

## Rising necessities: controversial transformation



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**Abstract.** The phenomenon of rising necessities is studied in the mechanism of the dialectical development of production and consumption and is represented as a set of interrelated aspects. This is an increase in the number of needs and consumption; distribution of needs in the broader circle of consumers; changed quality of needs; complication of the consumption method; changed forms of consumption; development of intellectual and social needs.

The article shows that the process of rising necessities includes the complication of the consumption method, which leads to the formation of needs in services, and then to the emergence of social forms of consumption and services. It reveals the features and effects of this process: broad development of non-vital needs, emergence of quality and quantity hyper-consumption, demonstrative consumption and pursuit of brands; existence of antisocial needs that turns the rise in needs in its opposite; prevalence of consumer demand over income that results in “life on credit” of individuals and entire countries; unrestrained growth of needs, consumption and production respectively that give rise to unprecedented environmental pollution; hedonistic orientation of consumption, violation of dialectical connection of needs-abilities, crisis of culture and morality; formation of poly-needs that combine several components (material and non-material); accelerated development of needs in communication, entertainment and games. There are typologies of needs in entertainment. The article describes growing need in entertainment and games with the help of the broad statistics.

**Key words:** necessities, law of rising necessities, consumption, method of consumption, needs in entertainment.

The modern society has changed a generalized “portrait” of human needs, their characteristics, a process of consumption, its results and consequences<sup>1</sup>. Along with some positive moments there are significant negative symptoms associated with the processes to form needs and consumption. It requires scientific analysis to register them, and if necessary, develop the recommendation to improve them. This article analyzes the process of rising necessities, in particular, the transformation of personal needs and their satisfaction at the present stage.

### **Rising necessities**

Historically, necessities in the most general form are identified as a requirement, a need in anything, without the satisfaction of which it is impossible to manage [20].

One of the most prominent representatives of the European marketing school J.J. Lambin points out that “necessity is a need caused by nature or social life” [7, c. 118].

Today, however, the above definition does not fully reflect the essence of necessities; moreover, there are entire “industries”, focused on the implementation of needs, without the satisfaction which it is not only possible, but objectively recommended to manage.

<sup>1</sup> However, the production is still aimed at satisfying human needs, which occurs in the process of consumption of the goods produced. As before, the production and consumption exist in the dialectical unity: on the one hand, consumption is mediated by production; on the other hand, production without consumption becomes meaningless. The needs are satisfied and developed in constantly reproducing acts of production and consumption.

Moreover, the unresolved problems of social and personal needs, the emerged “dead-ends” of consumption have contributed to the formation of the modern crisis in the world economy.

Therefore, we believe, the theory of needs and consumption requires a rethinking and this aspect should be considered on the basis of available research results. In this regard, we should refer to the already thoroughly forgotten results of K. Marx’s analysis of the dialectic of needs and consumption, his classification of personal needs, which, in fact, has formed the basis for all subsequent classifications.

K. Marx in “Capital”, Volume I, divides personal needs into physical, intellectual and social by the *public-functional indicator*. Thus, describing the dialectics of needs development, he states: “first, the quantitative expansion of existing consumption is required; second, – the creation of new needs by disseminating already existing needs in a wider range; third, – the production of new needs, the discovery and the creation of new consumer values” [11, p. 385].

Vladimir Lenin calls Marx’s algorithm of needs development as a “law of rising necessities” [8, p. 101]. Rising necessities emerge in the process of dialectical interaction of production, consumption and needs. When the requirements are being satisfied, they are developing “...the first satisfied necessity itself, the action of satisfaction and the already acquired tool of satisfaction lead to new needs,

