by Michał Piotr Pręgowski
Lifehacking: a new social phenomenon inspired by hacker culture

Internet od swego powstania podlega nieustannym wpływom użytkowników, którzy przystosowują go do własnych potrzeb; Manuel Castells (2003) nazywa to zdolnością Sieci do samoewolucji. Szczególną rolę w kształtowaniu internetu odegrali hakerzy. W klasycznym dla tej grupy artykule "Jak zostać hakerem" Eric S. Raymond (2001) zdefiniował środowisko jako ludzi, którzy *"rozwiązują problemy i tworzą rzeczy wierząc w wolność i we wzajemną pomoc"*. Autor konstatował przy tym, że filozofia hakerska nie ogranicza się do środowiska komputerowego. Jest tak w istocie. Jednym z nowych masowych trendów w północnoamerykańskim internecie stał się *lifehacking*, który przenosi do codziennego, także nieskomputeryzowanego życia idee starej kultury Sieci. Jest to zjawisko rzadkie i godne uwagi. Jednocześnie *lifehacking* wpisuje się w debatę na temat pozytywnego i negatywnego wpływu internetu na ludzkie życie. Przedstawiam genezę zjawiska, jego związki z hakingiem oraz społeczną użyteczność, jak również perspektywy rozwoju.
SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: haking, *lifehacking*, haking codzienności, etyka hakerska, elitarna kultura Sieci

Abstract
Since its foundation, the internet is constantly being influenced by its users, who tend to adjust it to their own needs; Manuel Castells (2003) called it the self-evolution of the internet. It is important to note that hackers played a particularly important role in creating and forming of the internet. In a classic article "How to become a hacker", Eric S. Raymond (2001) defined the group as people who *"solve problems and build things, and (…) believe in freedom and voluntary mutual help"*. The author ascertained that hacker philosophy was not limited to computer environment. It is not indeed, as lifehacking, the new internet phenomenon in North America, shows. One of the particularly interesting aspects of lifehacking is its ability to transport ideas of the old internet culture back into the common, often non-computerized life. This tendency is rather rare as of now, but definitely worth noticing. Lifehacking, nevertheless, can also be seen as a part of a wide debate about the positive and negative influence of the internet on human life. Presented here were the origins of the phenomenon, its relations with hacking, as well as its social usefulness and perspective future.
KEY WORDS: hacking, lifehacking, hacker ethics, elite culture of the early internet

Introduction

On April 30, 1995, the American National Science Foundation finally privatised access to the web it was managing. In reality this meant the opening of the Internet to the world, it allowed for the expansion of this new medium and resulted in the world being connected through the World Wide Web. The event, which took place in April, is considered the official beginning of the Internet because it was then that the Web[1] entered the minds of ordinary people. Before then, it was only available to those from computer science, academic, and military circles. Also, it was in 1995 when the term 'Internet' became officially defined and coined, as a result of Federal Networking Council (Cerf et al. 2003)[2] resolution.

Dating the Web back to 1995, however, is risky since many events took place in its 'prehistory', in the norm as well as culture creating contexts. Initially it was only select social groups that had access to it, those which were taking part in the creation of complex systems of computer webs, later known as the Internet. Manuel Castells (2003) divides the pioneers into two groups – the techno-elites and hackers, although it was not them who made the Internet widely

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[1] In the article the word "Web" will be spelled with a capital letter in order to differentiate it from other existing webs, including computer ones, to eliminate confusion.

[2] V. Cerf et al., *A Brief History of the Internet* [online], 2003, http://www.isoc.org/internet/history/brief.shtml [8.06.2007]

accessible to the rest of the people in the 1990s[3]. However, Castells considers values characteristic to these groups as fundamental to web culture, those which were rooted in academic and enlightenment ethos. Key ideas followed by Internet pioneers were formulated during the creation of their common mission (building of a centralized system of electronic communication). Castells sees their culture as one with faith in scientific/technical development and the good it will bring as a result of their work for the entire humanity. Hacker culture values, created somewhat later, are also similar. Both, representatives of techno-elites and hackers believed in equality, making the results of their work and research widely accessible and being subject to assessment by society. At that time many useful initiatives were created, such as Open Source and Free Software.

