contradict Benedict Anderson's argument on 'imagined communities' (Anderson, 1983). As he argues, the nation can only be defined as "an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign."[12] Anderson pointed out that nations exist more as mental images than as genuine communities that require a degree of face-to-face interaction to sustain the notion of a common identity, because „the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the

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[11] www.mek.oszk.hu
[12] Anderson (1983), p.6.

image of their communion."[13]. If nations exist, they exist as imagined artifices, constructed for us through education, the mass media and a process of political socialization. Anderson calls the nation a community and argues that it is so because "the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship."[14]

Anthems are texts that create imagined communities, imagining subjects as if they belonged to homogeneous categories like the English or the Hungarians. "Singing the Marsaillaise, Waltzing Matilda, and Indonesia Raya provide occasions for unisonality, for the echoed physical realisation of the imagined community". (Anderson, 1998, p. 145.).

The first verse of the Hungarian Hymnus creates a totalised image of Hungarian national identity, which is based on the notion of suffering.[15] According to Ágnes Györke (Györke, 2001), this identity is synecdochic, as it is chosen from many other possible identities that might have been narrated: different images, like 'flammable' or 'messianic' Hungarians. The anthem underlines the blind-spot nature of national identifications. Györke argues, that the identity of the suffering Hungarian is imaginary in the Althusserian sense, as it acts as an ideal and official image of the Hungarian that power imposes upon the subject. An interesting question is, whether Hungarians living in diaspora would automatically continue to pass the same ideas of 'Hungarianness' onto the following generations in the name of national self-definition, or would they create a new idea? Or, in case political directions change, will the same groups be defined as parts of the nation?

Where are the borders of a nation?

National self-definition is similar to family self-definition, its process happens with building symbolic borders: most commonly by language and stereotypes. Assimilation aims to demolish these invisible borders, whereas dissimilation means building them back. Dissimilation, from the point of view of the 'dissimilator' is attached to harmless, but self-defensive actions, but it can

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[13] Anderson (1989), p. 6.
[14] Anderson (1989), p. 7.
[15] For the text of the Hymnus please see Appendice II.

result in painful experiences for those who are dissimilated. Zoltán Szabó (Szabó, 1999) explains how Hungarians living in Hungary classify Hungarians who live abroad, as foreigners. As he writes: „A Hungarian from Rotterdam, who filled up his car (Dutch numberplate!) with Hungarian books, and went on a holiday to lake Balaton and spoke Hungarian, his mother tongue with exemplary precision and accent; was called 'Hollandus'. People at lake Balaton, instinctively dissimilated him."[16] The same reaction comes into play even towards those Hungarians who live closer to Hungary in the neighbouring countries: „It has happened to Transylvanian Hungarians as well, that in Bucarest they were classed as Hungarians because of their names, but in Hungary they were called Romanians because of their passports."[17] Szabó argues that the explanation of this phenomenon is in the special form of national identity that Hungarians 'share'. „A Hungarian person is usually proud of being Hungarian, in secret or openly. But he is not proud of the fact that there are others as well, who are Hungarians. This rather disturbs his own pride, he doesn't want to share it with others. In other words, in his national self-identity there is no team spirit."[18]

In her essay about borders, Györgyi Bindorffer[19] discusses Simmel's metaphor of the 'bridge' and the 'door' (Simmel, 1909). In this sense, the bridge means the wish for connection, whereas the door symbolises the power's decision of inclusion or exclusion, therefore creating 'in group' and 'out group'. Bindorffer says that setting out borders is a human need for living in society, as categorisation and the knowledge of these categories are central in living in society and culture. She goes on to Durkheim's opinion (Durkheim, 2003) that a community forms its own system of meanings and with this action sets out borders between its own and other communities.

It is part of political debates whether Hungary's geographical borders coincide with the nation's borders, taking language, ethnicity and most importantly self-identification into account. Self-identification is very significant as national

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[16] Szabó, 1999, p. 21. (The quote is presented here in my own translation. B.T.)
[17] Szabó, 1999, p. 22. (The quote is presented here in my own translation. B.T.)
[18] Szabó, 1999, p. 20. (The quote is presented here in my own translation. B.T.)
[19] Bindorffer, 2005, p 29-41.

identity is not only an attribute we can be born with, but something that can be learned as well. Hungarian history proudly lists personalities who were born as foreigners, but became Hungarians: poets, politicians and so on. Besides, it is not widely known that numerous important Hungarian personalities were born outside the country's present borders, which means that their nationality cannot be dependent on questions of borders.

Borders can be static and rigid, or changing and flexible. Economic and political borders are flexible and are set out by a ruling power that can change the borders from one day to the other. Ethnic, linguistic, cultural and national borders are more rigid and cannot be changed easily as „these contents form the basis of identity of groups and individuals".[20] Geographical borders are losing their significance for a variety of economic, cultural and political reasons. Economically and culturally globalisation is hugely responsible for the weakening ties of a nation-state. Communication technologies and cheaper travelling possibilities enable people to cross borders both 'virtually' and in real life. In the case of Hungary, joining the European Union brought significant changes. Migration became easier, and for example an actual border doesn't separate Hungarians living in Slovakia and Hungary any more. In the sense of Anderson's imagined communities, these borders could also be understood as virtual, in which case it is of no importance whether they coincide with the national borders or not. Obviously, the countries' sensitive and responsible political approach is vital in changing these borders into 'truly virtual'.

Stuart Hall defines five main elements of the national discourse. If we apply these elements to the nation as a cultural entity that is imagined by the community as an entity regardless of state-borders, we can say that Hungarians no matter where they live can share these ideas.

What is a diaspora?

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[20] Bindorffer, p. 30.

At this point it is necessary to clarify the meaning of diaspora. The 2002 edition of Oxford English Reference Dictionary states that 'Diaspora' is the "dispersion of Jews beyond Israel", and when written as 'diaspora' it refers to "any group of people similarly dispersed"[21]. Encarta Encyclopaedia defines it as: "Scattering of language, culture, or people: a dispersion of a people, language, or culture that was formerly concentrated in one place"[22]. A general phrasing from Barker (Barker 2004, p. 255) is that diaspora is a "dispersed network of ethnically and culturally related peoples". Cashmore's Dictionary of Race and Ethnic Relations (Cashmore, 1996, p. 99) highlights that the word, "[d]rawn from ancient Greek terms *dia* (through) and *speiro* meaning "dispersal, to sow or scatter" (…) is often used to describe practically any community which is transnational, that is, whose social economic and political networks cross the borders of nation-states." This is probably the case since 1991, when Tölölyan gave his widely used definition. In his view diaspora includes immigrants, foreigners, expatriates, refugees, guest workers, overseas communities, and ethnic communities.

What isn't included in plain definitions is discussed in the theoretical work of experts such as Gabriel Sheffer, William Safran and Robin Cohen.
Zoltán Fejős (Fejős, 2005[23]) argues that diaspora is a theoretical description, related to ethnic existence and geographical mobility. Walter Connor (Connor, 1986)[24] applied an open definition, saying that diaspora is the part of a people that lives outside the homeland. This definition proves to be too broad if we consider migration inevitable in the forming of diasporic groups.  Sheffer (1986) stated that modern diasporas are ethnic minority groups that were formed as a result of migration. They live in host countries but maintain strong emotional and practical relationship with the country of origin. Safran[25] also focuses on the migration origin of diasporas. He emphasises that diasporas are groups formed by force, not by voluntary action. According to him the following important factors define diaspora groups:

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[21] Quotes from page 394.
[22] http://encarta.msn.com/dictionary_1861604451/diaspora.html
[23] In: Kovács, 2005.
[24] Fejős, p. 16.
[25] Safran, 1991. In: Fejős, p. 16.

- The group's collective identity
- The sense of homeland
- Common solidarity (can be the character of economic migrant groups as well, in case they are 'alienated', not integrated parts of the host society)
- The desire of 'returning' to the homeland.

In the centre of Cohen's argument are 'victim diasporas',[26] who were scattered as a result of forced migration. Cohen differentiates four other types of diaspora:

- Colonial
- Worker, service
- Commercial, professional
- Cultural, hybrid, postmodern.

There are three groups that are not regarded as diasporas for Cohen: believer groups of worldwide religions, borderlands and standard minorities, which is unanimous with the Hungarian point of view.

Cohen maps out factors that contributed to the forming of most diasporas. His points can be applied to the Hungarian diaspora in the following way. If we consider political reasons as traumatic dispersal, the first element (which is 'traumatic dispersal from an original homeland to more than one other country') can describe Hungarians who emigrated from Hungary in the 19th century (and earlier), and after 1956. 'Expansion from a homeland as economic migrants or as part of colonial policies' applies to the groups of 20th century migrants, even in the latest years since the EU enlargement (in May 2004). For the first generation of migrants, 'a collective memory and myth about the homeland' is natural. But those who are born abroad have a

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[26] Cohen, 1997, p. 178-187.

different sense of Hungarianness, as their knowledge comes from a limited number of sources (parents, peer migrants, books, etc).

Life of the diasporas in tolerant host countries

Within multicultural societies, diasporic identifiers are only one part of an individual's identity construct, other factors, like class, gender, age, sexual orientation also impact on the way identity is constructed, and how a member of a diaspora interacts with both the homeland and the host society. It is a different, new viewpoint, that diasporic conditions facilitate the opportunity to create new identities – mainly in democratic, pluralistic and supportive countries. This perspective breaks with the traditional view of diaspora-life as regressive and negative, as symbolised with Cohen's 'victim diaspora'. New possibilities, easy travel and communication change the conditions of diasporic existence (Sorenson, 1991, Clifford, 1994 and others). No research has been done that could prove or disprove the impact of CMC and the Internet on Hungarian diasporic communities.

Diaspora identities are changing over time – also, it commonly changes whether a member of diaspora identifies himself/herself as belonging to the diaspora. The relationship with the homeland and the fact that it's a worldwide phenomenon makes the issue international. Tölölyan (1996) also stresses the importance of maintaining relationships intensively with other diasporic communities and keeping in contact with the homeland.

There are a set of myths, symbols, rituals and images that are used to construct a nation. Stuart Hall defines these as the 'narrative of the nation'[27]. According to Hall "[w]hen diasporas are created they tend to take with them a fixed concept of the national narrative as it existed at the point of departure." This applies to Hungarians who left the country (in the form of emigration and international migration) at different times in history. There is an emphasis on

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[27] Hall, p. 180.

the 'origins, continuity, tradition and timelessness' of the nation[28]: the idea that there is something unchanging about the nature of a nationality. "The idea of continuity in the existence of some essential aspect of a nationality is something which has an especially strong appeal to long-distance nationalists within a diaspora, struggling to maintain a separate identity against the pressures to assimilate faced in their host countries (Anderson, 1991). It also invariably forms part of the appeals made by diasporic groups to the homeland as part of nationalist discourse."