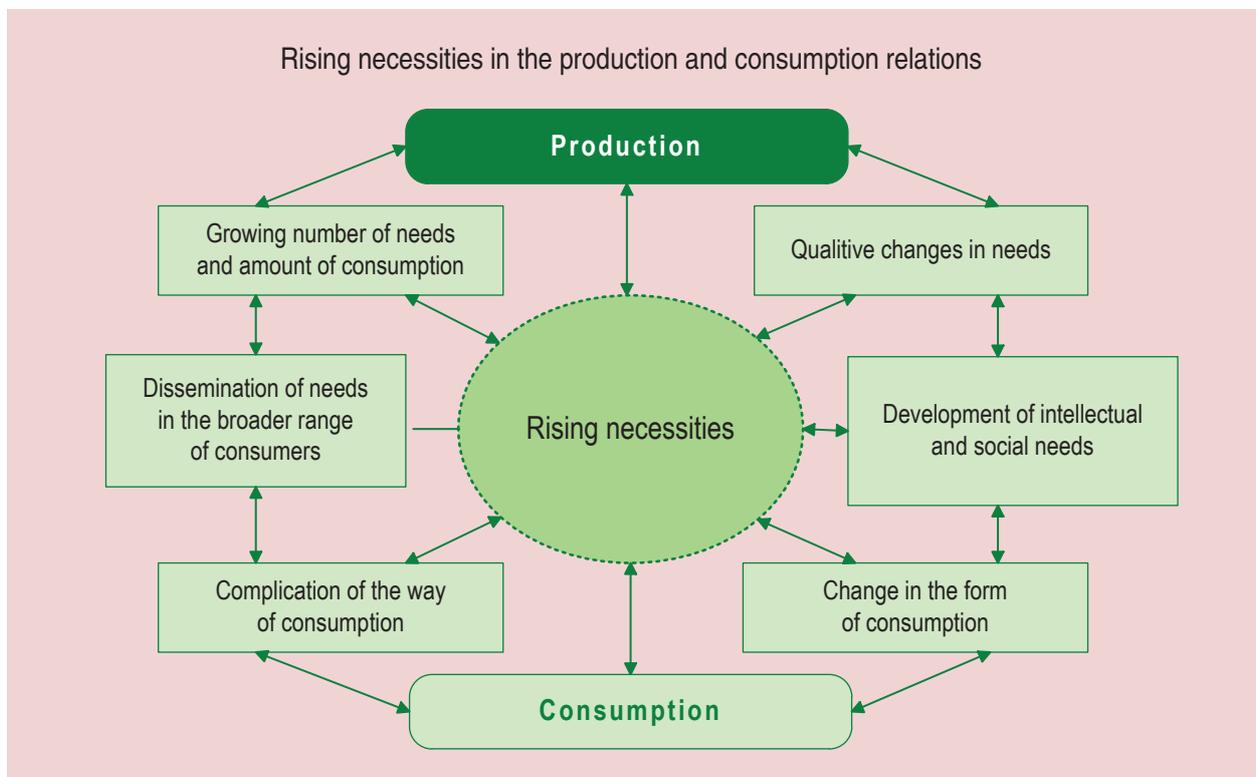
and this generation of new needs is the first historical act”, K. Marx writes [13, p. 27]. The source for needs development is a dialectical contradiction between production and needs that is resolved and reproduced with each new step in the development of living conditions of the society.

Rising necessities are implemented in the dialectical development process of production and consumption and, in our opinion, they contain a number of inter-related aspects, namely (see figure):

- growing number of needs and amount of consumption;
- dissemination of needs in the broader range of consumers;
- qualitative changes in needs;

- complication of the way of consumption;
- change in the form of consumption;
- development of intellectual and social needs.

The simplified understanding of rising necessities is often formulated as an increase in the number of needs, an increase in consumption, and distribution of needs in the broader range of consumers. These statements are obvious. There is even a curious confirmation in art: the American researchers have studied 5 2 art paintings created over the past millennium to identify the change in the size of tableware and amount of food. So, the size of plates has increased by 66%, food portions – by 69% and bread – by 23% [14].



### **Dialectics of the method and forms of consumption in the rising necessities mechanism**

*The way and forms of consumption are, in our opinion, key points in the economic law of rising necessities.* They involve radical shifts in the division of social labor and its distribution in different areas. This is especially clear in terms of the formation and the development of material services which “grow out” of the needs in material goods.

