Communicative products of social networks and the Internet as a social glue in times of social crises and disasters

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ABSTRACT

The article presents the quantitative and qualitative impact of social networks and the Internet products on social bonding during crises and disasters. The study is based on the data of psychological experiments, the results of sociological research and various models of news broadcasting and presents consideration about the nature of this impact. In particular, it is shown that informal communication, being a "social glue", has been replenished with new powerful communication channels due to the development of Internet technologies. Despite such an important characteristic as unverified information and other features of counter-knowledge, these channels are massively used by people, thus, according to the author, their communicative and informational products can be studied regarding the possibilities and conditions their expansion and heuristic ability, so they can be analyzed as a factor of social bonding. It has been proven that informal communication in its massive forms are activated in situations of social crises and disasters, because the users are traumatized, often lose control, plunge into a state of social deprivation and need constant communication with like-minded people in similar circumstances. In this way, the community is bonding by social glue by overcoming common problems, and relevant information products and their rapid sharing by the Internet contribute to this. The very information content of for the informal communication through social networks and the Internet allows people to explain reality better and "modify" or alter its representation to a more comfortable one. It has been proven that such factors as "cognitive simplicity" of the information content, its myth-producing component and the high status of an addressee of a message contribute to this. The article also outlines considerations on how people could be taught to navigate the information and choose those products of social networks and the Internet that not only glue community together, but also unite it on the basis of real knowledge. People should be taught to approach information messages critically, to understand the nature and properties of media messages, their communicative and destructive influences. Media literacy and critical thinking could be very helpful in these situations as they facilitate informational culture, teach media literacy, increase personal self-confidence, help people shape their own view of reality and consciously choose partners for constructive communication.

Introduction

The vivid metaphor "social glue" currently denotes any result of social processes that contributes to the bonding and understanding in a social group (community), offering it a vision of a common future at the same time. And this result is fixed either in shared cultural patterns, or more broadly, in the establishment of certain community "game rules" regarding cohabitation and communication. Therefore, researchers who use this metaphor to outline their own subject of research agree that the object of their interest is group interaction and the expected result of group bonding. The diversity of their subjects is determined by the different levels of the studied communities, the contexts of their professional focusing and, ultimately, the goals of their public expression.

The scientific concept of social bonding as "social glue" was introduced and developed by a British biological anthropologist and evolutionary psychologist Robin Dunbar, who studied the social behavior of primates and humans, and is best known for formulating Dunbar's number, a measurement of the cognitive limit to the number of individuals with whom any one person can maintain stable relationships. Social glue encompasses the various ways in which individuals connect with one another, build relationships, and cooperate to achieve common goals, thereby contributing to the stability and resilience of social structures. He also substantiated the role of language as the main means of communication channel that allows to maintain a direct social contact and stabilizes the mental manifestations of a human personality (*Dunbar, 1996*).

Based on his research, the studies of direct communication and social networks prove that one person can maintain stable interaction with a maximum of 150 people. The core of this stability is a mutual exchange of benevolent actions when building social relations which are considered to be existing factors of such relations, and at the same time more promising for the exchange of information and resources (*Baumeister, Leary, 1995*).

Since benevolence is an emotion that is directly or symbolically communicated from person to person, it is a factor of informal communication with the extensive multiple communication channels (*Orel, 2016*) that are gaining more and more importance nowadays due to the Internet and digital networking development. Other important characteristics of the informal communication are their unplanned nature, random participants, constructing and shaping based on personal preferences, friendships, interpretive nature and informal register of language and speech (*Krysko, Skyshliak, 2019*). As we can see, all these characteristics contribute to the establishment of relationships based on trust within a certain community, and their communicative products, being propagated through informal channels, are covered by the concept of "counter-knowledge", which cannot be verified, but which has a certain psychological and informational influence on the communicants, uniting and conforming them in a certain opinion, and thus, "gluing" the community.