Traditional and Virtual Communities

Before discussing the characteristics of communities and the special conditions of online communities, it is worth starting with the etymological roots of the word itself.

Howard (1997, p.69), in his work on the rhetoric of electronic communities discusses how Corlett (1989) translated 'community' to latin (cummunis, communus) in two ways, depending where he separated the word:

1. com+unis= with oneness, 2. com+munus= with gifts or service.

The same word: 'community' in Hungarian is 'közösség', and if we follow the same method, we can get to interesting meanings:

1. köz+ős (with changing the accent) = common ancestor, 2. közös+ség= commonality.

These understandings of the word point towards the definitions of community.

The traditional concept of community, derived from sociologists such as Tönnies (1957), can be expressed as 'a sense of interrelatedness and shared experiences among people living in the same locality'. Edward Said (Said, 1978[29]), talks about 'imaginative geography and history', which helps the mind to intensify its own sense of itself by dramatising the difference between what is close to it and what is far away. It has acquired an imaginative and

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[28] Hall, p. 180.
[29] Said, Edward: Orientalism

figurative value we can name and feel. Our belongingness to it constitutes what Benedict Anderson calls an 'imagined community'.

"Community is now conceptualised not in terms of physical proximity but in terms of social networks." Smith and Kollock's[30] definition supports those theories that state that a nation's ethnic and cultural borders do not depend on geographical or political borders, if we accept that a nation can be regarded as community. They also argue that the online world suits the needs of those people who are bound by geographical obstacles, but wish to maintain 'intermediate-strength' ties with people who share their interests[31]. In the case of groups and individuals with diasporic characteristics, the Net is therefore a suitable medium to serve their linguistic and cultural needs. The Internet can provide much more than other forms of the media (like television or radio), particularly in building communities, because of the medium's special possibilities.[32] Community activities of diasporic groups traditionally included folk dancing and social gatherings. The Internet has no capacity for activities of this sort (yet?) but it definitely can give helpful tools for people to organise such events. Communities are dynamic; they continually change and evolve. Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) tools are suitable types of media that are flexible enough to follow changes instantly. Diamandaki (2003) argues that the online phenomena are a manifestation of the age of late modernity.[33] Virtual ethnicities and digital nations are part of what Poster (1998) calls "the strange new world of the postmodern quotidian".

Sherry Turkle quotes the anthropologist Ray Oldenberg when discussing the social spaces that people use for interaction and community activities:[34]

> *"... Oldenberg has written about the "great good place", a place where members of a community can gather for a pleasure of easy company, conversation, and a sense of belonging. He considered these places – the*

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[30] Smith and Kollock, 1999, p. 17.
[31] Smith and Kollock, 1999, p. 185-186.
[32] See Evans, 2004 or Mason, 1998.
[33] See Poster 1996 and Lyon 1997. Source: Diamandaki, 2003, p. 197.
[34] Turkle, 1996, p. 233.

*local bar, bistro, and coffee shop – to be at the heart of individual social integration and community vitality."*

Recent theories of virtual spaces provided for users, such as themed chat rooms, fan sites and online games and entertainment plays a very similar role, as traditional spaces. The main difference, however, is geographical space and the lack of face-to-face communication. Despite the 'alien' or 'strange' feeling of an online community, some aspects of traditional groups are still present in the virtual world, such as ethics, rules of social interaction and the expectations of a 'real', or face-to-face community. Jones (1998, p. 3) quotes from Doheny-Farina's 'The Wired Neighborhood': "A community is bound by place, which always includes complex social and environmental necessities. It is not something you can easily join. You can't subscribe to a community as you subscribe to a discussion group on the net. It must be lived. It is entwined, contradictory, and involves all our senses."

There is a view (a hope, rather) that the Internet will play the role as a "communal heaven" (Rheingold, 1994), a possibility for achieving democracy, caring and solidarity in an electronic social space. Even if the Internet means a "renowned sense of community" (Rheingold, 1994), digital democracy is still questioned, mainly because of the selectivity of the medium (accessibility, financial reasons, generational differences, knowledge of the new technology), the Internet's power-relations and security issues.

<u>Virtuality and diasporas</u>

Adams and Ghose (2003) describe the Indian diasporic community's attitudes towards the new media. They argue that distance-shrinking technologies can make communities seem more "close-knit" (Adams&Ghose, 2003, page 415). The 'bridgespace' (Adams&Ghose, 2003, page 415) they create works by the analogue of *home* online. As diasporic organisations can create homely spaces on the Web, individual users do so as well by launching their own weblogs that they can share with others, wherever those others may be. Information Communication Technologies (ICT) provide virtual places or

spaces for people. Since people use ICT to build a sense of community and personal identity, both of which relate strongly to ethnicity, the topic deserves attention.

Appadurai (1996) discusses "diasporic public spheres" which he sees as emblems of the post-national political order and explains how the politics and communities of the diasporas have been fundamentally altered by electronic mediation. The following chapters of this dissertation will show how theories can be applied to practice: how Hungarian diasporic websites relate to the idea of a living community, and how users feel towards the new diasporic media.

# Chapter II.
# Methods, methodology and approach

In this chapter I will describe the methods I chose to conduct the research project and describe the selected data collection tools, techniques of sampling and analysis used.

In order to ensure that the research is ethical from all aspects, I followed standard guidelines set out by Coventry University and the Data Protection Act[35].

## Aims and objectives

My research aims to define the needs and attitudes of diasporic website users. It also aims to summarise strategies and identify online spaces that provide environment for Hungarian groups living outside Hungary to interact with each other and develop their cultural bonds and identity. The research

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[35] Data Protection Act: www.open.gov.uk/dpr/dprhome.htm

focuses on the available services and on the existing demand from communities.

Thus, my objectives are:

- To establish the users' attitudes towards the existing websites, and their further requirements and ideas regarding the contents and purpose of the sites,
- To carry out content analyses of the sites that are mentioned by the users,
- To evaluate critically the results and summarise the present situation,
- To suggest possible options and directions for improvement.

## The significance of Computer-Mediated Communications in personal use and research

The Internet is now a widely available tool and researching questions related to the use of the Internet requires web-based tools and methods. Hobbes' Internet Timeline is one of the sources that show the exponential growth of the Web.[36]

Table 2. The growth of the Internet between 1996 and 2004

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[36] Increase in Internet hosts since 1996: Hobbes' Internet Timeline. Available online: http://www.zakon.org/robert/internet/timeline/ Retrieved on 9 July 2005.

Hobbes' Internet Timeline Copyright ©2005 Robert H Zakon
http://www.zakon.org/robert/internet/timeline/

| DATE | SITES | DATE | SITES |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| 12/90 | 1 | 12/93 | 623 |
| 12/91 | 10 | 06/94 | 2,738 |
| 12/92 | 50 | 12/94 | 10,022 |
| 06/93 | 130 | 06/95 | 23,500 |
| 09/93 | 204 | 01/96 | 100,000 |
| 10/93 | 228 | 06/96 | 252,000 |
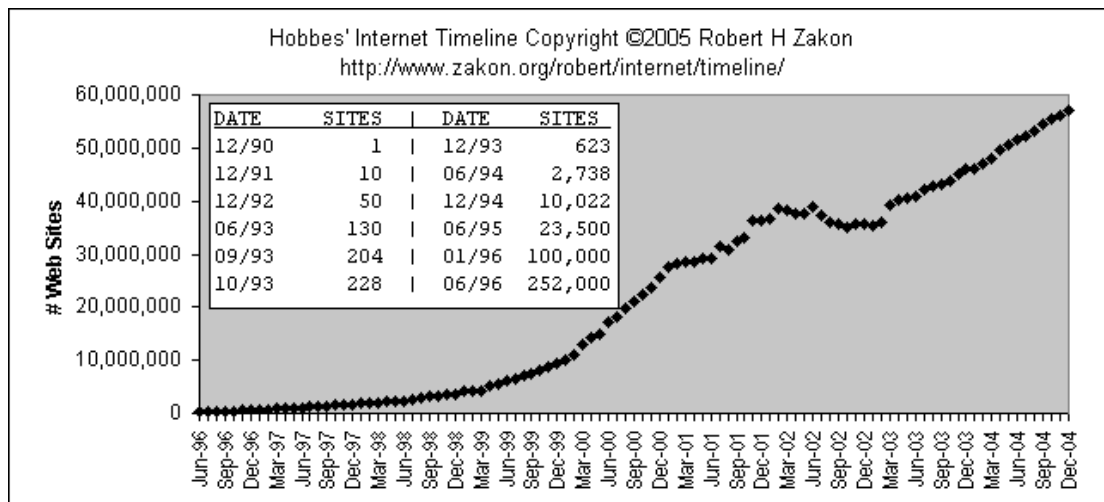
Lawley (1994) argues, that the possibilities of CMC are not used up to their limits just yet: "I eliminate the communication technologies that rely upon computers for switching technology (such as telephony or compressed video), but do not require the users to interact directly with the computer system via a keyboard or similar computer interface… Given the current state of computer communications and networks, this limits CMC to primarily text-based messaging, while leaving the possibility of incorporating sound, graphics, and video images as the technology becomes more sophisticated."[37] This process can be traced down easily by looking at the history of computer games, where these changes tend to happen much faster than in all other industries.

Looking at other definitions, we find a different approach: that CMC is used up to its capacity: different purposes at different times, but always 'reaching for the maximum'. Webopedia, an Internet-based encyclopaedia that specialises in technological terms, gives the following definition: "CMC refers to human communication via computers and includes many different forms of synchronous, asynchronous or real-time interaction that humans have with each other using computers as tools to exchange text, images, audio and video. CMC includes e-mail, network communication, instant messaging, text messaging, hypertext, distance learning, Internet forums, USENET

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[37] Lawley, E. (1994): *The sociology of culture in computer-mediated communication: an initial exploration*. Available online: www.itcs.com/elawley/bourdieu.html. Accessed on 10 June 2005.

newsgroups, bulletin boards, online shopping, distribution lists and videoconferencing."[38]

Accessing the Internet

The Net also has its own limitations: older generations are less likely to switch their habits of diasporic media use to the wired world's opportunities. The hurdles of computer literacy impose certain selectiveness as not all occupations are naturally related to the everyday use of technology. Personal experiences and interests are also important in making decisions whether to use a particular medium. These factors also determine the group of users of the Hungarian ethnic and/or national networks and to an extent limit my sample size.