A decade has passed since the opening of the Internet to the world. From this perspective it is interesting to see that some ideas developed in hacker culture are applied in *offline* reality. This is something unprecedented which is well worth noticing. This culture values, popular on the Web and outside of it as well, can be seen on the example of the Creative Commons movement. Another example is lifehacking, or hacking in reality, which is the subject of this essay[4]. So far, not many analyses of this topic have been conducted. All in all, we can even talk about a lack of interest in hacking and hacker culture in Polish literature.

For the above mentioned reasons, a presentation of hacking in reality or lifehacking is the topic of this research, a description of how it is carried out, its genesis, perspectives and threats. The analysis carried out here can serve as a basis for future research on this subject, so far not very well known in Poland phenomenon. Lifehacking may turn out to be just a short lived fad but the values that it carries are well worth noting and can be considered long term. Thanks to lifehacking, we can say that "we are all hackers". Contrary to popular belief, hacker accomplishment are great and deserve to be discussed. Since they are also connected to lifehacking, they will be discussed below as well.

Hacker culture and its basic values

Writing about hacker culture we need to make a language note – in colloquial language a 'hacker' is an Internet criminal, while in specialist language it means a qualified computer scientist with great experience, able to create and improve computer software, manage computer networks and modify hardware. Within the hacker world, someone who breaks into systems, does damage for antisocial or egotist reasons is known as a 'cracker'. The hacker movement dates back to 1961 (Raymond 2000a), while the modern meaning of 'hacker' became coined in the early 1980s. This was a result of media doing which did not initially notice this rather significant in meaning nuance and created a negative image of the hacker as a super talented individual who can influence the fate of other people, countries and even the world. It was "The Miami Herald" which on November 21, 1982 published an article, "Hackers – rouges or misunderstood?" where it was discussed whether computer specialists can be dangerous. This issue was also covered in 1983, by "Newsweek" (in an article from September 5, "Beware: Hackers at play") and by CBS, resulting in protests from internauts demanding a correction[5]. In 1983, a film "War Games" was released in which a young hacker (really cracker) nearly brings about a nuclear war and human extermination. It was after the distribution of this popular film that media began referring to crackers as hackers. By 1984, in American press there were as many as 11 articles using the term 'hacker' to mean cyber criminals[6]. Although there were many protests from computer specialists or hackers demanding disclaimers, they were generally ignored by journalists (according to Richard M. Stallman[7]).

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[3] M. Castells, *Galaktyka Internetu. Refleksje nad Internetem, biznesem i społeczeństwem*, Rebis, Poznań 2003, p. 48.

[4] In the Polish version of the article the terms used were the English originals, 'lifehacking' and 'life hacks' as well as the Polish translations. In the English version, obviously, only the English terms are used.

[5] The post from a discussion group, net.misc, September 19, 1983, by Joe Wilson Virginia University, http://groups.google.com/group/net.misc/msg/5f706369944b69d6 (from 14.02.2007).

[6] A short history of hacking in American Publications (up to 1985) at http://hacker.textfiles.com/press/ (from 14.02.2007).

[7] R. M. Stallman, *On Hacking* [online] 2002, http://www.stallman.org/articles/on-hacking.html [8.06.2007]

Let's stress this one more time – real hackers are not dangerous to society but are its allies. It is thanks to them that we have numerous technological innovations which have resulted in Internet's wide accessibility. Among famous hackers there are: Tim Berners-Lee – the father of WWW which revolutionized the Internet and the first search engine, Steve Wozniak – the co-creator of Apple, Linus Torvalds – the creator of Linux, the operation system, and Rasmus Lehrdorf – the creator of PHP script language. Other hackers, such as Richard M. Stallman or Eric S. Raymond, have played a great role in the creation of ideological foundations of hacker culture and the promotion of its values.

According to Castells' model of Web culture, without hackers there would never be a bridge which would allow the popularization of the Internet among society. Also the Web's global development would not happen at such a fast pace if it was up to commercial companies. It is thanks to hackers that we have available various free alternative computer software and network applications. Castells also stresses the common values that Web pioneers (techno elites) and hackers possess. This is how Castells characterizes the culture of Internet creators:

- treating technical discoveries as highest values;
- superiority of practical knowledge over theoretical;
- open access to commonly modified sources;
- equality among members of society;
- access to society based on merits for the common good;
- altruism in use of common sources.