The way of consumption includes consumption goods (what is consumed) and means of consumption, including consumption tools (with the help of what it is consumed). Furthermore, the consumption method always reflects the specificity of preparation for consumption, the nature of needs satisfaction, social and national characteristics, traditions, etc. The consumption method depends on the level of production, indicates the degree of productive forces perfection and the relations within society and is inextricably linked with the changing needs.

Material goods come into the sphere of consumption in different stages of readiness to their direct use by people to satisfy their needs. The less the product is ready for consumption, the more labor, time, material and money are required to finish off in the consumption sphere of instead of the production. The examples of such activities are the following: preparing food, making and repairing clothes, shoes or objects of cultural and community purpose by people themselves.

The more developed social production, the more developed needs of people, the harder the method to meet them and the way from production to consumption. Historically, in this case the consumers have a *need in services*, because, first, at some stage their own abilities and skills are not enough, and, second, additional conditions and resources (e.g. equipment) are required.

If the original production in the sphere of consumption was carried out in the self-service order or with the help of family members, then there appears the category of persons, turning into the wait staff due to the labor division. There is a category of professionals to provide consumer services. Thus, *the emergence of needs in services and opportunities to meet them has marked a change in the way of consumption.*

The means of consumption (material and non-material) influence the way of consumption actively. However, the material resources (buildings, structures, tools, devices, machines, tools, etc.) used in the process of preparation for consumption and the actual consumption and the material conditions that make consumption possible do not only change the way of consumption, but can cause the transformation of the necessity. Karl Marx writes: “Hunger is hunger, but hunger which is satisfied by cooked meat, eaten with a knife and a fork, is different hunger than the one when raw meat is eaten with hands, nails and teeth” [9, p. 718].

When personal needs are met, it is impossible to radically change the way of

consumption. The “concentration” of the consumption process and its transformation into organized public consumption are required. The process essence remains the same: consumption is individual; it is aimed at maintaining the physical existence of a person and the reproduction of labor forces. However, the form of this process is undergoing significant changes. The public form of consumption is used instead of individual.

Applying this approach to the analysis of, for example, needs in food, we can see that over time people become interested in the food preparation services that results in the emergence of a special branch of the service sector: catering.

This is caused by the fact that the increasing complexity and costs of consumption means, the emergence of special machines and equipment requiring special skills and the increase in requirements to food quality complicate the way of consumption and lead to the formation of the public form of consumption, such as public catering.

At a certain stage of historical development there are needs in intellectual, and social services due to rising necessities. It is education, culture, art services, etc. This kind of needs has ambivalent characteristics. On the one hand, they are secondary to the needs in material goods. “... People must, first of all, eat, drink, have home and dress, before they can engage in politics, science, art, religion, etc.” [23, p. 350]. On the other hand, these needs become relatively independent, when the “normal

public” level of satisfaction of vital needs is achieved. The more pressing needs in material goods and services are satisfied, the more opportunities for spiritual needs development people have, including, through intellectual, and social services.

However, the algorithm to form and meet the needs in intellectual and social services is the same as in the case of consumer services. At a certain stage people begin to use the services of other people to meet their own needs. Further development of the social labor division leads to the transformation of service into a special kind of activity and forms the sphere of services, which is developing rapidly nowadays. Thus, *the accelerated development of services is a natural process of rising necessities* [3].

#### **Features of the implementation of the rising necessities law s at the present stage**

At each stage of historical development the law of rising necessities is realized in different ways. Nowadays it has certain features. Unfortunately, most of them are negative:

1. The needs, which are not objectively necessary to maintain the functioning of people, are widely developing. And over time the number of these needs is growing. For example, fashion leads to mass development of necessities, which far exceed the level necessary to satisfy trivial requirements in clothing and footwear. In terms of meeting initial physical need in clothes and footwear we can speak about the development of “*quality and quantity hyper-consumption*,” which is gradually becoming the norm of life and is actively promoted by

the manufacturers. We can also talk about the development of so-called demonstrative consumption and pursuit of brands [1].