Computer-Mediated Communications provide wide geographical access: communication between countries, otherwise remote areas, like separate communities and even continents (Cohen, 1996). This enables this research to be conducted literally 'around the world'. As Hungarian communities are present at a number of locations (See Table 1.), CMC seem a logical choice of new media for the purposes of national identity construction, breaking down of language barriers and creating a user-friendly environment (Internet cafes, centres or even the user's own home), where casual and scientific activities can take place at the same time, without the problems of locality and distance. Without pressure, respondents are more likely to answer even 'touchy' questions that with face-to-face methods would not be successful. The advantages are two-fold: everyday use and research both benefit from it. Similarly, cost and time saving are important factors for users and researchers as well. Easier data handling is very beneficial for researchers, and regarding response rates and willingness to contribute to research projects, it is vital from the point of view of users as well.

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[38] From Webopedia: Online Computer Dictionary for Computer and Internet Terms and Definitions. http://www.webopedia.com/TERM/C/CMC.html Retrieved on 9 July 2005.

<u>The planning and the instrumental phase of the research, getting access to data</u>

The task of writing a master's research project provided the permission from the relevant academic/official authorities to conduct the research: to approach people with questions, to choose a sample and to work with the data. Supervision by the university provided the participants with a sense of 'security', that their data will be handled with professional care and confidentiality.

<u>Legal and ethical considerations</u>

Despite all the dispute about difficulties of anonymity and related crimes, as Mann (Mann, 2000) points out, "…[q]ualitative material collected by, and manipulated with, computers does not fall outside the scope of the legal system."[39] Online researchers are bound by the same rules and regulations as those who do research in traditional ways. Respondents have the same rights as if they participated in research based on traditional methods. However, as the Internet poses additional difficulties (like the use of digital signatures, extensions of e-mail addresses, etc.) law is not enough, enforced ethical sensitivity and regulations are necessary.[40] There are a number of organisations that are dedicated to ensure that computers and the Internet are used in an ethical and legally correct way. One example is the Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility (CPSR). The Computer Ethics Institute's 'Ten Commandments of Computer Ethics' appear on their website, just as it is accessible from other sources.[41] In 1998, Arlene Rinaldi wrote guidelines, or 'Netiquette', incorporating the Ten Commandments.[42] On the other hand, researchers using online methods must be aware of the possibility that respondents may react to questions differently compared to traditional

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[39] Mann, Chris (2000): Internet communication and qualitative research, page 40.
[40] Thomas et al. (1998) cited in Mann, 2000.
[41] http://www.cpsr.org/issues/ethics/cei Accessed on 9 July 2005. The Ten Commandments of Computer Ethics were written by Barquin, Ramon C. (1992): "In Pursuit of a 'Ten Commandments' for Computer Ethics."
[42] Available online: http://www.fau.edu/netiquette/net/netiquette.html. Retrieved on 9 July 2005.

surveys. The freedom of hiding one's identity can encourage and also discourage people from giving truthful answers.

Data collection tools

As this project focuses on Information and Communication Technologies in a cultural context, research tools and techniques were chosen accordingly. Data were collated in two ways: measuring user attitudes with a *questionnaire*, and *analysing websites* following a specifically worked out method.

In the beginning, two main types of research tools were considered: e-mail based survey and website-based questionnaire. E-mail surveys[43] present the questions in the form of an easily accessible text, and the respondent replies to the message, inserting the answers in the text of the e-mail. The difficulty with sending the questions through e-mail is that electronic messages could only be sent to known addresses, whereas using a web-based questionnaire could potentially reach a wider audience.

The questionnaire[44]

The questionnaire was divided into two main parts: an introduction, describing the aims and the process of the study, and the questions section. Respondents of the questionnaire were informed about the aims and objectives of this study in several different forms. First of all, background information about the project was made available on a number of websites. Information was accessible on a web space provided by Coventry University, where I uploaded a description of the project and the text of the questionnaire as a downloadable file[45]. The same information became available on several other pages, discussion forums and ethnic websites, as the project proceeded.[46]

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[43] Mann, Chris (2000): *Internet Communication and Qualitative Research.* Page 67.
[44] For the full text of the Questionnaire, please see the Appendices.
[45] http://covcsaduk.typepad.com/hungary/
[46] For example www.magyaronline.net, www.canadahun.org, etc.

It is a general rule, that in all types of research, personal data should be collected for one specific, legitimate purpose.[47] In the introduction part of the questionnaire, it was stated that the answers would be used only for this study, and no other purpose.[48] The participants' informed consent to the use of the data that they provide was embodied in the act of filling in and returning the questionnaire. In order to hide the respondents' identity, in the study I followed guidelines about using pseudonyms, changing identifiable details and assigning code numbers. The questionnaires received were immediately renamed with codes (i.e. k1, k2, k3, etc.), e-mail addresses were removed from the text, and any details that would have made it possible to identify a respondent were removed.

Consideration was given to the potential affect on participants. Whilst they were at no risk of physical or emotional harm, questions related to their age, or to the reasons why they left Hungary might cause some distress. Such questions were put into a neutral context to minimise this. For example, questions on the respondents' relationship to Hungary were always mentioned simply as relationship to the country, and not to 'homeland', or the people who live in that country, as their 'fellow Hungarians'. Also, placing 'personal' questions at the end of the questionnaire suggested the necessity of answering them, without putting stress on the respondents at the start of the questionnaire.

But participating in this research had certain advantages for the respondents. Those who were interested in the topic researched would surely be interested in the results. In case the topic was very kind to them, they might even have the rewarding feeling that they personally could contribute to it. But the most positive outcome usually is that „…it can help people to understand more about the dilemmas and conflicts which confront us in life." (Oliver, 2003, p67)

Website analysis

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[47] Mann, Chris (2000): *Internet Communication and Qualitative Research*. Page 40.
[48] Data Protection Act: www.open.gov.uk/dpr/dprhome.htm

The chosen method for evaluating the available diasporic websites is content analysis. The elements of the websites can be interpreted in different ways. A content analysis aims to class these elements in a way that makes it possible to handle the information and link it to the results of the questionnaires. This method is appropriate to measure frequencies, which in this case is the main method of finding out whether the content and format desired by the group of users matches the actual content and format of the websites analysed.

The website analysis was designed in order to relate to the information that is gathered from the questionnaires and from the literature. The sites are examined along the following main aspects: Who is the targeted audience of the sites? Which languages do they use to communicate with them? What type of information (documents, resources, links) do the sites contain? The content analysis included the 'Mission statements' as well, as they give the pages' self-definition and define the targeted audiences.

Sampling

The Internet, as the primary source of data is often accused of being too selective and biased to one group: the lower middle-aged, educated male. Very few studies argue for the opposite side: that an Internet sample can be representative. Smith and Leigh (1997)[49] found that comparing Internet and non-Internet samples, differences in demographic variables were significant only in age and gender, but overall the comparability is sufficient to accept the Internet as research tool. According to Hewson et al. (2003), "[t]here seems to be a tendency for Internet samples to have a wider age range and to be more ethnically diverse, and perhaps to contain more males than females. However, it seems apparent that the type of sample obtained will rely heavily on the sampling methodology employed, for both traditional and Internet samples."[50] In spite of the fascinating possibilities of the Internet as a tool of 'masquerade', Buchanan and Smith (1999) found that Internet and non-

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[49] Cited in Hewson et al. (2003), page 27.
[50] Hewson 2003, page 28.

Internet samples "displayed similar psychometric properties"[51], which suggests that attitudes and/or behaviour changed by the 'virtualness' of the Internet has not affected the responses in a distort way.

Sampling for the questionnaire

The questionnaire was circulated by e-mail to webmasters of Hungarian ethnic websites. Sending out messages to organisations happened in two phases. The following organisations were contacted with the questionnaire in the first wave, before 25 June 2005:

- www.magyaronline.net,
- www.hungsoc.com,
- www.forumcenter.hu,
- www.hufo.info,
- www.skyex.com/hvm,
- www.hunsor.nu,
- www.nyeomszsz.org,
- www.bbc.co.uk/hungarian.

The second set of organisations were contacted before 29 June 2005:

- Hungarian-Costa Rica Friends Association,
- Duna Club,
- www.canadahun.com,
- Ir Gulyas,
- Hungarian Cultural Centre.

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[51] Quote from Hewson, 2003, page 29.

Some of the organisations welcomed the idea of this research project and embraced the aims and goals that link these sites together. The questionnaire was circulated by the maintainers of sites and got posted to other sites as well.

The websites, where the questionnaire appeared before 4 July 2005 are:

- [www.magyaronline.net](www.magyaronline.net),
- [www.canadahun.com](www.canadahun.com),
- [www.hhrf.org](www.hhrf.org),
- [http://covcsaduk.typepad.com/hungary/](http://covcsaduk.typepad.com/hungary/).

Therefore the sample is the group of individuals who came across the questionnaire on one of these sites. Filling in the questionnaire happened on a voluntary basis. Despite the initial great interest that surrounded the topic, during the examined period (25 June-31 July 2005) only 12 valid responses were received. The results are based on the questionnaires received before 31 July 2005. Out of the 12 responses 2 had to be discarded due to reasons of inappropriate format.

Sampling for the website analysis

As there is no complete database of websites designed for the Hungarian diasporas, I relied on link collections included on sites, such as [www.magyaronline.net](www.magyaronline.net), [www.linkcenter.hu](www.linkcenter.hu), [www.hhrf.hu](www.hhrf.hu) and [www.magyarorszag.hu](www.magyarorszag.hu), to find websites to start the research project. (By September 2005 a full list will become available, as research is being carried out by [www.magyaronline.net](www.magyaronline.net).)

The content analysis was carried out on websites mentioned by the respondents. The sample described is therefore not representative to geographical groupings, or to every available Hungarian diasporic website.

The respondents mentioned 24 websites in total, but as some of their choices fell outside the category of 'diasporic website', my analysis is limited to 14 sites (for details please see the Results on page 41.).

Coding

Categories for coding the contents were decided following pragmatic principles. The structure of the categories was designed to fulfil the formal requirements of a content analysis.[52] The categories are exclusive, without overlapping.

In creating categories for evaluating the websites, I followed the ideas and methods used in the research project examining Indian diasporic sites carried out by Adams and Ghose in 2003[53], because there are similarities in the use of the diasporic Internet spaces between the Hungarian and the Indian groups. Besides, there are several aspects that do not yet apply to the Hungarian usage, but might be in use in the future.

How the results were evaluated

Evaluating the results of the content analyses was executed in a quantitative format, following statistical methods. Categorical, ordinal and dichotomous variables were used to give an exhaustive evaluation of the findings. Coding the meaning was very important in order to be able to transform qualitative data into quantitative data; which allowed patterns to be detected from the analysis.