Individual development of one's skills based on common sources is treated as the common good of the society and the reputation and position within the group is based on the intellectual input in the work. Necessary authority is delegated to those who enjoy the respect of others due to their accomplishments[8]. Analogous values can also be found in hacker culture which Castells characterizes as a culture of technologic creativity based not only on freedom, equality and cooperation but also on mutuality and informality.

The most important value in hacker culture is freedom. This means freedom of creation, distribution and exchange of information. Steven Levy (1984) stresses this value in his rules of hacker ethics[9]. According to Levy, information needs to be free because only full access to it leads to innovation and creativity. In order to support the exchange of information, decentralisation needs to be promoted. Access to it is for the common good and, hence, it cannot be limited (idea of equality). Levy also states that computers can change human life for the better and that programming is like an art. Hackers, just like artists, need to be praised for their accomplishments and not according to their race, education or social position. Rules formulated by Levy sound more like postulates for which people should strive than an ethical code. Brian Harvey (1985) from UC Berkeley argues that we are dealing here with ethics not aesthetics[10]. This does not change the fact that Levy, in a clear and precise way, advocates objective ideas of freedom and equality. Also Eric S. Raymond (2001) describes hackers as people who, "*solve problems and create believing in freedom and mutual aid*"[11]. Raymond is similar to Levy on the issue of freedom, stating that power and autocracy do not lead to problem solving while, "*the world is full of fascinating problems waiting to be solved*" and "*nobody should ever solve the same problem twice*"[12]. The idea of freedom, including freedom of information is extremely important to hackers, according to Bruce Sterling (1993) also because part of this society in the 1960s was fascinated by Yippies, or anarchy

[8] M. Castells, p. 49-52.
[9] S. Levy, *Hackers: Heroes of the Computer Revolution*, ed. Anchor/Doubleday, New York 1984. Also [online], http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/729 [8.06.2007]
[10] B. Harvey, *What is a Hacker?* [online], 1985, http://www.cs.berkeley.edu/~bh/hacker.html [8.06.2007]
[11] E. S. Raymond, *How To Become A Hacker* [online], 2001, http://catb.org/esr/faqs/hacker-howto.html, [8.06.2007]
[12] Ibidem.

advocating hippies[13]. The most ideologically radical movement, Free Software, was initiated as a result of hackers' protests against the commercialisation of Unix by AT&T. Richard M. Stallman, the father of Free Software, advocated for freedom of this programme, meaning free and unlimited access to its use, distribution as well as source code, meaning the possibility of its modification. Copyright law, according to Stallman, should by replaced by *copyleft* which allows alteration of computer programmes and their re-distribution with the possibility of being modified successively. Stallman sees himself as the liberator of cyberspace[14]. His opinions, firm on intellectual and economic ownership, are sometimes regarded as neo-Marxism, also by Stallman[15], however, in the context of entire hacker community they are a generalisation. Most hackers are a lot less radical on ideas of freedom and ownership, including Eric S. Raymond, involved in, similar to Free Software movement, the Open Source.

According to Castells, characteristic to hacker culture is also the informality of contacts between members of the community, their virtual character and autonomy in carrying out common tasks. Representatives of techno elites are normally connected institutionally and they cooperate with each other as part of their regular work responsibilities for which they get paid. Their relations are more formal in character than those among hacker community members who cooperate in a more decentralized and independent way. Relations characterizing hacker culture are more in the form of self improvement than a way of making a living. Hacker Raymond (2000b) is an advocate of a 'bazaar', chaotic and diffused but more effective cooperation on a project with limited hierarchy of management (Linux example). This is contrary to the more academic approach where rules of conduct are strictly controlled, according to specific outlines and more time consuming but less scattered[16]. The 'bazaar' vision is criticised by some, such as Charles Connell (2000), for being too idealistic, with a great autonomy for work but definitely not without a management hierarchy[17]. Others complement Raymond's theory, such as Mattia Monga (2004), who, based on research of the community, proposed a new metaphor of a 'kibbutz' which is a compromise between the 'bazaar' and the academic theories. Its most imperative elements are: a general conformity among members of the community regarding their main, idealistic goals, their lack of expectations regarding being awarded for their work, their social consciousness and, most importantly, accepting the fact that their common work is subject to control by regulations chosen via the direct democracy model[18].