2. There are necessities of antisocial nature that hinder human development and undermine people's health. These include, for example, needs in tobacco, alcohol, drugs. In this case, rising needs turn into the opposite.

3. The desire for hyper-consumption and the excess of consumer demand over income encourage "life on credit". This refers to entire nations and individual consumers. Today the debt load of individual consumers and entire countries is a real economic threat [2]. For example, the Russians now spend 21% of revenues on disbursement of loans – that is by 2–7 times higher than in developed countries [21].

4. Modern unrestrained consumption and production, which are increased at any cost, cause enormous damage to the planet ecosystem, become a real threat to the very existence of the mankind. According to the experts, the abilities of the environment to cope with the negative effects of human activities have already exceeded by 25–30%. Sixty percent of all ecosystems are now used excessively [16, p. 28]. The growth of production and consumption results in a huge amount of waste that is constantly growing. In 2009 in Russia there was 3505 million tons of waste (in 2000 – 3036 million tons) [17].

5. Today's consumer society can be characterized as primarily hedonic, focused on maximizing comfort and pleasure. It involves the satisfaction of primitive needs,

which do not contribute to the improvement of a person him/herself. According to some researchers, this orientation reflects the crisis of culture and morality and is manifested in the mass pursuit of pleasures without regard to a reasonable extent, social, environmental and other consequences. This violates the dialectical connection of needs-abilities. During its realization the individual sacrifices and improves his/her rational needs and simultaneously develops the abilities.

6. The changed way of consumption is also manifested in the formation of poly-needs that include several components (material and non-material). There is a basic need and a set of additional necessities around it that make the process to meet a basic need more effective, comfortable, or pleasant. For example, a person goes to the retail and leisure center for a particular purchase; in this case he/she combines shopping with leisure in the cafe or restaurant, going to the cinema, a children's event in the same mall<sup>2</sup>. Eating out is aimed not only at tasting delicious food but also meeting social and emotional needs. In such a case, the important role is played by the favorable impression of interior decoration, comfortable environment, politeness and professionalism of the staff, quality concert programs, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Today visiting malls has become a sort of entertainment. So, according to the "Public Opinion" Fund survey, 21% of the Muscovites go to malls without a purpose, just to spend free time. In the shopping malls the capital's residents spend their leisure time differently: 39% meet friends, 52% go to the movies, 56% visit cafes, restaurants and bars, 65% buy non-food items (clothes, shoes, household appliances), 47% buy food [22].

7. The necessities in communication, entertainment games are rapidly spreading, including those, which are satisfied due to the Internet.

**What is our life? – The game! ... Communication and other entertainment!**

The need in entertainment is genetically programmed into human nature. The ancient Greek satirist Juvenal (1st–2nd centuries), describing the contemporary aspirations of the Romans, wrote: “This nation long ago... has forgotten all the worries, and Rome... restlessly dreams about only two things: bread and circuses!” [24]

Today the problem of “bread” is solved for the significant share of population (unless we consider the problem of a balanced diet). Besides, other pressing needs ensuring physical existence are also satisfied. At the same time, the grown labor productivity leads to the reduced working time and, consequently, to the increased free time. So, the question arises how to use it rationally for recreation, self-education, entertainment and communication. We believe that *the significantly increased demand for games, shows and other entertainment* is one of the most striking and controversial manifestations of rising necessities today. E. Petrenko, for example, points to the growing role of emotional and mental components of consumer experience and the emergence of a new customer value – “impression” [15, pp. 13-14], which, we believe, is the main motive desire for entertainment. At the same time, the entertainment industry is growing rapidly.

Entertainment differs by its influence on physical and spiritual development of a person. There are 3 groups.

