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About	Migros is Switzerland's largest retail company and the largest employer in the country. Migros Magazin is owned by Migros. It's the most read newspaper in Switzerland. More than 1.5 million copies are printed weekly and distributed domestically throughout Switzerland.
Circulation	The publication has 2.4 million readers.
	This article recognizes Sandra Cortesi as an expert in the field of youth and media and profiles her online media habits as well as her thoughts on how teens navigate the digital world. The article describes her work with youth around the world as well as the numerous organizations (e.g. schools, afterschool programs, NGOs) she partners with worldwide.

## Sandra Cortesi on her own media habits

*She reads many newspapers but only in digital form. She plays mobile games to pass the time – and is well-acquainted with teenagers’ digital world in order to chat with them as equals.*

**Text** [Ralf Kaminski, Dinah Leuenberger](#) **Images** Michael Sieber



*Sandra Cortesi is a “Digital Junkie” herself: she cannot live without her phone.*

**Do you still subscribe to any print editions of daily newspapers? Do you pay for them?**

I have several newspaper subscriptions, such as *The New York Times* and the *NZZ*, but they are all digital. Additionally, I read various daily newspapers online, including publications from the United States, Switzerland, and Latin America, where I once lived.

**But nothing on paper?**

No, unless I am in Switzerland and reading *20 Minuten* [free daily newspaper in Switzerland]. However, I do prefer printed books.

**Which social media platforms do you use?**

In my personal life, I like to use Instagram, and for work, I like to use Twitter. I also use Facebook, YouTube, and Snapchat, although that one (Snapchat) I do not fully understand. I use these platforms not only for my work, but also because they interest me personally. And I have many gaming apps: gaming is my passion.

### **What do you play?**

Everything imaginable. I have a Nintendo Wii, but I also play Clash of Clans and Clash Royale. Many things I play to pass the time.

### **But no first-person shooter games with zombies or other monsters?**

I have played them in the past, but I'm currently not in that phase.

### **Do you think the platforms teenagers use are cool, or do you think "Oh my God, what's that again?"**

I rarely find a new online platform "un-cool", but of course, it ultimately depends on what the platforms are being used for. Games are mainly a pastime for me. That's why I generally do not have greater demands on gaming apps beyond that purpose. However, gaming apps can oftentimes create new channels of communication for youth. Many have their own chat features, where young people can communicate differently than they would over email.

### **Facebook and Twitter are already over ten years old. Other social media platforms have disappeared long ago. Will these two platforms survive long term?**

I think the social media landscape will change a lot in the future. Teenagers change platforms quickly: in the U.S., some numbers show that they currently have no desire to even open a Facebook account. Collecting customer data generally does not contribute much to a platform's positive reputation. Many young people don't want to just go along with everything: a platform's political positioning also plays a role in young people's choices. For example, if a company treats its employees badly, a young person may prefer to use another platform because they do not want to support this behavior.

### **In recent times, Twitter has become a communication channel for the government through the new American president. Have you dealt with this topic?**

Many of us at the Berkman Klein Center are working on this new topic. In the near future, we will investigate the impact of such tweets on the opinion formation of young people.

### **What types of young people come to you to explore these topics?**

Very different types. We have about 50 paid summer internships each year. The young people come from all over the world – usually several thousand apply for these positions. We also often work with focus groups and schools or organizations that have afterschool programs. Even more important is the continuous exchange we have with young people. Specifically, this means that on some days from 3 PM onwards my office looks very different. The teenagers come from school to chat with us and tell us what’s going on. However, it is a constant challenge to keep that up.

***“I lead a busy life: I’m constantly on the move.”***

**Why?**

These kids volunteer to come to my office, which works because I am believable to them and because I know exactly what I’m talking about when I discuss digital platforms. I cannot be superficial: I must honestly care about the students as young people and know about the issues that concern them. The teenagers would find out right away if I just pretend.

**You are an expert in your field. Your knowledge could certainly be commercialized for profit.**

The Berkman Klein Center has an open access policy. Our research has to be available to the world for free. I think that’s an extremely important concept. It is important to me that adolescents be taken more seriously. If for that I have to give more talks and interviews, I’m happy to. I do not make money from them.

**You were born in Venezuela, grew up in Colombia, spent a long time in Switzerland and are now in the USA. That sounds like a very multicultural life. Do you find what makes you tick different from what a 35-year-old who has always been in Switzerland might be like?**

I generally find my international background to be very positive. I speak many languages, travel around the world, and feel at home in many places. I can better understand different cultures, which also helps me in my work. For example, when I am working on a project with UNICEF in South America, the world there is not totally alien to me. But of course, it’s an extreme life. I’m constantly on the move.