Castells, Levy and Raymond focus on ideas of equality, decentralisation and cooperation in hacker communities. Raymond states that hacker culture can be compared to some primeval societies[19]. He outlines non-material goods, such as their creativity, skills and free time, that they sacrifice. Gaining status in hacker culture requires one to write his own programming, to test and improve it as well as to gather and propagate socially useful information on the Web. Raymond states that creative minds are capital which cannot be wasted and therefore their time is extremely valuable. Hence, having respect for others' time is key (sharing of information to save it) and can be considered a moral obligation. Wherever it is possible, Raymond thinks, people should eliminate copying of what has already been done. Based on these ideas, followed by hackers since the 1960s, lifehacking was created, or hacking in reality.

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[13] B. Sterling, *The Hacker Crackdown: Law and Disorder on the Electronic Frontier*. Bantam Press, NewYork 1993, p. 41.

[14] R. Poyndner, *The Basement Interviewp. Freeing the Code: Richard Stallman* [online], 2006, http://ia310134.up.archive.org/1/items/The_Basement_Interviews/Richard_Stallman_Interview.pdf [8.06.2007]

[15] Cf. M. Wark, *A Hacker Manifesto*, ed. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachussets, London 2004

[16] E. P. Raymond, *The Cathedral and the Bazaar* [online], 2000, http://catb.org/esr/writings/cathedral-bazaar/cathedral-bazaar/ [8.06.2007]

[17] Cf. C. Connell, *Open Source Projects Manage Themselves? Dream On* [online], 2000, http://www.linuxtoday.com/news_story.php3?ltsn=2000-09-15-002-21-OS-CY-SW [8.06.2007]

[18] M. Monga, *From bazaar to kibbutz: how freedom deals with coherence in the Debian project* [online], 2004, http://homep.dico.unimi.it/~monga/lib/oss-icse04.pdf [8.06.2007]

[19] Cf. B. Malinowski, *Argonauci Zachodniego Pacyfiku*, wyd. PWN, Warszawa 1987, p. 126-132

Short history of *lifehacking* and hacking

The history of *lifehacking* dates back to 2004. The term *life hack* was first coined then by Dan O'Brien, a British journalist specialising in new technologies. In 2003, he was researching communities of information scientists, analysing their work (not only programming) and management of information. O'Brien (2004) noticed in his research a repeating trend – the creation of scripts and shortcuts to minimize the time it takes to do less interesting tasks or, in order words, to make the scientists' lives easier. He showed the results of his research at a conference, the O'Reilly Emerging Technology in San Diego in February 2004, and the term *life hack* appeared in the headline of his presentation[20]. The phrase was picked up by other members at the conference, it quickly found its way into blogosphere and was later amended to be written together – *lifehack*. O'Brien popularized the results of his research at other conferences and also prepared an Internet service devoted to *lifehacking*, which in the end was not put on the Web.

Regardless, the phenomenon quickly became popular. The first website devoted to *lifehacking* was 43 Folders (http://www.43folders.com) by Merlin Mann, who together with O'Brien regularly writes about *lifehacking* in the "Make"[21] magazine. In January 2005, the publisher of electronic media, Gawker Media, opened the largest to date Internet service on *lifehacking* - Lifehacker (http://www.lifehacker.com). In May of the same year, launched was an independent Lifehack.org (http://www.lifehack.org) created by the Australian Leon Ho. Also, opinionated American bloggers quickly commented on O'Brien's first presentation. The phrase *lifehacking* gained so much attention that editors of the New Oxford American Dictionary nominated *lifehack* for Word of the Year 2005 along side with other very popular phrases then, such as *podcast*, *sudoku*, *rootkit* or *bird flu*. After over a year of Lifehacker.org existence, its chief editor Gina Trapani in December 2006 published a book "Lifehacker: 88 Tech Tricks to Turbocharge Your Day". In 2005, the scientific O'Reilly Publishing prepared over 60 handbooks on lifehacking and various specialisations (Table 1).