*The first group* includes entertainment, promoting the human development and the growth of people’s spirituality and intellect. This is, first and foremost, presupposes visiting of cultural institutions – museums, theaters, libraries, etc.; the entertainment aimed at maintaining health and physical improvement, such as physical education, sports and active recreation, etc.

*The second group* includes entertainment, definitely harmful to the moral and physical health (smoking, drug and alcohol addiction, etc.).

*The third group* includes entertainment, which can be attributed both to the 1st and the 2nd group depending on the content. Going to the cinema and public events (including sport), recreational activities and games, listening to the radio, watching TV, reading books and newspapers, using the Internet, etc., on the one hand, can promote human development but , on the other hand, can generate bad feelings and aspirations.

The dynamics of the free time spending structure, including a variety of activities, shows contradictory trends (*tab. 1*).

So, in 1986 the leading positions among all entertainment belong to watching TV (14.5 hours a week for men and 10.6 – for women), reading (5.8 and 3.6 hours, respectively) and communication (2.6 and 2.5 hours). In 2007–2008 the time for watching TV decreased, accounting for 7.6 hours for men and 6.8 for women.

Table 1. Dynamics of distribution of working citizens' free time in 1986–2008, time a week per respondent, hour.

Activity type	1986		2007–2008	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Study	0.8	0.9	2.3	1.0
Social and religious activities	1.2	0.8	0.1	0.3
<b>Communication</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>9.8</b>	<b>8.4</b>
Physical education and sport	0.9	0.6	1.1	1.0
Rest in the fresh air	1.9	0.9	1.6	0.5
<b>Amateur activities and games</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>2.2</b>
Listening to the radio	0.2	0.1	0.5	0.3
Visits of cultural institutions	0.9	0.6	0.7	0.1
<b>Watching TV</b>	<b>14.5</b>	<b>10.6</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>6.8</b>
<b>Reading</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>1.8</b>
Surfing the Internet	No data	No data	2.1	0.7
Passive rest (doing nothing)	2.5	1.7	0.9	0.6
Movements	2.0	1.4	-	-
Free time – total in a week	34.0	25.7	30.9	23.5

Source: Karakhanova T.M. Svobodnoe vremya gorodskikh zhitelei: proshloe i nastoyashchee [Free Time of Urban Residents: Past and Present]. *Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniya* [Sociological Studies], 2014, no. 1, p. 77].

Communication increased to 9.8 hours per week for men and 8.4 hours for women, indicating accelerated development of the social needs variety. The time spent on recreational activities and games grew from 0.7 to 2.2 hours for men and women from 2.1 to 2.2 hours.

However, we believe that, in fact, the increase was more significant, as some time for communication was also dedicated to amateur practice and games in the company. Unfortunately, people spent less time on reading and visiting cultural institutions that by no means indicates growing intellectual needs. It seems that in subsequent years this trend has continued.

For example, the NRU HSE study provides the following data: today 16% of the Russians are interested in museums and

visit them, 14% know about museums, but does not visit them, and 70% (!) do not know about museums and are not interested in them [19].

Yu. Svechnikova, referring to the analysis of the sociological research conducted among students of Belgorod State National Research University, makes a disappointing conclusion: “The majority of students, namely 90% of girls and 65% of boys, do not do anything useful for physical or spiritual health, self-education or self-improvement in their free time. They spend their free time watching TV programs, which are often aimed at destroying the psyche of a young, immature person, or what is worse, they spend time in the cheerful company drinking alcohol, which is harmful to physical health”.

Twenty percent of the freshmen spend their free time on visiting amusement and entertainment establishments. As for the fifth year students, this figure reaches 60% [18].

Thus, we can conclude that the development of needs and consumption at the present stage do not lead to the formation of true rising necessities, which are understood as the pursuit of needs of a higher order. Most people do not become more spiritual and intellectual. Self-education and self-improvement, striving to become a harmonious, fully rounded personality can be considered as an exception rather than a rule. Unfortunately, there is a dominant trend to maximize short-term pleasures by meeting the lower needs in the hierarchy – people still want bread and circuses. In modern times people who are not hungry demand more entertainment.