The concept of "counter-knowledge" was introduced by a British Journalist D. Thompson, who defined it as unverified information believed in by a certain critical mass of people. The author cites current events, celebrity gossips, manipulative excursions into history, including the statements that lack evidence or are contradicted by their own evidence base as the examples (*Thompson, 2008*) of "counter-knowledge".

At present, the most relevant types of global "counter-knowledge" are communicative products of social networks and the Internet, which, in addition to unverified information and massive trust of people as the main features, also are characterized by the use of so-called "hype technologies" aimed at the increase of the engaged audience and their interest in certain objects or processes. D. Rushcoff, a leading American expert in new media and digital culture, noted that a characteristic feature of hype technologies is their short-term effect, as their main function is to create an informational drive for discussion, insignificant in terms of content, but game-changing in terms of the perception of local and global events (*Rushcoff, 1995*). Currently, this technology is being used in one way or another to create any digital content, which resulted in its advantages over traditional content offered by print media and television. And we assume that the generic features of this technology of engagement and content individualization contribute to the increase of the audience of social networks and video hosting.

According to the study "Media Consumption of Ukrainians in a Full-Scale War" (*Sobenko, 2022*), conducted by the Ukrainian national sociological operator of the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology in 2022, the most popular source of information was social networks (76.6% of the total number of respondents use them for this purpose), more than 92% of respondents between the ages of 18 and 39 consume news on social media, social networks also dominate among other sources of information for people aged 40-49 (58.4%) and 50-59 (57.5%).

This result gives reason to consider communicative products of social networks and the Internet as relevant and worthy of study for social bonding called as "social glue". We tend to consider the age group of 40-59 years old as the main object of the research, as it was shown in their work (*Cipolletta, Mocellin, 2017*) as they document almost every aspect of their everyday life in social networks, present themselves and manage their social relationships, communicate with friends and perform other socio-cultural activities online according to the functions of social bonding. Young people aged 18-40, as it is well shown in the following research (*Lomachinska, Hryschyna, 2024*), were born and grew up in the context of Internet communication, therefore their actions in social networks and perception of Internet products may appear to be not the feature of social bonding, but rather of individualization and increased level of critical thinking.

Methods of Research

When communities experience complex and crisis events, influenced by multiple factors, participants of social communications often use not genuine knowledge (proven true belief), which usually requires complex intellectual efforts to perceive and lack the appealing informality, but the communicants prefer comprehensible, accessible knowledge they are ready to trust in. The problem of giving preference to "counter-knowledge" did not appear today. Back in the 15th century, Sebastian Brant contemplated the problem in his "Ship of Fools", accurately exposing the vices and stupidity of his contemporaries, and in the 16th century, Erasmus of Rotterdam strongly emphasized the reluctance of people to think in his "Praise of Folly". In the 20th century, Isaac Asimov, speaking of the threats to democracy posed by ignorance, proclaimed that the main slogan of his contemporaries was "My ignorance is no worse than your knowledge." Today, as there is greater access to various informational channels, human ignorance and the desire to be satisfied with simple and understandable information penetrates into all spheres of life and is sustained by false statements that knowledge is equal to ignorance (counter-knowledge).

At the same time, such opposition of knowledge and counter-knowledge suggests that the first facilitates scientific and technological progress, while the second is a certain emotional factor that promotes social unity and openness. Therefore, it deserves a separate consideration as a factor of social bonding.

In this article we made an attempt to substantiate the quantitative and qualitative impact of social network products and the Internet on social bonding during crises and disasters and determine the nature of such influence, using the data of psychological experiments described in the scientific literature, the results of sociological studies of societies during the periods of uncertainty and deprivation, and the results of mathematical modeling of news sharing. A separate issue to consider within the framework of this analysis is whether it is possible to teach people to navigate the information and choose those products of social networking and the Internet, that not only glue society together, but also unite it on the basis of real knowledge.