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[20] O'Brien's presentation full title: *Life Hacks: Tech Secrets of Overprolific Alpha Geekp.* From a conference on 11.02.2004, O'Reilly Emerging Technology Conference, San Diego, United States.

[21] Cfb. M. Mann, D. O'Brien, *Why These Kids From Podunk Are Keeping You Down*. "Make" 2006, nr 08/2006, p. 14.

Table 1 – O'Reilly website with a great variety of handbooks on *lifehacking*

There would not be such great popularity of this phenomenon if its rules were not so universal. O'Brien's original definition accurately described the on-going practises such as writing programme scripts which managed people's time better, filtering of e-mail, dynamic RSS bookmarks and effective management of other tasks at hand[22]. Although initial *lifehacking* referred to computer science communities, the prefix *life* could be understood as a synonym of general effective work organization which could be applied to average people's daily lives.

The ideas of *lifehacking* are so universal that they could be applied to many other spheres of people's activities. It was also Eric S. Raymond (2001) who, in his definition of hacker attitudes, focused on values such as time saving and respect for human creativity, *"In order to behave like a hacker, you need to know that other hackers' time is precious and it is one's moral obligation to share information, help solve problems and offer solutions so that other hackers can spend their time solving new issues without mulling over those which have already been done by others"[23]*. The above statement should not be exclusive for computer science communities and the Web. According to Raymond, hacker philosophy is not limited to this group because, *"There are people who user hacker philosophy in other spheres such as electronics or music, and really it should be found on the highest levels of arts and science research (…). There are people who believe that hacker philosophy is independent of any medium that it involves"[24]*. Richard M. Stallman (2002) was of a similar opinion, according to him hacking means researching, going over the limits of what is possible and enjoying this type of exploration[25].

Considering the fact that O'Brien researched experienced, specialist computer scientists, it is not surprising that they are devoted to hacker culture which stresses time saving. The results of his research are not surprising, *lifehacking* can be written into hacker culture. However, it was the popularization of the phrase which brought attention to general hacker values and found its way to

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[22] C. Doctorow, *Running notes from Life Hacks: Tech Secrets of Overprolific Alpha Geeks* [online], 2004, http://www.craphound.com/lifehacksetcon04.txt [8.06.2007].

[23] E. P. Raymond, *How To Become A Hacker* [online].

[24] Ibidem.

[25] R. M. Stallman, *On Hacking* [online], 2002.

mass culture.

Resulting was the creation and development of services such as Lifehacker (Table 2) and Lifehack.org (Table 3) whose authors cite Stallman in their works[26]. The presence of *lifehacking* in mass culture have resulted in its modification; its essential, according to O'Brien, time saving aspect was pushed aside. Although innovation is key to *lifehacking*, of priority became the life simplifying aspect, similar to what Raymond postulated, so that nobody should work on problems which have already been solved before.

Lifehacking in practice –a short characteristic based on examples

Lifehacker and Lifehack.org Internet services offer publications with advice on various subjects. Some of it is geared toward computer scientists, other – to 'regular' people. In both cases the available advice is written not only by editors but also by readers. Topics more loosely connected with computer science are particularly popular on the Lifehacker site which does not include much advice for advanced computer programmers able to write their own scripts. Both services offer a great deal of information on how to increase the efficiency of one's equipment or software. Lifehack.org, for example, presents much advice on how to improve the Mozilla Firefox browser or e-mail programmes (management of electronic lists). The Lifehacker site focuses on file and data management as well as iPods which have been equipped with great capabilities and not enough exterior software, therefore provoking various modification. Some materials available on Lifehacker are in the form of films (ie. Linux installation on the iPod). The site also advertises special software tool kits which every internaut should own such as Google Pack (http://pack.google.com), Pegtop PStart (http://www.pegtop.net/start) or Portable Apps (http://portableapps.com/suite). There the readers can also find out how to get rid of burnt out pixels on LCD screens. There is also advice on how to use the Internet in general, how to more effectively use the browser Google and its services (ie. (Google Maps, Google Video, Google Groups, etc.) as well as popular network services such as Flickr, MySpace and YouTube. It should also be mentioned that the published by O'Reilly handbooks deal with topics similar to advice available on site.