#### **Entertainment industry today and tomorrow**

Spreading needs in entertainment stimulate the emergence and rapid development of relevant industries. Nowadays this activity sphere, in turn, begins to influence consumers by offering them new services, generating, thus, new needs in entertainment.

According to the study conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers<sup>3</sup>, in 2013 the

<sup>3</sup> PricewaterhouseCoopers is an international network of more than 160 companies across the world providing accounting and consulting services. The review "Global Entertainment and Media – Forecast" is published annually and contains an analysis, factors and forecasts of entertainment and media market development in 54 countries for 5 years. Thirteen major media sectors are studied, such as television, radio, Newspapers, film industry, book publishing, and the Internet.

global entertainment and media market amounted to 1.7 trillion U.S. dollars. Almost the United States of America account for 34%, Japan – about 10% and China – 7.7%. Russia's share amounted to slightly more than 1.6% (*tab. 2*). The global entertainment and media market is expected to amount to 2.2 trillion U.S. dollars at the 5% average growth rate in 2018.

In the Russian Federation in 2013 the entertainment and media market increased by 10% and amounted to 27.7 billion U.S. dollars. However, its volume was by 20.7 times less than in USA.

Nevertheless, the Russian market remains one of the most dynamic. In the forecast period the average annual growth rate is expected to amount to 9.8%, and by 2018 the market will grow to 44.3 billion U.S. dollars. The already mentioned study by PricewaterhouseCoopers also presents the data on the development of basic entertainment industry sectors in Russia in 2013 and the forecast for 2018 (*tab. 3*). It is assumed that the fastest increase is characteristic of the access to the Internet (+96%), the film industry (+65%), pay TV (+63%), radio (+61%), video games (+50%). The more modest growth is characteristic of the music industry (+39%), magazines (+28%) and newspapers (+11%). The negative growth is expected in the book publishing industry (-17%).

The very rapid growth of the Internet entails the development of all needs, which satisfaction is connected with the Internet.

Table 2. Largest entertainment and media markets in 2013–2018\*

Market	Million U.S. dollars		Position		Average annual growth, % forecast
	2013	2018 (forecast)	2013	2018 (forecast)	
USA	572,874	723,733	1	1	4.8
Japan	168,862	174,690	2	3	0.7
China	130,934	219,412	3	2	10.9
Germany	112,833	123,893	4	4	1.9
UK	90,514	105,348	5	5	3.1
Italy	43,013	50,203	9	10	3.1
Brazil	42,186	68,810	10	7	10.3
Australia	36,883	43,366	11	12	3.3
Russia	27,701	44,307	12	11	9.8

\* Entertainment and media markets include elements of double-counting.  
Compiled by: *Vsemirnaya industriya razvlechenii i media – prognoz na 2014–2018 gody: issledovanie PricewaterhouseCoopers* [Global Entertainment and Media – Forecast for 2014-2018: PricewaterhouseCoopers Research]. Available at: [http://www.pwc.ru/ru\\_RU/ru/entertainment-media/publications/assets/entertainment-mediaoutlook-2014.pdf](http://www.pwc.ru/ru_RU/ru/entertainment-media/publications/assets/entertainment-mediaoutlook-2014.pdf)

Table 3. Key sectors of the Russian entertainment industry, radio and the Internet, million U.S. dollars

	2013	2018 (forecast)	2018 to 2013, %
Film industry	1,631	2,697	165
Pay-TV	1,621	2,644	163
Video games	1,311	1,972	150
Music industry	1,327	1,841	139
Magazines	1,312	1,684	128
Newspapers	1,224	1,361	111
Publishing	1,451	1,207	83
Radio	532	856	161
Internet	6,768	13,281	196