"Qualitative researchers use multiple methods to collect rich, descriptive, contextually situated data in order to seek understanding of human experience or relationships within a system or culture (Silverman, 1999). Processes of analytical induction from the data might then lead to the

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[52] Slater, Don (1998): *Analysing cultural objects: content analysis and semiotics*. In: Seale, Clive (1998)(ed.): *Researching Society and Culture*. London, SAGE, p.233-245.
[53] Adams, Paul C & Ghose, Rina (2003): *India.com: the construction of a space between*. Progress in Human Geography 27,4 pp. 414-437

formulation of simple explanatory hypotheses or, using systematic approaches such as grounded theory, the development of complex theories (Brannen, 1992)."[54] As Mann (2000) explains, qualitative research is based on the use of 'contextually situated data' that enables the researcher to find answers to the questions raised by the examined problem.

Researching the ethnic use of Hungarian websites is very complex, and is embedded in the theoretical discussions on several key issues that have specific meanings in the Hungarian context: citizenship and nationality, homeland and country. As explained in the literature review, these key issues do not offer simple, straightforward explanations to the occurring phenomena. Therefore this research aims to follow a systematic method of examination, in order to find the answers to the research question.

Understanding differences (cultural, ethnic, gender, age, etc.) means that we must accept that there is no „uniform group" (Oliver, 2003, p91) and that no judgement is acceptable during the research. As it is explained in details in the Introduction and the Literature review, Hungarian diaspora groups can be very different; therefore it was vital to take this into account while constructing the questions and during the evaluation of the results.

"In cyberspace (…) identities are 'flexible, swappable and disconnected from real-world bodies' (Shields, 1996)."[55] It was very important to examine, whether this sentence was true or applicable for the group participating in this research project. In drawing conclusions from the results of the data, it was considered, what conditions apply to the virtual community in question.

# Chapter III.

# Results

In this chapter I would like to present the results of the questionnaire and the website analysis. The results of the questionnaire responses are divided into two sections: the data of the respondents and their replies to the questions.

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[54] Mann, Chris (2000): Internet communication and qualitative research, page 2-3.
[55] Mann, 2000: page 203

Questionnaire Data

The characteristics of respondents are shown on Tables 3 to 10.

The total number of responses that contribute to the results of this research project is ten.

Table 3. Distribution of respondents by gender

| Gender | Male | Female | Total: |
|--------|------|--------|--------|
| Number | 6 | 4 | 10 |

The age range of the respondents is between 25 and 63 years. Only one respondent chose not to provide his/her age.

Table 4. Age of respondents

| Age | Number |
|-----|--------|
| Under 30 | 4 |
| Between 31 - 40 | 1 |
| Between 41 - 50 | 0 |
| Between 51 - 60 | 2 |
| Between 61 - 70 | 2 |
| Undisclosed | 1 |
| Total: | 10 |

The majority of the respondents are Hungarian citizens, and two are dual citizens.

Table 5. Nationality of respondents

| Nationality | Number |
|-------------|--------|
| Hungarian | 7 |
| Dual citizen | 2 |
| Undisclosed | 1 |
| Total: | 10 |

Table 6. shows the respondents' current location. 60% of the respondents live in Western Europe, 10% live overseas, but 30% decided not to reveal their location.

Table 6. Location of respondents

| Location | Number |
|----------|--------|
| Germany | 2 |
| Great Britain | 2 |
| Denmark | 1 |
| Norway | 1 |
| USA | 1 |
| Undisclosed | 3 |
| Total: | 10 |

Of the ten respondents seven were born in Hungary and three were born outside Hungary. The seven people, who were born in Hungary, left the country in three waves (Table 7.).

Table 7. The periods when the respondents left Hungary

| Year of leaving Hungary | Number |
|-------------------------|--------|
| 1960-1969 | 1 |
| 1970-1979 | 0 |
| 1980-1989 | 3 |
| 1989-2004 | 2 |
| Undisclosed | 1 |
| Total: | 7 |

According to the responses the main reason for leaving (Table 8.) is of personal nature: mainly family matters. Job opportunities and education also appeared among the chosen answers. It is notable that one respondent left one of the neighbouring countries and not Hungary.

Table 8. Reasons for leaving Hungary

| Reasons for leaving | Number |
|---------------------|--------|
| To work | 1 |
| To study | 1 |
| Personal reasons | 4 |
| Other | 1 |
| Total: | 7 |

Table 9. shows the frequency of visits made to Hungary. It is apparent that 90% of the respondents go to Hungary very frequently: once or twice per year.

Table 9. Frequency of visits to Hungary

| Frequency of visits to Hungary | Number |
|---|---|
| Every six months | 4 |
| Yearly | 5 |
| Never | 0 |
| Other | 0 |
| Not responding | 1 |
| Total: | 10 |

Seven of the respondents do not plan to move to Hungary in the next ten years, two of them do. (Table 10.) One person mentioned an intention to move to one of the neighbouring countries.

Table 10. Intention of moving to Hungary in the next 10 years

| Yes | 2 |
|---|---|
| No | 7 |
| N/A | 1 |
| Total: | 10 |

Questionnaire Responses

Question I.

In Question number I. respondents were asked to list at least five websites that they consider as 'diasporic website'. The most widely known site among the respondents is www.magyaronline.net, as it was mentioned a total of nine times, and out of the nine times on five occasions as first choice. Only www.utazasforum.net and http://www.mbk-norvegia.no/ were mentioned by two respondents. The other sites were all listed by single individuals.

Table I. Websites mentioned by respondents in order of preference

| Name of website | Number of times mentioned as... | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1st choice | 2nd choice | 3rd choice | 4th choice | 5th choice |
| www.magyaronline.net (Website for Hungarians living Worldwide) | 5 | 3 | 1 | | |
| www.bostonhungarians.org (Hungarian Society of | 1 | | | | |

| Website | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Massachusetts) | | | | | |
| www.duna.dk (Danish-Hungarian Cultural Association) | 1 | | | | |
| www.fi.uib.no/~csernai/Hu/magyar/egyesulet.html (Hungarian-Norwegian Friends Association - Hordaland) | 1 | | | | |
| http://www.mbk-norvegia.no/ (Hungarian Friends' Circle in Norway) | 1 | | | 1 | |
| www.magyarorszag.de (Website for Hungarians living in Germany) | 1 | | | | |
| www.utazasforum.net (Travel forum) | | 2 | | | |
| www.bbc.co.uk/hungarian (The BBC's Hungarian page as part of the World Service) | | 1 | | | |
| www.hungaroclub.com (Club for Hungarians in Malmo, Sweden) | | 1 | | | |
| www.hunsor.se (Hungarian-Swedish Online Resources) | | 1 | | | |
| www.irokilencek.hu (Contemporary literature) | | 1 | | | |
| www.utazas.com (Travel) | | | | | |
| www.buod.de (Association of Hungarian Organisations in Germany) | | | 1 | | |
| http://roeke.cjb.net/ (Transylvanian Carphat Association – Page cannot be found) | | | 1 | | |
| www.foruminst.sk (Forum Minority Research Institute, Slovakia) | | | 1 | | |
| http://www.empolis.no/~barna/HunNor/ (Information channel for Hungarians living in Norway) | | | 1 | | |
| www.index.hu (News portal) | | | 1 | | |
| www.magyarorszag.hu (The government portal) | | | 1 | | |
| www.origo.hu (News portal) | | | 1 | | |
| www.dania.lap.hu (Link collection) | | | | 1 | |
| www.transindex.ro (News portal) | | | | 1 | |
| http://www.freiburgimagyarok.com/ (Hungarians living in Freiburg) | | | | | 1 |
| http://www.geocities.com/mliget/ (Family Magazine for Hungarian families living in Southern Sweden) | | | | | 1 |
| www.nyeomszsz.org (Association of National Hungarian Organisations in Western Europe) | | | | | 1 |

Question I/a.

Question I/a examined the most visited site. According to the replies, four out of ten respondents visit www.magyaronline.net the most. The other six pages were voted for by single individuals, and are listed (Table I/a.) in alphabetic order.

Table I/a. Websites visited the most

| Sites visited the most | Number of people voting for it |
|---|---|
| www.magyaronline.net | 4 |
| www.duna.dk | 1 |
| http://www.empolis.no/~barna/HunNor/ | 1 |
| www.magyarorszag.de | 1 |
| http://www.mbk-norvegia.no/ | 1 |
| www.origo.hu | 1 |
| www.utazas.com | 1 |
| Total: | 10 |

Question I/b.

Table I/b. shows that 70% of the respondents use a forum at least daily and 30% do so weekly.

Table I/b. Frequency of visiting the 'favourite' website

| Frequency | Number of replies |
|---|---|
| Twice a day | 4 |
| Daily | 3 |
| About twice a week | 0 |
| Weekly | 3 |
| Once in a fortnight | 0 |
| Monthly | 0 |
| Other | 0 |
| Total: | 10 |

Question I/c.

The main reasons why the respondents visit the listed sites are very diverse. Table I/c. shows the most commonly occurring elements in the answers. Exchanging information, using Hungarian language, getting news and the possibility of discussions are the most important, according to the number of times these options appeared among the answers.

Table I/c. Reasons for visiting diasporic websites

| Reasons | Number of times mentioned |
|---|---|
| Information | 3 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Language | 3 |
| Forum and chat | 3 |
| News | 2 |
| Aim: getting to know people, exchanging experience | 1 |
| Good acquaintances, democratic and friendly atmosphere | 1 |
| Cultural roots | 1 |
| Least injustice | 1 |
| Not applicable (The respondent is webmaster/author of a site) | 2 |
| No response | 1 |

Question I/d.

To the question: '*If the site has a forum; do you actively take part in discussions?*' respondents gave an almost unanimous reply. The responses given show that 90% of the respondents are active forum users. (Table I/d.)

Table I/d. Attitudes to discussion forums

| Options | Number |
|---|---|
| Yes | 9 |
| No, I only read them | 0 |
| No, I'm not interested in forums | 0 |
| Other | 1 |
| Total: | 10 |

Question I/e.

Question number I/e focused on the online forums' virtual or face-to-face (F2F) character. Table I/e presents the responses to the question '*Do you know any of the other forums users personally?*' According to the data, 60% of the respondents know their forum-partners personally. Further 40% would meet the forum users. No respondent preferred not to know the other forum users personally.

Table I/e. Virtual and face-to-face character of forums

| Options | Number |
|---|---|
| A, Yes, I knew them beforehand | 2 |
| B, Yes, after meeting online, we | 3 |

| | |
|---|---|
| organised a face-to-face meeting | |
| C, No, but this is why I prefer online communities | 0 |
| D, No, but I would consider meeting them in real life | 3 |
| E, Other (a.: mix of A&B, b.: would select who to meet) | 2 |
| Total: | 10 |

Question II.