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[26] Cf. G. Trapani, *Lifehacker launches* [online], 2005, http://www.lifehacker.com/software/announcements/lifehacker-launches-031643.php [8.06.2007]

Table 2. Fragment of the Lifehacker website

Both the Lifehacker and Lifehack.org sites also offer advice not directly connected to computers or the Internet. Only some of the presented information is strictly connected to classic lifehacking and the time saving due to shortened procedures. The Lifehack.org site has got, for example, an extensive explanation of how to legally bypass regular passenger check-in on Southwest Airlines and use business class without waiting in queues (and without having the right ticket). Both sites also include psychological, health and general advice such as how to plan more efficiently, maximise productivity, increase one's memorising skills and select information effectively, etc. Clearly, the given advice is closely related to hacker culture. Some of the most important tags on the Lifehack.org site are: 'communication', 'management', 'productivity' and 'programming'(Table 4). Gina Trapani, advertising her book, declares that lifehacking goals are to maximise productivity and to more effectively use technology in readers' daily lives, saving their time and energy. Trapani uses the phrase 'outboard brains' to refer to computer hard discs[27].

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[27] G. Trapani, *Sneak Preview: Lifehacker the book's table of contents* [online], 2006, http://www.lifehacker.com/software/lifehacker-the-book/sneak-preview--lifehacker-the-books-table-of-contents-216871.php [8.06.2007]

lifehack.org

Daily digest and pointers on productivity, getting things done and lifehacks

Community | Howto | About | Support | Home

Problem - 97% of people
Fail in Life because they are Stuck Free 90 Day eCourse To Get Results
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Keep jerks out of your workplace Survive a nasty workplace
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Ads by Google

Latest Community Activity

The Slacker's Guide to World Domination... a great little read on Productivity and Project Management

email password

Someday/Maybe And 101 In 1001

Become What you Want to Attract

Latest Forum Posts

What "Suspicious Activity" Should I Look For?

Infidelity Appears To Be The Topic Of The Year

How to make great motivation

Poxies how can i make them ? ?? ??

How do I denote a temp-to-hire position on my resume?

NOV 25 **My Life Planning Model**

(photo by **Drunken Monkey Photography**). I thought I'd explain a little more in detail about how I plan my life, and what tools I use to achieve my goals. I like to separate my thoughts on planning and organizing into two levels: upstack and downstack. I often talk about Getting Things Done (GTD) as a good downstack framework. But this post will be about my upstack efforts, and for that, I often turn to Covey.

Covey's Habits

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Table 3. Fragment of the Lifehack.org website

In this phenomenon, imperative is the interaction between the creators and the recipients, as mentioned above, many *lifehack* ideas published were proposed by readers. Around lifehacking created are first communities, such as a Lifehack.Community.Beta (http://community.lifehack.org). Their existence and future creativity will determine whether *lifehacking* will turn out to be a short or long term phenomenon as there are threats that it may become trivial due to recipients' (hyper)activity.

This is because, aside from very useful every day life information, today's *lifehacking* also includes a lot of advice not so innovative in character. Initially it was the innovativeness which attracted people to ideas of hacking, including odd advice such as best ways to tie a tie, to utilize old newspapers (Lifehack.org) or how to prepare Thanksgiving turkey and its vegetarian alternatives (Lifehacker) which could also easily be found on many other Internet advice sites. Other unusual instructions that could be found there are how to peel a baked pepper without cutting it or how to fix a wobbling stool (Lifehacker). As mentioned above, *lifehacking* bases on solid ideological principles and has a clear mission that includes a wide variety of themes, information and tricks.

Publication of content considered trivial by some may be the result of treating Raymond's ideas too broadly, however, it is difficult to say so arbitrarily. We can say, though, that it could hinder innovativeness[28]. It is much safer to say that combining *lifehacking* ideas with general advice

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[28] It is hard to decide for person X whether Y's time will be saved if he uses X's idea or one invented by someone else earlier but unknown to Y. Perhaps people who publish lifehacks have such dilemmas and because of that they sometimes make available trivial information.

will result in weakening hacker culture.