Compiled by: *Vsemirnaya industriya razvlechenii i media – prognoz na 2014–2018 gody: issledovanie PricewaterhouseCoopers* [Global Entertainment and Media – Forecast for 2014-2018: PricewaterhouseCoopers Research]. Available at: [http://www.pwc.ru/ru\\_RU/ru/entertainment-media/publications/assets/entertainment-mediaoutlook-2014.pdf](http://www.pwc.ru/ru_RU/ru/entertainment-media/publications/assets/entertainment-mediaoutlook-2014.pdf)

However, its use for entertainment is growing at a faster rate. If in 2011 19% of the respondents had a good time surfing the Internet, in 2014 their number amounted to 31%. If we add listening to music, watching movies, reading books and communication (which, in fact, are entertainment) to it, we will see a significant growth (*tab. 4*).

The rapid growth of the Internet inevitably *boosts the gaming segment*. Its revenues are rising significantly, which once again confirms our conclusion about the growth of needs in entertainment (*tab. 5*).

Since 2008 the *sector of online games* had been growing steadily and in 2013 its revenues came out at 340 million U.S.

Table 4. Do you use the Internet, and if yes, for what purposes? (multiple answers are allowed), in % to the total number of respondents

Answer options	June 2011	June 2012	June 2013	June 2014
To find the needed information	33	36	41	44
For communication	25	32	31	36
<b>For entertainment</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>31</b>
To follow the latest news	20	23	27	30
<b>To find/listen to any music</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>To find/ watch any movies</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>26</b>
To find/buy any goods or services	11	14	14	19
To understand what is happening in the country and abroad	10	14	16	19
To find/read any books	8	11	13	16
Other	1	1	1	1
I do not use the Internet	55	46	39	36

Source: <http://www.levada.ru/30-06-2014/ispolzovanie-interneta> [4]

Table 5. Revenues from online and mobile games in the world in 2013–2018, million U.S. dollars

	2013	2014 (forecast)	2018 (forecast)
Online games	340	406	650
Mobile games	214	258	456

Compiled by: *Vsemirnaya industriya razvlechenii i media – prognoz na 2014–2018 gody: issledovanie PricewaterhouseCoopers* [Global Entertainment and Media – Forecast for 2014-2018: PricewaterhouseCoopers Research]. Available at: [http://www.pwc.ru/ru\\_RU/ru/entertainment-media/publications/assets/entertainment-mediaoutlook-2014.pdf](http://www.pwc.ru/ru_RU/ru/entertainment-media/publications/assets/entertainment-mediaoutlook-2014.pdf)

dollars. In 2014 the yield is expected to increase by 19.5% and reach 406 million U.S. dollars. According to the forecast, up to 2018 the average annual growth rate will amount to 13.8%, while the revenues from online games will reach 650 million U.S. dollars.

The *mobile games sector* had been developing fast. Its revenue amounted to 214 million U.S. dollars in 2013 and, according to the forecasts; in 2014 they will grow by 20.6% to 258 million U.S. dollars. In 2018 the revenues from mobile games will reach 456 million U.S. dollars and the annual average growth rate during the forecast period will be 16.3% [5].

The increasing desire of certain part of the society to “live effortlessly” is alarming because it reflects the general immaturity and the aspiration to escape from reality. For children games are necessary as they help understand reality and develop skills to life in the society; for adults games serve primarily as entertainment and means to get or splash out emotions. It often takes people a lot of time to play games, though this time could be spent much more productively.

Moreover, the extreme forms of gambling, such as computer game addiction, just threaten health and social well-being of an individual.

In terms of public use such games are “fruitless”: they do not stimulate the development of personality, involve the transformation of reality, create a public product or increase national wealth.

It is appropriate to recall the interpretation of free time given by Karl Marx. Free time is “*time, which we can have, is wealth*”<sup>4</sup>, time required “... for

*education, for intellectual development, for social functions fulfillment, for social communication, for free play of physical and intellectual forces...*” [10, pp. 243-244]. Today the effective use of free time is critical for the creation of a harmoniously developed personality. In this case, the true rising necessities mean the improvement of physical and spiritual needs.

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