In Question number II. respondents were asked to list up to five ideas of essential elements for a diasporic website in order of preference. For each element a measure of Popularity is calculated by allocating a score of 5 points for 1st choice, 4 points for 2nd choice etc. Frequency of occurrence is also given in Table II. The absolute first position is voted to "Debate forum" as it has the highest scores both for totals and frequency. Elements that gained the high scores (8 points) are "Information and news from 'homeland'", "Hungarian and international culture and cultural news" and "Events, programs". Elements, that were mentioned the most times (3 points) besides "Debate forums" are "Information and news from 'homeland".

Table II. Desired elements of diasporic websites

| Ideas | Number of times ideas mentioned as...choice | Total | Frequency |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

| | 1st | 2nd | 3rd | 4th | 5th | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Debate forums** | 2 | | | 1 | | **12** | **3** |
| Information and news from 'homeland' | 1 | | | 1 | 1 | 8 | 3 |
| Information of schooling abroad | 1 | | | | | 5 | 1 |
| Hungarian and international culture and cultural news | 1 | | 1 | | | 8 | 2 |
| News for/about diasporas | 1 | | | | | 5 | 1 |
| Language, culture | 1 | | | | | 5 | 1 |
| Local diaspora news | 1 | | | | | 5 | 1 |
| Life of diasporic communities | | 1 | | | | 4 | 1 |
| Information of learning languages abroad | | 1 | | | | 4 | 1 |
| Political debates | | 1 | | | | 4 | 1 |
| Events, Programs | | 2 | | | | 8 | 2 |
| Everyday in different countries | | 1 | | | | 4 | 1 |
| Connections/togetherness | | 1 | 1 | | | 7 | 2 |
| Local diaspora events | | 1 | | | | 4 | 1 |
| Recipes | | 1 | | | | 4 | 1 |
| Chat, discussion forums | | | 2 | | | 6 | 2 |
| Links to other diasporic sites | | | 1 | | | 3 | 1 |
| Anniversaries, Remembrances | | | 1 | 1 | | 5 | 2 |
| Practical advice from 'homeland' | | | 1 | | | 3 | 1 |
| Link collections | | | 1 | | | 3 | 1 |
| Mother tongue | | | | 1 | | 2 | 1 |
| Information about the host country | | | | 1 | | 2 | 1 |
| Online shopping | | | | 1 | | 2 | 1 |
| Hungarian humour | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Help | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Travel stories | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Extra option: Kids' corner as 6th choice | | | | | | 0.5 | 1 |

Question III.

Question number III. focuses on how respondents 'finish' unfinished statements. The following tables (Table III/a-g.) show the responses given to each statement. In some cases different respondents wrote similar (on occasions the same) ending to statements, therefore in the tables these appear as grouped data. 'N' indicates the number of people finishing the actual statement.

Table III/a. A good Hungarian diasporic website …

| (N=8) | Number of times mentioned |
|---|---|
| Has no politics | 2 |
| Does not exist yet | 1 |
| Easily accessible, Good-looking, Rich with information | 1 |
| Is in relation to the members' needs, Democratic | 1 |
| Informs and gives help | 1 |
| Tries to fill the gaps of other websites, is well structured and well laid out | 1 |
| Must aim to serve the Hungarian diaspora | 1 |

Table III/b. What I like the most about these sites is…

| (N=7) | Number of times mentioned |
|---|---|
| All in Hungarian language | 1 |
| That they exist | 2 |
| Good atmosphere, something new, interesting and links us together | 1 |
| Practical advice | 1 |
| That I know that I am not alone in ..., and there is a chance to meet other Hungarians | 1 |
| That because of their 'locality' they suggest personal involvement | 1 |

Table III/c. About these websites, I would like to know…

| (N=6) | Number of times mentioned |
|---|---|
| Why aren't they distributed more efficiently? | 1 |
| How many of them are financed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs? | 1 |
| If the existence of politically independent sites is possible without funding? | 1 |
| How can content be changed according to needs? | 1 |
| Why are there so few visitors and why don't they write to the forums? | 1 |
| Which generation of diasporic Hungarians are the maintainers? | 1 |

Table III/d. The main purpose of these sites is…

| (N=9) | Number of times |
|---|---|

|  | mentioned |
|---|---|
| To provide accurate information | 1 |
| To help stay Hungarian | 1 |
| To keep the attachment to language and to homeland | 1 |
| To combat loneliness, Develop culture, Deepen connections with the homeland, Increase common understanding | 1 |
| To inform people | 1 |
| To keep those Hungarians together, who live 'there' | 1 |
| To bring diasporic Hungarians closer to each other | 1 |
| Survival, and development and advertising of the site | 1 |
| To support to keep the reader's (supposedly) Hungarian originated identity | 1 |

Table III/e. I think these websites should be maintained by…

| (N=7) | Number of times mentioned |
|---|---|
| MVSZ | 1 |
| Information channels, embassies | 1 |
| The local community | 1 |
| Homeland's society + the rich ones of those who left | 1 |
| The host country | 1 |
| The organisation that founded it | 1 |
| Local NGO Hungarian community (if there is one), or a successful entrepreneurs, anyone who has the money or time to do it | 1 |

Table III/f. The worst thing about these sites is…

| (N=8) | Number of times mentioned |
|---|---|
| Some are politically committed to a party | 1 |
| That the information is often 'alien' | 1 |
| That those who could lead the topics at a quality level, don't have enough time | 1 |
| If it's 'personal' | 1 |
| Improper comments from improper people (which is the downfall of the Internet) | 1 |
| That many of them are not updated frequently | 1 |
| That there are too few of them (not enough) | 2 |

Table III/g. In my opinion these sites help…

| (N=8) | Number of times |
|---|---|

| | mentioned |
|---|---|
| The nation 'nursing' culture | 1 |
| Keep one's identity, People not to forget their origins, In keeping diasporas' Hungarian identity | 3 |
| Keep values, Live Hungarianness, Increase understanding between Hungarians and Non-Hungarians | 1 |
| Getting to know people | 1 |
| The diaspora and those arriving there, Hungarians living abroad in getting information | 2 |

Question IV.

Respondents were asked to rank 12 functions from 1 to 12 in order of preference. In the analysis the function ranked first was allocated 12 points, the second 11 points, etc. Table IV. shows the functions in order of general preference, according to the total marks allocated by using the respondents' votes. 'Forum' is the most preferred function of a diasporic website (with the score of 83 points), as opposed to 'Matrimonial service', which proved to be of the least interest for the respondents, scoring only 25 points.

Table IV. Ranking of functions available on diasporic websites

| Ranking | Function | Total mark |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Forum | 83 |
| 2. | Cultural programs with diasporic communities | 75 |
| 3. | News and information about Hungarians living abroad | 67 |
| 4. | News and information about Hungary | 62 |
| 5. | Hungarian language teaching online | 57 |
| 6. | Online entertainment (books, radio, TV, music, films) | 56 |
| 7. | Online databases (statistics, political issues, etc about Hungarians worldwide) | 50 |
| 8. | Cultural programs with 'homeland' | 47 |
| 9. | Virtual galleries and museums | 41 |
| 10. | Virtual tours in Hungary | 35 |
| 11. | Online competitions | 26 |
| 12. | Matrimonial service | 25 |

Question V.

Each respondent marked the outlook of the nine listed websites with scores from 1 to 5 (5 meaning positive, 1 meaning negative opinion). Table V. shows the average marks given to each site. According to the numbers www.magyaronline.net and www.magyarorszag.hu are the most attractive websites with 3.9 points, and http://kulfoldimagyarok.linkcenter.hu is the least attractive, awarded only 2.3 points.

Table V. Preferences of the websites' outlook

| Name of website | Average mark given |
|---|---|
| Hungsoc | 2.9 |
| MVSZ | 2.5 |
| BBC | 3 |
| Linkcenter | 2.3 |
| MON | 3.9 |
| Nyeomszsz | 2.7 |
| Projectretour | 2.8 |
| Magyarorszag.hu | 3.9 |
| Hungary.com | 3.8 |

Website analysis

The websites listed by the respondents were categorised according to criteria of diasporic websites, which were the following:

- Target audience is a Hungarian diaspora group or individuals related to them
- Services are aimed at Hungarian diaspora groups

Table 11. shows, which sites can be defined as diasporic sites and which are the ones, that fall out of that category. 60.9% of the visited sites are of diasporic character. 34.8% are general sites from Hungary, Romania and Slovakia for the general public, not specifically for diasporas. One of the mentioned sites was not available at the time of the research.

Table 11. Distribution of diasporic and non-diasporic websites

| Diasporic sites: 60.9% | Non-diasporic | Not applicable: |
|---|---|---|

| | sites: 34.8% | 4.3% |
|---|---|---|
| www.bbc.co.uk/hungarian (The BBC's Hungarian page as part of the World Service)<br>www.bostonhungarians.org (Hungarian Society of Massachusetts)<br>www.buod.de (Association of Hungarian Organisations in Germany)<br>www.duna.dk (Danish-Hungarian Cultural Association)<br>http://www.empolis.no/~barna/HunNor/ (Information channel for Hungarians living in Norway)<br>www.fi.uib.no/~csernai/Hu/magyar/egyesulet.html (Hungarian-Norwegian Friends Association - Hordaland)<br>www.freiburgimagyarok.com/ (Hungarians living in Freiburg)<br>www.geocities.com/mliget/ (Family Magazine for Hungarian families living in Southern Sweden)<br>www.hungaroclub.com (Club for Hungarians in Malmo, Sweden)<br>www.magyarorszag.de (Website for Hungarians living in Germany)<br>http://www.mbk-norvegia.no/ (Hungarian Friends' Circle in Norway)<br>www.hunsor.se (Hungarian-Swedish Online Resources)<br>www.magyaronline.net (Website for Hungarians living Worldwide)<br>www.nyeomszsz.org (Association of National Hungarian Organisations in Western Europe) | www.dania.lap.hu<br>www.foruminst.sk*<br>www.index.hu<br>www.irokilencek.hu<br>www.magyarorszag.hu<br>www.transindex.ro<br>www.utazas.com*<br>www.utazasforum.net<br><br>Pages marked with * have some features of a diasporic site, but their main profile is different. | http://roeke.cjb.net/<br><br><br><br>This page was not found. |

The following tables refer to the sites defined as 'Diasporic websites' only. Analysis was carried out to find data in the contents in the following topics: Location and language choices, discussion forums, newsletters, targeted audiences and areas, goals and mission, and finally services available.

Table 12. summarises the proportion of currently maintained and neglected sites. 57% of the pages were up-to-date at the time of the analysis. Three sites appeared 'forgotten', as they were last reviewed in 2004, 2003 and 2001. 21% were modified within the last 6 months.