Table 4. "Tag cloud" Lifehack.org website

***Online* and *offline* reality**

On the other hand, it needs to be stressed that a great number of advice printed on the above mentioned websites comes not from their creators but from readers. Perhaps this means that such accumulation of various types of information is something that people need, at least in the United States where *lifehacking* is most developed. This social aspect of the phenomenon is vital and it fits in with Barry Wellman's (2001) concept of network individualism who considers it the dominant form of organization of interpersonal contacts[29]. People making use of *lifehacking* share their observations and discoveries with other readers and website creators, they create their own social networks based, in this case, on common interests and the common good. According to Manuel Castells (2003), network communities experience great development of hybrid communication which ties together physical space and cyberspace combining direct and indirect communication channels within computer networks[30]. *Lifehacking* is such an example, especially the part outside the Web.

Thanks to Internet platforms, *lifehacking* combines what is *online* with *offline*. Obviously not all information can be applied offline, such as advice regarding computer or software improvements but general advice on how to increase productivity or save time does not have much to do with the Web. This way *lifehacking* has become a tool for Internet sociologists and psychologists who advocate viewing the Web and the world offline as two entities intertwined and interdependent but not separate[31]. *Lifehacking* can also be seen as dispersed intelligence in which the individual can, at the same time, be a creator, a recipient and a beneficiary of *lifehacks*, becoming something like a public terminal[32].

From today's perspective it is difficult to predict the future of lifehacking, although the literature written on the subject so far seems to view it favourably. At the time of writing this article it is an issue of public debate predominantly in North America and Japan[33]. What is more

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[29] B. Wellman, *Physical place and cyberplace: the rise of networked individualism*. International Journal of Urban and Regional Research 2001, vol. 25, nr 2, p. 227-252.

[30] M. Castells , p. 151-153.

[31] Cf. M. Gulia, B. Wellman, *Net Surfers Don't Ride Alone: Virtual Communities as Communitiep.* [w:] P. Kollock, M. Smith (ed.) *Communities in Cyberspace: Perspectives on New Forms of Social Organization*. University of California Press, Berkeley, 1997.

[32] K. Krzysztofek, *Społeczeństwo w dobie Internetu: refleksyjne czy algorytmiczne?*, [in:] Ł. Jonak et all (ed.), *Re: internet – społeczne aspekty medium. Polskie konteksty i interpretacje*, WAiP, Warszawa 2006, p. 23.

[33] In Poland, the hacking issue has been raised by only a few bloggers including the less known portal Bajo.pl which has

important, this phenomenon of communication from one-to-many and many-to-many favours innovation potentially available to all people on Earth who know English and have access to the Internet.

Lifehacking also renders much for traditional hacking. To a degree, it results in some people not seeing hackers as criminals (according to the wrong definition started by "The Miami Herald in the 1980s and the film "War Games"). A positive, useful to society image of lifehacking can weaken or eventually erase the unnecessarily created bad image of hacking popularized by media. Presently traditional media eagerly discuss the subject of lifehacking[34]. Moreover, lifehacking brings into mass culture basic ideas of hacker culture which co-created the Internet and has done a great deal of service for it since.

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created a Lifehack subservice (http://lifehack.bajo.pl) in September 2006.

[34] Cf . articles from "The Guardian", "Newsweek" and "New York Times": O. Burkemann, *Lifehacking*. "The Guardian" from 11.11.2006; [online]: http://www.guardian.co.uk/weekend/story/0,,1943254,00.html [8.06.2007]; G. Thompson, *Meet the life hackers.* "The New York Times" 2005, 16.10.2005, [online]: http://www.nytimep.com/2005/10/16/magazine/16guru.html?ei=5088&en=2864cc65d74cefb8&ex=1287115200 [8.06.2007] lub B. Stone, *Digital Hygiene for the Holidayp.* „Newsweek" 2005, 23.10.2005, [online]: http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/10165009/site/newsweek/ [8.06.2007].