The methodological basis of the research was the understanding of communication on the basis of trust and benevolence, researched by R. Dunbar as the concept of "social glue". The second important research term is "counter-knowledge", which we, following D. Thompson, understand as unverified information that is trusted by a critical mass of people. And we supplement this definition with D. Rashcoff's characterization of "hype technologies", bearing in mind that counter-knowledge is necessarily

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based on the keen interest of the audience in certain objects or processes.

Results and Discussion

Informal massive communication is active in situations of social crises and disasters. Psychologists Jennifer A. Whitson and Adam D. Galinsky grounded this thesis in their research "Lacking Control Increases Illusory Patter Perception" (*2008*). They presented a series of experiments that tested whether lacking control increases illusory pattern perception, which they define as the identification of a coherent and meaningful interrelationship among a set of random or unrelated stimuli. Psychologist previously consulted and updated the participants about their childhood traumas. Participants who lacked control were more likely to perceive a variety of illusory patterns, including seeing images in noise, forming illusory correlations in stock market information, perceiving conspiracies, and developing superstitions. Experimenters conducted the same conversations with people in the control group who were not previously traumatized. And the result of conversations with people in the control group was a very restrained perception of conspiracy information and frequent misunderstanding of the provided drawings or sets of numbers. Additionally, they demonstrated that increased pattern perception has a motivational basis by measuring the need for structure directly and showing that the causal link between lack of control and illusory pattern perception is reduced by affirming the self. Although these many disparate forms of pattern perception are typically discussed as separate phenomena, the current results suggest that there is a common motive underlying them. The obtained conclusion of the experimenters is the following: if a person was traumatized and lacked control, they will better trust the information with warnings about possible danger. This conclusion confirms the results of anthropological research about the discovery of ancient properties of the human psyche trained to scan the environment for danger. In our opinion, the above experiment can be extended to the perception of majority of social networks and the Internet communicative products: the effect of searching for information that corresponds to a certain mental state is even more intensified. Moreover, since the entire Internet audience is subject to targeting, a user is more likely to respond to certain content in their networks and video channels.

People in a permanent state of social deprivation demonstrate the same readiness to consume and spread unverified information or hype content. Czech psychologists J. Langmeier and Z. Matejczyk (*1984*) define deprivation as a state that resulted from certain life situations, when a subject has been unable to satisfy the basic human needs sufficiently and for a long time. The researchers single out a number of basic (vital) needs as impossible to be satisfied in this state, including the need for primary social relations, which provides the possibility of effective basic integration of an individual, and the need for social self-realization, which provides the opportunity to master various social roles and value goals. In other words, it is a long-term negative situation that people or their loved ones cannot change or influence on.

Scientific experiments related to a human perception of information in such states (*Finiv, 2015*) prove that people tend to give pessimistic assessments of their future, support and spread various rumors, constantly look for someone to blame for their problems, lose trust in governmental policies and even tend to devalue them. According to

Ukrainian researchers E.V. Siryi and M.A. Nakhabich, the atmosphere of mental unrest, emotional excitement, and symptoms of decommunicative ("silent") rebellion are spotted (*Siryi, Nakhabich, 2018*) in society as a whole, as well as in a separate territorial community in particular. The authors also provided a list of judgments that represent an example of unverified false knowledge, which were readily followed and further interpreted by the survey participants in the aforementioned study of social tension.

For example, regarding the rating of social fears, the most popular statements were:

> "Fear of the economic situation, if the dollar exchange rate is more than 50 hryvnias, then we shouldn't fear any war, we will die out without it."

> "Fear of economic collapse, when the prices are being increased, and utility bills are increased compared to the rise in salaries" (*Siryi, Nakhabich, 2018: 99*)

Summarizing these studies, we can state that social deprivation is a significant factor to the users massive social networking, it contributes to their consumption of relevant communicative products as simulacres of positive feelings and can cause addictive behavior.