Table 12. Time of last updates

|  | **Up to date** | Updated in '05 | Out of date | Total: |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of sites | 8 | 3 | 3 | 14 |
| Percentage | **57.1%** | 21.4% | 21.4% | 100% |

The locations where the sites are edited are shown in Table 13. 92.8% of the sites were edited in Western Europe, and a single website in the United States.

Table 13. Number and percentage of sites edited in the six countries

| **Countries** | **Number of sites edited** | **Percentage** |
|---|---|---|
| Denmark | 1 | 7.1% |
| Germany | 4 | 28.6% |
| Great Britain | 1 | 7.1% |
| Norway | 3 | 21.4% |
| Sweden | 4 | 28.6% |
| United States of America | 1 | 7.1% |

The websites are mostly written in Hungarian, but in six cases there is an option of viewing the pages in a different language. The second language is usually the language of the host country: English, German, Danish, Norwegian and Swedish. English is an exception as it also appears on a page maintained in Sweden. (Table 14.)

Table 14. Distribution of mono-, bi- and trilingual sites

| **Language** | **Hungarian only** | **Bilingual** | **Trilingual** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number of sites | 8 | 5 | 1 |
| Percentage | 57% | 36%% | 7% |

Table 15. classifies the profile of sites, which indicates whether they communicate to individuals ('Open'), organisations ('Specified') or both ('Mixed'). In this system there are two forms of coverage: 'International' and 'Local'. 'International' means that the websites communicate towards audiences living in several countries, whereas 'Local' shows sites that focus

on a certain country, area or city. Among the 14 websites 3 are classed as 'International', 11 (78.6%) are of local interest.

Table 15. Coverage and profile of sites

| Coverage and Profile | Local and Open | Local and Specified | International and Open | International and Specified | International and Mixed |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of sites | 10 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Percentage | 71.4% | 7.1% | 7.1% | 7.1% | 7.1% |

The target audience for a website was identified from the mission statement. The main types of audiences targeted are shown in Table 16.

Table 16. Target audiences

| Target audience | Number of times mentioned | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Hungarian émigrés and temporary migrants | 10 | 50% |
| Individuals of Hungarian descent | 3 | 15% |
| Hungarian organisations in diasporas | 2 | 10% |
| Hungarians living in Hungary or in the Carpathian Basin | 2 | 10% |
| Other nationals who are interested in Hungarian language and culture | 2 | 10% |
| Western media | 1 | 5% |

Most websites (9 out of 14) had a 'Mission statement' or 'Constitution'. Two didn't have either but on the Home Page stated their main goals in a few sentences. On one website the Constitution was available only in one language (not Hungarian or English) and so was inaccessible for this project. From these texts the elements of mission and goals were extracted, as shown in Table 17.

Table 17. Main elements of goals and mission of sites

| Position | Elements of 'Mission and Goals' | Number of times mentioned |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | • Getting to know and band together Hungarians | Eight |
| 2. | • Create a source of information<br>• Maintain Hungarian language, culture, identity and traditions | Seven times each |
| 3. | • Organise events<br>• Inform other nations<br>• Create links and co-operation with other nations | Four times each |
| 4. | • Propagate Hungarian culture for other nationals<br>• Support members of the diasporas<br>• Protect interests and rights of members of diasporas | Three times each |
| 5. | • Give support for Hungarian causes<br>• Coordinate the work of organisations | Twice each |
| 6. | • Help integration of Hungarians into host society | Once |

Table 18. shows the availability of four main types of contents: discussion forums, information sent out to users regularly in the form of group e-mails or newsletters, online documents and weblinks. Out of the 14 diasporic sites only three have a forum, and four use the e-mail news system. As one site uses both methods, the total number of sites with these options is six. Eight sites (57.1%) don't give the options of communication to their users on forum or chain letter. Of the three sites that run a forum, only one is regularly in use, one is just being set up, and on the third the last message was sent in May 2005. Out of the four sites that run e-mail lists, two allow users to create the messages; two sites have an official newsletter.

Table 18. Types of online content available

| Content | Forum | Newsletter or chain e-mail | Online documents, resources | Links |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of sites that have the type of content | 3 | 4 | 11 | 14 |
| Percentage | 21.4% | 28.6% | 78.6% | 100% |

The following type of documents and resources were found on the websites:

- News articles
- Links to miscellaneous topics: Hungarian cuisine, official translation, accommodation, converting measures, tax advice, university studies and research, etc.
- Addresses, e-mail lists
- History of Hungarian groups in the host countries and articles on host countries
- Documents about Hungarian minorities' issues

It is notable that among the resources there are links as well. The content analysis respected the sites' own categories: 'Links' in this table are addresses listed under 'Links' or 'Connections' sections on the websites. Table 19. shows the proportion of links provided in different topics.

Table 19. Links found on the pages

| Type of links | Number of links | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Information (global, local, services and addresses) | 94 | 22.5% |
| *(Local info and services:* | *30* | *7.2%)* |
| Culture (in general, online, and education) | 77 | 18.4% |
| *(Online:* | *13* | *3.1%* |
| Governmental offices (embassies, ministries) | 75 | 17.9% |
| Organisations for diasporas | 69 | 16.5% |
| Media | 53 | 12.7% |
| Travel | 39 | 9.3% |
| Political parties | 10 | 2.4% |
| Miscellaneous | 1 | 0.2% |
| **Total:** | **418** | 100% |
| Average number of links per page (Total: 10 pages!*) | 41.8 pages | |
| Standard Deviation | ±40.5 | |
| Smallest number of links/site: | 7 | |
| Largest number of links/site: | 143 | |

* BBC, Hunsor, MON and Mliget were not part of this section for the following reasons:

- The BBC website contains standard BBC links and does not necessarily relate to Hungarian diasporic contents. Counting in all the BBC links would distort the proportions of links found in each section.
- Hunsor and MON are enormous databases that contain thousands of links and a vast number of documents. It is beyond the capacity of this research project to examine all the contents of these two sites.
- Mliget is an online version of a magazine, and is neither a database, nor a link collection.

# Chapter IV.

# Discussion

<u>The number of respondents</u>

Although the questionnaire was posted on four different websites the response rate was disappointingly low. A possible explanation for this lies in the very character of the Internet. The lack of face-to-face (F2F) contact with the prospective respondents had a negative effect. Also, there are numerous online questionnaires circulated on the Net, competing for attention, therefore this questionnaire would have needed more advertising to attract more users. As two sites of the four that broadcast the questions have established discussion forums, most of their users might be content with the current situation of diasporic websites and probably didn't feel motivated enough to look into the issue in more depth. Since the time of the research was during summer, some readers might have been on a holiday, and in general, the number of visits made to the sites might have contributed to the low response rate.

The distribution of respondents by age, gender, location, reasons for leaving and the various periods when they became members of the Hungarian diaspora indicate that the sample is reasonably diverse and their attitudes towards diasporic websites mirror this diversity, however neither the number nor the distribution is representative to the Hungarian diaspora. For example, according to the Office responsible for Hungarians Abroad (HTMH) report in 2003 between 260-270,000 people lived in Western Europe (excluding Austria) and 1.4 million people in the USA (in 2000),[56] whereas to this study six times more replies arrived from Western Europe than from the USA. (Table 6.)

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[56] www.htmh.hu/jelentesek2003/nyugat2003.htm

It is questionable whether the respondents understood the definition 'diaspora' consequently throughout the questionnaire. The main reasons why it is unclear are the following:

- The admitted location of the respondents (Table 6.) shows no replies coming from areas that used to be part of Hungary (and therefore would not be defined as diaspora)
- Seven respondents declared to have been born in Hungary and replied to Question 7. about the time they left the country
- But among the replies to Question 8. one respondent stated to have left one of the neighbouring countries, and not Hungary. (Similarly, in Table 10. one answer was that one respondent is planning to move to a neighbouring country and not to Hungary.) This poses the question whether in Table 7. the data are slightly distorted. More importantly, it is questionable whether Hungary is understood as the current, official territory of the country or as 'homeland', together with the areas 'beyond the borders'.

Four of the respondents left Hungary between 1960 and 1989. (Table 7.) The Farkas Kempelen Digital University Database (HIK)[57] describes the main waves of migration from Hungary. According to HIK between 1963-1989 1300-2300 people left Hungary legally per year, and between 1800-4600 illegally. The most popular destinations in the 20th century are in Western Europe, whereas in the past more people chose to relocate to the USA, Australia and Canada. Two respondents left Hungary between 1989-2004, which coincides with the main migration wave from the East to the West after the collapse of socialism. It is also before Hungary's EU membership.

The issue of citizenship for Hungarians living around the world is currently part of political and civil discourse. In the light of national ideals it might be meaningful that 7 respondents kept their Hungarian nationality and would worth more in-depth research.

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[57] http://www.hik.hu/tankonyvtar/site/books/b105/ch03s02s04.html

The frequency of visits to Hungary (Table 9.) is very high. More questions could clarify whether it means intensive homesickness ('national' attachment, family visits) or business trips. However it explains the relevance of the number of Travel links found on the websites. (Table 19.) Despite whichever explanation, most respondents do not plan to move to Hungary in the next 10 years. (Table 10.)

General characteristics of the websites

The sites listed in Question I. weren't all diasporic sites (only 60.9% were), but the respondents' first choices were without exception aimed at the diaspora. The non-diasporic sites listed by the respondents are shown in Table 20. These websites contain elements that can be found on diasporic pages as well. The fact that the respondents chose these sites might be that this group doesn't require assistance from diasporic organisations to find information and other topics about Hungary, because they have the social capital and network to find the necessary sources themselves.

Table 20. Type and name of non-diasporic websites

| Type of sites | Name of websites |
| --- | --- |
| Specific information site | www.dania.lap.hu |
| General information site | www.foruminst.sk<br>www.index.hu<br>www.transindex.ro |
| Cultural site | www.irokilencek.hu |
| Forum sites about travelling | www.utazas.com<br>www.utazasforum.net |
| Hungary's government portal | www.magyarorszag.hu |

It is quite surprising, that the most significant official diasporic website, the Hungarian World Association (MVSZ) was not on the list at all. Similarly, the Association of National Hungarian Organisations in Western Europe (Nyeomszsz) appeared only once and as last choice. The MVSZ is the main umbrella organisation that aims to bond Hungarians together whatever country they live in, therefore they are the organisation responsible for issues

of Hungarians living in diaspora as well. Their major activity though is in political lobby to highlight and improve the situation of Hungarians living in minority status. Despite their well respected work, their website is not among the visited pages in this study. It is likely that people can track the MVSZ's actions better from news articles and other media sources than by using the MVSZ website, because the page is not updated frequently: the article featured on the main page is dated May 2004. The other organisation, Nyeomszsz is probably in a similar situation, as their activity and statements can be found on a number of other websites. Another possible reason for not recording a great number of visits is the lack of interactive possibilities, like that of a discussion forum.

