

Dublin Pubs - The Original Social Network

Socializing comes easier in front of a pint than in front of a computer screen. This is something that so-called netizens seem to be forgetting, sucked in by their LCD virtual friends in social networks.

“City pubs have always provided a warm environment for social networking and remain the best way to mix and unwind,” said Ted Madden, Chief executive of the Licensed Vintners Association (LVA) at the launch of the new advertising campaign on behalf of Dublin’s publicans. The campaign will consist of radio commercials and posters splashed on city buses with the arresting slogan “Dublin Pubs – The Original Social Network” and of ads promoting the LVA’s website getoutmore.it.

Madden also added: “The so-called netizens would be healthier and happier if they logged off a little more often and legged it along to their local pub to communicate face-to-face in a cosy and congenial atmosphere.”

Would they? With Ireland ranking among the highest consumers of alcohol in the 26 countries on the enlarged EU and with an Irish person drinking an average of 490 pints or 129 bottles of wine or 46 bottles of vodka in a year – as it was reported for 2008 – director of Alcohol Action Ireland Joan Kelly doesn’t seem to go along with the statement.

“Severe problems in this Republic stem from the widespread belief socializing is synonymous with getting sizzled in a pub. Excessive alcoholic consumption can lead to extremely anti-social behaviour,” he commented.

So, is it better to stay at home, have a fag while chatting in Facebook – with the smoking ban

you can’t even enjoy your cigarette without literally freezing in the streets – and blame publicans for the high prices of drinks?

Kevin Rafferty, 28, estate agent employee, doesn’t believe so. “It’s pretty sad that people have to be coaxed into going to the pub to socialize. I’d be out every single night of the week if I could,” he said.

Pubs are still the hearth of Irish social life. “The Irish pub is as much a feature around the world as the Italian restaurant!” said chairman of the Drinks Industry Group of Ireland (DIGI). “The pub and the hospitality industry are key parts of tourism, cultural and community infrastructure and the developing trend of rural pub closures is having a major impact on the lives of many people who have used their local pub not only as a means of enjoying alcohol, but also of interacting with their local community.”

True. In a country where the weather doesn’t even allow people to enjoy sunny days playing football in a park, there would be no community at all without pubs. But let’s not blame Facebook only for people not hanging out at pubs anymore. What goes around comes around. “Publicans were creating it in during the Celtic Tiger boom. You couldn’t step into a Dublin pub without a hundreds euros in your wallet. They are still way to expensive. They should save the money they are spending on this campaign and drop their prices,” said Hugh Dunne, 38, psychiatric nurse.

If to socialize you need at least €20 per night, well, at least Facebook is cheaper.