A personal tendency to altruism is another factor in the perception of communication products of social networks and the desire make them viral. This factor was analyzed by Nigerian researchers Oberiri Destiny Apuke and Bahiyah Omar in their 2021 study on modeling predictors regarding the proliferation of fake news on COVID-19 (*Apuke, Omar, 2021*). The results showed that altruism was the most significant factor that promoted sharing of COVID-19 fake news. The fake news phenomenon was studied using the Uses and Gratification framework, which was extended by an "altruism" motivation. They define altruism as the act of sharing news and information without expecting a reward for such an act and show that people who engage in such activities (sharing fake news on COVID-19) are motivated by the emotional impact and significance that this news for the recipients. They also found that information sharing, socialization, information seeking and pass time predict fake news sharing.

At the same time, not only fake news and unverified judgments go viral on the networks. As it was shown in V.D. Bezuglova's research, online social networks have become the main communication tool for updated information and communication in society since the beginning of the full-scale Russian invasion in Ukraine (*Bezuglova, 2022*). She proves this fact with the results of the 6 Ukrainian National Survey by "Rating" sociological group, and further in her research she confirms that the main types of communicative support are provided by leading messengers, social networks and video hosting. Bezuglova even claims that Ukrainians' habit to monitor and share news in social networks is caused by the constant need to reduce stress by consuming relevant content. And this conclusion, in our opinion, correlates with the altruistic support given by the Nigerian respondents during the sharing news and information about the pandemic.

Finally, a very important factor in the quantitative growth in the distribution of social networks and the Internet products in times of crises and disasters is their predominant connection with emotions of fear, disgust, and surprise. This conclusion is one of the research results presented by S. Vosoughi, D. Roy, and S. Aral in Science article "The spread of true and false news online" published in 2018 (*Vosoughi et al. 2018*). Their analysis of all the verified true and false rumors that spread on Twitter confirms that false news is spread online more often and has a 20

times higher chance of reposting than actual true facts. The greater likelihood of people to retweet fakes more than the truth is what drives the spread of false news, despite network and individual factors that favor the truth. The information that causes strong negative emotions attracts the greatest audience. It is an evolutionary human ability to spread and share negative news faster, thus protecting themselves from all kinds of dangers as it helped people to survive.

In a situation of social disasters, counter-knowledge shared through social networks and the Internet better explains reality and allows to "alter" it in a way that is comfortable for a person. In our opinion, this statement can be supported by applying the factor of "cognitive simplicity/complexity" identified in J. Kelly's theory of personal constructs, which in general consists in explaining how a person interprets and foresees their life experience, predicts (constructs) future events, and manages experienced events. As established by many researchers, the content of social phenomena and the social world as a whole is perceived differently by individuals and depends on the level of their cognitive abilities (*O'Madagain, Tomasello, 2021*) development and social perception (*Studenikin, 1999*). In particular, the more a person identifies with other people, the higher is one's self-esteem and the higher are the evaluations of other people. The lower is someone's cognitive complexity, the more positive they evaluate themselves and other people mainly by sharing common identity with many acquaintances and thus being less anxious. Individuals with high cognitive complexity tend to perceive themselves and other people less positively, they identify less with their environment and are highly anxious (*Studenikin, 1999*). This means that they need more factors to make decisions, and they are less inclined to believe in viral information (rumors and viral social media communication products). Individuals with lower cognitive ability (who are the majority in any communicational community) are satisfied with simple and figurative explanations and tend to interpret and share these explanations to their communicative environment, thus either enhancing general anxiety or conveying general social optimism.

Andrea Kitta's research "Vaccinations and Public Concern in History: Legend, Rumor, and Risk Perception (Routledge Studies in the History of Science, Technology and Medicine)" (*2011*) demonstrated the spread of anxiety and general concern trough informal communication channels. Through the use of ethnographic, media, and narrative analyses, this research explores the vernacular explanatory models used in inoculation decision-making. Dr. Andrea Kitta established that almost 48% of decisions made about vaccination were not based on complex (reliable scientific explanations), but on the personal experience of vaccinations, informal rumors, personal contacts with a doctor (as a substitute for an expert opinion), etc. The research was designed to help create public health education programs and promotional materials that respond to patients' fears, understandings of risk, concerns, and doubts. Exploring the nature of inoculation distrust and miscommunication, Dr. Andrea Kitta identifies areas that require better public health communication and greater cultural sensitivity in the handling of inoculation programs.