Updated and 'old' content

It is very significant, that 21.4% of the analysed websites were not up-to-date. Out-of-date information is not helpful for the users. Given the frequency the respondents visit websites, it would be disappointing to find the content unchanged over a long period. It also lowers the value of the infrastructure as a whole, whereas Internet-based information is in theory the most mobile and cost effective to modify. However, it is very important to keep the information available even if it's not the newest: some users might want to look into the archives, or other (new) users will find that piece of information new as well.

Location of websites and users

Comparison of the location of the users and the editors (Table 21.) indicates 'locality' to a certain extent. The majority of users and websites are in Western Europe and a smaller percentage in the United States. However, it is possible that the undisclosed location of 3 respondents means a broader variety of places. Locality was mentioned as a positive value in response to Question III/b. It is also notable that some respondents are site maintainers at the same time, so the answers cannot be interpreted as solely coming from 'average users'.

Table 21. Country of respondents and editors

| Countries | Respondents | Websites' editors |
|---|---|---|
| Denmark | 1 | 1 |
| Germany | 2 | 4 |
| Great Britain | 2 | 1 |
| Norway | 1 | 3 |
| Sweden | 0 | 4 |
| USA | 1 | 1 |
| Undisclosed | 3 | 0 |

<u>Languages and target audience</u>

It was shown in the Results section (Table 14.) that the majority of websites are written only in Hungarian, and only 43% of them are available in other languages. Although it is mentioned in the responses (Table III/b.) that Hungarian diasporic websites are preferred in Hungarian language, it is important to take other sections of the possible audience into account (Table 16.): those who are descendents of Hungarians, other nationals and the Western media, that altogether make up 30% of the target audience. Besides, considering that half of the Hungarian diaspora doesn't speak the language any more (as mentioned in the Introduction on page 2), it is necessary to provide access to the websites in a form, which make them more attractive for a wider audience. On the other hand, some documents were not accessible in Hungarian at all, only in a non-Hungarian language.

<u>Main functions and the elements of page content as expected by the users and as prioritised by the website maintainers</u>

Questions II. and IV. of the questionnaire focused on the users' needs and expectations regarding the services and content available on the diasporic websites. In both questions discussion forums were declared to be the most vital element, followed by information and cultural content; and possibilities for getting to know other Hungarians at programs and events. The actual elements found on the sites (Tables 17. and 18.) cover only parts of the user needs. The goals reflect on the need for connection between people, and

consider providing information and organising programs as a high priority. Despite this, as few as 21.4% of the sites maintain discussion forums.

Links

Even though the need for link collections was not reflected as high priority by the users compared to other types of content (Table II.), the number of links found on the websites is relatively higher in proportion to other contents (Table 18.): All the websites have links, but only 78.9% stores information online. The amount of information in resource format is in reality even lower, as on many sites simple links are categorised as resources.

The topics of the links are very diverse and compliment the choice of topics about which the users would like to read. The number of links pointing to other diasporic organisations is relatively low (only 69 out of the 418), which does not facilitate the members of the diaspora getting to know other organisations or other, disparate diasporic Hungarians, outside their known communities. As the present research didn't ask the respondents which groups of diasporic Hungarians would they specifically like to create bonds with, these results cannot be interpreted in neither a negative nor a positive way. Generally, international research hasn't documented a lot of information on the diasporic website users' offline networks. Future research projects might discover more information about this topic.

Online activities

It is important to take into account that responses to questions about the most known websites, preferred functions and the attitude to forums might be biased in this study. Since the questionnaire was circulated mainly on sites with discussion forums, regular forum users had more chance to know about it than non-forum users. Secondly, people who enjoy participating in online discussions are perhaps more likely to respond to a questionnaire than others. This is directly related to questions where MON scored high, because

it is likely that the responses came from a very selective group: the users of MON.

The replies suggest that participating in a discussion forum is a preferred online activity. The main evidences for this are the following:

- 40% of the respondents voted for MON, a site that has a forum, as the most visited website (Question I/a.),
- In Table I/c. it is shown that forums are in the most common reasons for visiting a website,
- 90% of the respondents actively take part in forums at least once a week, but mainly even more frequently: once or twice a day (Questions I/b. and d.).

However, as all the respondents prefer combining F2F communication (Question I/e.) with Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC), 'virtualness' is not applicable to their online activities. There are several possible explanations to this. First of all, as the Internet is still considered to be 'new media' perhaps audiences haven't familiarised with some of its useful possibilities. There might as well be a little rejection in their behaviour, as online activities are not considered to be absolutely safe, accepted and 'serious' as the traditional ones.

Hardly any of the websites utilise the Internet to host other activities than to inform the users about offline programs. The exceptions are MON and Hunsor. These two websites store a significant amount of data online, which are accessible to users at any time and not by request. Magyaronline has launched an online competition as well. Hunsor supplies up-to-date information in numerous useful topics to diasporas and non-diasporic Hungarians or other nationals.

Similarly to the answers to Question I/e. the replies to Question IV. suggest that the users don't want groundbreaking, novelty features: the ideas of virtual

galleries, tours and competitions finished very low down on their ranking list; leaving the idea of an online matrimonial service as low down as possible, at last position.

Expected visual quality

The outlook of the websites doesn't seem to influence the choices the respondents make when selecting a website to use for diasporic purposes. Even though MON finished at first position in the marks given for outlook (Table V.), frequency of use (Table I/a.) and in being mentioned the most times (Table I.); it appears to be the case that content, online activity and atmosphere were more important factors. The following data supports this explanation:

- Table III/a. shows that only once was the outlook mentioned as a criterion for a good website, and even then together with easy accessibility. Another respondent also highlighted the need for a site to be well laid out and structured, but not necessarily the 'visually attractive'.
- Even though www.magyarorszag.hu scored the same points in attractiveness as MON (Table V.), out of the total 33 votes for visited sites it was mentioned only once, and as third choice (Table I.),
- MON has a variety of discussion forums, which was proven to be the most popular choice as website element in Table IV., and was also in the upper sections of Table I/c. and II.

On the other hand, respondents appreciated the pleasing outlook of websites by giving high scores to the professionally built websites of Hungary Tourism Ltd. and the BBC (Table V.)

# Conclusions

This dissertation provided an insight to the online activities of a small Hungarian diasporic group. Relevant theories and concepts were described, giving background information to international migration, in order to place the question of diaspora in context with global processes. The definition of diaspora was examined in relation to concepts of the meaning of nation.

The users' attitudes towards the existing websites, and their further requirements and ideas regarding the contents and purpose of the sites were established by a questionnaire. A content analysis of the websites mentioned by the respondents was carried out. This was followed by the presentation and the critical evaluation of the results.

Summary of the results

The answer to the research question is that, for Hungarians in diaspora, there are some very informative websites available which are planned to meet the users' requirements and expectations to some extent. However, the results showed that the group in question would like to see more diasporic online spaces as one of the most negative aspects they mentioned was that there weren't enough diasporic pages available.

The results also made it clear that these websites play an important role in helping diasporic Hungarians keep their national identity. Responses showed that the Internet, and especially diasporic websites, are part of the participants' everyday experiences; the users are in favour of regular online discussions, which is in line with the assumptions and focus of Hungarian diaspora research.

It was an interesting question as to whether the new media (computers and the Internet) would be adopted by diasporic communities and if yes, how quickly. This study concludes that the users are open to the useful capabilities

of websites, but only if the facilities are made relevant to them. Along the lines of the results presented in this dissertation, it would be worthwhile to design additional, more in-depth and larger scale research to find out more about the relationship between Hungarian diaspora groups and Computer-Mediated Communication.

Possible directions for improvement

To serve the users' needs better, more online content must be made available. It is also very important to make it clear on the websites whether the word 'Resources' means real source documents in accessible format. Another aspect, which relates to the co-operation of the different diasporic websites is to discuss and decide roles and profiles of websites. If the sites deliver what they promise in the mission statement, and don't get entangled in other issues that they don't really support, it will make it easier for users to identify suitable online spaces for themselves. Regular updates are vital in order to make the content interesting and reliable. And last but not least, websites must be developed with great care, to make sure that the content helps the users to access quality material, presented at a high standard, in a linguistically proper way.

It is apparent from the results that users are enthusiastic to participate in discussion forums. But further research could throw light on other content elements, for example finding out more details of what type of information do they follow closely.

Examples of another country

In Tyner and Kuhlke's report on the Philippine diaspora's way of using the Internet, a very different situation is described. In their case, the diaspora's online activity not only facilitated and maintained diaspora-homeland and inter-diasporic relationships, but it actually intensified communities and trans-national discussion. It is a fascinating opportunity for the Hungarian diaspora

as well, to build up such a network that could be a catalyst for data collection, research, co-operation and development.

Online content and national priorities

Numerous conferences are organised to have an understanding of life in a diaspora. Questions of national identity, native language, arts and traditions are usual topics for discussions and presentations.  The idea of double or multiple identities are not omitted either. Online spaces have the opportunity to make conversations between 'motherland' and diaspora more fluent, approachable, fast and easy. Once a mutual understanding is reached, the infrastructure would make progress possible.

Initiatives related to digital databases for the Hungarian diaspora

One of the main reasons why diasporic Hungarians visit websites is to preserve their national identity. This is possible in several ways, including access to Hungarian cultural products online. There is a process under way to digitise Hungarian cultural heritage and make it easily accessible. One of the online databases already known to the respondents of this research project is the Hungarian Electronic Library (MEK), because it is found among the links from several diasporic websites. Another online database is János Neumann Digital Library (Tószegi, 2002). This was launched in 1997, operates at www.webkat.hu and contains documents formatted to the Internet in Hungarian language. The activity of these two main libraries (that were followed by hundreds of museums and libraries) conform to the strategies of 'E-Europe', a European Union initiative that aims to make the cultural heritage of European nations accessible online. It is complemented by the so-called "I-2010" European Information Society 2010 programme.[58] In another article Tószegi comments that the Hungarian state will be obliged to provide access to audiovisual documents, as it is part of the constitutional right to access

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[58] For more information visit
http://europa.eu.int/information_society/eeurope/2005/index_en.htm

information. For this purpose, the National Audiovisual Archive (NAVA) project is planned, which would create an online, accessible meta-database that would include cultural products, which were not previously accessible. These databases are designed to be free for the users and available regardless of the individuals' location, which would make it ideal for diasporic use.