The addressee's status is an important factor in the positive perception and further sharing of unverified judgments of a message. In this sense, the products of social networking and the Internet often differ from rumors or gossip as types of counter-knowledge precisely by the identified source of a message. If such a message meets the perceptions of the recipients about the course of events, the desired ooccurrence of the event, or simply has a calming effect on them, then people are inclined to share such a statement with a community of like-minded people, adding their own interpretations. In this way, the effect of "social bonding" and understanding in the community is ensured. And the high status of the author of the original message is perceived as a sufficiently proved and trustworthy opinion. In addition, the person who directly shares the information thereby removes responsibility for the false or fake information.

One can also "alter" the reality to a more comfortable version of it and unite the community on this basis with the help of myth-producing constructs, such as heroic stories, urban legends, or anecdotes. Comparing a real situation with the one that happened in the past and was narratively fixed in a well-known work or a mass narrative (legend), a person also builds possible scenarios for the development of the real situation and at the same time does not bear personal responsibility for their implementation.

This is manifested most massively in feature films narration in cinematography. Having a wide range of tools for emotional impact on a huge audience, they literally create an official narrative about a certain historical event and form the necessary attitudes. For example, Soviet film "Battleship Potemkin " (dir. Sergei Eisenstein) was voted on Brussels 12 at the 1958 World Expo as one of the greatest films of all times. The film is set in June 1905; the protagonists of the film are the members of the crew of the Potemkin, a battleship of the Imperial Russian Navy's Black Sea Fleet. The film is based on a real event, but shows the imaginary fictional plot development, yet even today, some scenes are perceived as documentary. In particular, it has long been proven by the historians that no more than a quarter of the sailors actually supported this mutiny, that the mutiny was prepared and was not spontaneous, that after the ship docked in Odesa port, a large-scale fire broke out there, accompanied by looting and pogroms that caused the death of several hundred people, and the injury of several thousand more... (*Osborn, 2005*). Moreover, even such Odesa landmark and toponym as Potemkin Stairs has got its name because of the film. The pathos of the invincible struggle led to a different view of events, altered by Eisenstein's talent in film directing, and thus the constructed narration was fixed in collective historical memory. The effect of altered reality is also present in other celebrated films as they often change people's collective perception of what happened in reality, especially if the event happened many years ago and was comprehensively understood.

Modern media and social networks are the total intermediary between man and the world today as they are the fastest in generating social myths from events and stories, significant for the community at a specific moment in time (*Lomachinska, Lomachinskyi, 2023*). According to R. Barthes definition, the most important thing in modern myth-creating is the method of covering the event (*Barthes, 1973*). In order to happen as a communicative product and become a media event, a story or a case must be properly covered, and in fact, this is what social media users participate in, covering the event, evaluating and reacting to it, and thus bonding with the supporters under their evaluation and forming a circle of opponents.

In his collection of three short essays "The Gulf War Did Not Take Place" (*1991*) Jean Baudrillard showed the

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difference between media coverage and a real insight into the confrontation that took place between Iraq and the 35-nation Coalition in 1990-1991. While the author acknowledges that the events and violence of what has been called the Gulf War took place, he asks if the events happened were really as they were presented, and whether they could be called a war. Baudrillard argued the Gulf War was not really a war, but rather an atrocity which masqueraded as a war, a simulacrum of war. Continuing these considerations, we can assume that these stories preset altered reality as a more comfortable one either for the addressee or at the request of the information consumer.