László Vetési discusses the need for a Diaspora strategy – National strategy. He stresses that a plan must be made for collecting accurate information about Hungarian diaspora groups around the world. It is necessary to know the scope and the locations of the Hungarian diaspora in order to make successful research possible. Using ICT strategies would make data collation more effective. As it was shown in this research, diasporic users have differing views on the question of who should fund the operation of online diasporic spaces (ranging from MVSZ, the local community and Hungary to saying that it's the host country's responsibility). It is a priority to get to a common agreement and start cooperative development.

# Appendices

## **Questionnaire: Usage of Websites designed for Hungarian diasporas**

Dear User,

My name is Bernadett Toth; I am an MA student at Coventry University's Communication, Culture and Media course. As part of my dissertation, I am undertaking a research project in the following topic area: 'Hungarian diasporic life online'.

I am researching:

- What websites are available for Hungarians living in diasporas;
- What are the contents of these websites, and
- What are the users' attitudes to these sites?

I would like to ask you to fill in the following questionnaire. It will take you about 20-25 minutes, and for Question no.5 you will need Internet access. The data you provide will be used only for the purposes of this research project, and will not be given to any third party. Your identity will be kept confidential. Please note that by filling in and returning the questionnaire you allow me to use your answers in my study.

If you have any questions about this research, please send me an e-mail to tothbernadett@freestart.hu. This is also the address, where you can return the questionnaires.
My dissertation supervisor is Professor Karen Ross. If you wish to contact her about my project, please e-mail her at k.ross@coventry.ac.uk.

Thank you for your co-operation!
Bernadett Toth
Researcher

I.

Which websites do you know of, that are for Hungarian diasporic communities? Please list them in order of preference! (1.: your favourite) If there are more than 5, please continue the listing.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

I/a Which ONE of these sites do you visit the most?
www.

I/b How often do you visit this site? (Please type an 'x' into the box next to your selection. Please choose only one answer.)
[ ] At least twice a week
[ ] Daily
[ ] About twice a week
[ ] Weekly
[ ] Once in a fortnight
[ ] Monthly
[ ] Other (please specify by typing your answer between the brackets): [type here ]

I/c What are the main reasons why you visit this website? (Please explain in no more than 5 sentences.)
[type here]

I/d If the site has a forum; do you actively take part in discussions? (Please type an 'x' into the box next to your selection. Please choose only one answer.)
[ ] Yes
[ ] No, I only read them
[ ] No, I'm not interested in forums
[ ] Other (please specify by typing your answer between the brackets): [ type here]

I/e Do you know any of the other forum users personally? (Please type an 'x' into the box next to your selection. Please choose only one answer.)
[ ] Yes, I knew them beforehands
[ ] Yes, after meeting online, we organised a face-to-face meeting
[ ] No, but this is why I prefer online communities
[ ] No, but I would consider meeting them in real life
[ ] Other (please specify by typing your answer between the brackets): [type here]

II.

What are the 5 most important services you think a Hungarian diasporic website should have? Please list them in order of importance (1: most important)! If you have more, than 5 ideas, please continue the listing.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

III.

Please finish the following half-sentences with not more than 20 words.

A good Hungarian diasporic website …

What I like the most about these sites is…

About these websites, I would like to know…

The main purpose of these sites…

I think these websites should be maintained by…

The worst thing about these sites is…

In my opinion these sites help…

IV.

Which of the following functions would you like to see on a website aimed at diasporic communities? Please mark them from 1 to 12 by typing a number in between the brackets. (12 is what you would like to see the most)

[ ] Online competitions
[ ] Virtual galleries and museums
[ ] News and information about Hungarians living abroad
[ ] Forum
[ ] Hungarian language teaching online
[ ] Cultural programs with diasporic communities
[ ] News and information about Hungary
[ ] Online databases (statistics, political issues, etc about Hungarians worldwide)
[ ] Online entertainment (books, radio, TV, music, films)
[ ] Virtual tours in Hungary
[ ] Cultural programs with 'homeland'
[ ] Matrimonial service

V.
Please have a look at the following homepages, and mark their outlook individually from 1 to 5 (5=very attractive, 1=ugly) by typing the number in between the brackets.

[ ] www.hungsoc.com
[ ] www.mvsz.hu
[ ] www.bbc.co.uk/hungary
[ ] http://kulfoldimagyarok.linkcenter.hu
[ ] http://www.magyaronline.net/
[ ] http://www.nyeomszsz.org
[ ] www.projectretour.org.hu
[ ] www.magyarorszag.hu
[ ] www.hungary.com


Finally, please let me know some details of you!

**Gender**: [ ] Male         [ ] Female
**Age**: [ ] years
**Nationality**: [ ]
**Location**: [ ]

**Were you born in Hungary?**         [ ] Yes [ ] No

**If yes, when did you leave Hungary?**         [ ] year

**Why did you leave?** [ ] To work         [ ] To study     [ ] Personal reasons     [ ] Other (please specify): [ ]

**How often do you visit Hungary?**   [ ] Every six months   [ ] Yearly        [ ] Never
        [ ] Other (please specify): [ ]

**Do you plan to move to Hungary in the next 10 years?**   [ ] Yes          [ ] No


## Thank you for filling in this questionnaire!

If you wish to receive information about the completed research project, please give me an e-mail address where I should send you the information. This project will finish in September 2005.
E-mail: [type here]

## II. The anthem of Hungary

You have brought our ancestors
Onto the holy crag of the Carpathian,
Blood of Bendegúz have won a
Beautiful homeland by you.
And where roar the surfs of
Tisza, Danube,
Heroic offsprings of Árpád
Prospered.

You have swayed ripe ear for us
At the fields of Kunság,
You have dripped nectar
On the wine-shoots of Tokaj.
You have often planted our flag
Onto the mound of wild Turk
And the proud castle of Vienna
Have groaned the sorrowful army of Mathias.

Oh, but anger has caught fire
In your heart because of our sins,
And you shot your lightnings
In your thundering clouds,
Now you made the arrows of
Robber Mongols rumbling above us,
Then we took yoke
To our shoulders from Turks.

How many times did a triumphal song
Resound on the lips of
Wild people of Ozman
Over the bone-hills of our beaten army?
How many times have your own son
Attacked your breast, my beautiful country,
And you became the urn of your descendant
Because of your descendant?

The ridden hid, and sword
Reaches out towards him in his cave,
He looked around and had not found
His home in this homeland.

| |
|---|
| He climbs to crag and descends to valley,<br>Sorrow and doubt are with him,<br>Streams of blood at his feet,<br>And there is sea of flames above him. |
| There stood a castle, now it is a heap of stones,<br>Temper and pleasure flew around,<br>Death rattle and lament<br>Clamour now instead of them.<br>And ah, freedom does not flourish<br>From the blood of the dead,<br>Tear of tormenting bondage drops<br>From the heroic eyes of our orphans! |
| God, take a pity on Hungarian,<br>Who are being thrown by disasters,<br>Stretch out a protective arm towards them<br>On the sea of their pain.<br>Who is torn by ill fortune<br>Bring them a merry year,<br>Has suffered yet this nation<br>For the past and the future! |
| (Source:<br>http://impulzus.sch.bme.hu/dome/docs/hymnus.html) |

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Online databases:

http://www.balkankult.org BalkanKult

www.c3.hu Center for Culture & Communication

http://www.cgeopol.hu/magyarindex.htm 'Geopolitical Council' NGO

http://www.cultsock.ndirect.co.uk/MUHome/cshtml/index.html CCM InfoBase by Mick Underwood

http://www.digitaldivide.net/ The Digital Divide Network

http://eracareers-hungary.tpf.hu/ The Researcher's Mobility Portal Hungary

www.h-net.msu.edu H-NET Humanities & Social Sciences Online

www.hungary.com Hungarian Tourist Board's website

www.hungkong.unideb.hu Website of Conference for Hungarian Culture, August 2005, Debrecen, Hungary

http://www.insna.org/ International Network for Social Network Analysis

www.ksh.hu Hungarian Central Statistical Office, Budapest

www.kulturakutatas.lap.hu Cultural Research Link Collections

http://www.madiera.org/ MADEIRA (Multilingual Access to Data Infrastructures of the European Research Area)

www.magyarorszag.hu Hungarian Government Portal

http://www.nautilus.org/gps/virtual-diasporas/ Virtual Diaspora Project. The Nautilus Institute

www.nda.hu National Digital Database

http://www.socialnets.org/ Online Social Networking 2005

www.socialnetwork.hu SocialNetwork.hu (Hungarian Network for Social Network Analysis)

http://sosig.ac.uk/ SOSIG (Social Science Information Gateway)

www.tarki.hu Social Research Informatics Centre, Budapest

www.tarsadalomtudomany.webmania.hu Social Science

www.vos.ucsb.edu Voice of the Shuttle

http://www.zakon.org/robert/internet/timeline/ Hobbes' Internet Timeline:
Increase in Internet hosts since 1996

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_networking#Internet_social_networks
Wikipedia article on Social Networks


**Video recording**


Cohen, D. (director)(1984): Passage to Britain: 6.: *The Hungarians – How to
be the alien*. VHS Recording. 23.05.1984. Southampton, TVS Education


**Websites for the Hungarian diaspora**


www.bbc.co.uk/hungary The BBC's Hungarian site

www.bostonhungarians.org Hungarian Society of Massachusetts

www.buod.de Association of Hungarian Organisations in Germany

www.duna.dk Danish-Hungarian Cultural Association

http://www.empolis.no/~barna/HunNor/ Information channel for Hungarians
living in Norway

www.fi.uib.no/~csernai/Hu/magyar/egyesulet.html Hungarian-Norwegian
Friends Association - Hordaland

http://www.freiburgimagyarok.com/ Hungarians living in Freiburg

http://www.hhrf.org/mliget/ Family Magazine for Hungarian families living in
Southern Sweden

www.hungaroclub.com Club for Hungarians in Malmo, Sweden

www.hungsoc.com Oxford Hungarian Society

www.hunsor.se Hungarian-Swedish Online Resources

http://kulfoldimagyarok.linkcenter.hu Link collection for Hungarians living
abroad

http://www.lamoszsz.hu/ Hungarians in Latin America

http://magyarokvasarnapja.com/ Worldwide Online Newspaper for Hungarians
abroad

www.magyaronline.net Website for Hungarians living Worldwide

www.magyarorszag.de Website for Hungarians living in Germany

http://magyarsag.lap.hu/ Link collection of sites of Hungarian interest

http://www.mbk-norvegia.no/ Hungarian Friends' Circle in Norway

www.mvsz.hu World Hungarian Association

www.nyeomszsz.org Association of National Hungarian Organisations in Western Europe

www.projectretour.org.hu Non-profit organisation supporting Hungarians returning from abroad

http://www.vilagradio.hu Hungarian World Radio and TV