It is especially important that people develop a certain informational immunity at the wartime or during other social crises, and should be able to resist destructive information in the form of "counter-knowledge" with its negative impact and distortion of the reality. Media literacy could be very helpful in these situations. In addition to being resistant to informational aggression and hostile narratives and myths, a media-literate person learns a model of behavior that encourages him to think about what he experiences, sees, and reads. The task of media literacy is to transform media consumption (as consumption of any products of Internet networking) into an active and critical process that facilitates a better understanding of the potential manipulation.

International experience shows that countries of stable democracies began to teach their citizens to understand the products of social networking and the Internet correctly, they started to encourage and promote media literacy long ago, and initially by the influence of their civil society at the level of projects aimed at combating fake news (see, for example, *Selnes, 2024; Melchior, Oliveira, 2024*).

Over a period of time, when experts and governmental officials had realized that it was best to teach media literacy from a young age through media educational elements, special training courses were integrated in the curricula of secondary education institutions in Great Britain, the United States, Canada, France, and other countries. These courses teach young people to think independently and analytically, to value facts more than their own experience, to use social networking and other Internet products effectively and safely, and to protect themselves from manipulative technologies (*Rudenko, Ovcharenko, 2022*).

Stacey Goodman, a teacher of new media and film production from the United States, published an article in 2014, in which she examines the most popular concepts of media literacy from the perspective of media audiences and users of social networks and formulates five key principles of a conscious media users who are no longer just consumers of media, but content creators and distributors (*Goodman, 2014*). So, all knowledgeable users/netizens should be aware of the fact that the media present carefully crafted constructions, reflecting many decisions and are the result of many determining factors, thus when creating your own media, one should be aware of how imitation of popular or approved media images might come into play, and what influences outside of one's own life and values might be shaping how you create and share original content online. Likewise, they (users) should realize the fact that their perception of reality is shaped by media messages, and with this in mind, any message should be correlated with their own position, and not just broadcast popular opinions. The next principle is related to different understandings of messages by different audiences. Media-literate users should also consider that their content may have various interpretations and consequences that differ from the original intentions and assumptions of the addressee. Another key principle is related to the idea that media messages have commercial implications. Stacey Goodman argues that media ownership determines not only the media we can or cannot view, but also what the ordinary user can share and say online and their choice of addressee. Media literate users should be aware of how the media are influenced by commercial considerations, and how they impinge on content, technique, and distribution. The final principle of media literacy argues that media products are advertising in some sense proclaiming values and ways of life. Posting pictures and verbal content online we are using the media to "edit out" what is undesirable about our world and our lives, and feature only what is most photogenic or appealing. Thus, while observing flashy catching images, one should understand their "edited festivity", try not to be deluded by their appeal and should avoid despair that our lifestyle is different from the one shown online.

Another way to teach people media literacy for the sake of social bonding is to support and maintain self-confidence. As we noted above, one of the factors contributing to the massive social information going viral is social deprivation. Therefore, the biggest agents of counter-knowledge online posting in social networks and messengers are socially deprived individuals. A social experiment conducted in the Netherlands showed that people with low incomes and in certain disadvantaged positions tend to spread conspiracy theories or panic ideas in order to increase their social importance. Then in the course of the experiment they were involved in various civic activities, from volunteering in social care institutions (such as hospices) to arrangement of urban spaces, etc., any work that leads to social recognition. In about a year, when researchers reminded the respondents of the conspiracy theories or rumors, they were spreading, the contributors began to deny their authorship and involvement en masse, refusing to acknowledge that they could possibly believe in such things (*Lantian et al., 2018*).

This and other examples demonstrate that a deprived person is usually overwhelmed with emotions, anxious and unable to think rationally. Understanding one's importance and social value, on the contrary, increases self-esteem, and therefore changes the behavior (including media behavior) of such a person. That is, self-confidence allows you to move from the perceptive emotional plane of any message to a rational one, thus, people pay less attention to various suggestive linguistic means (such as "toxic" headlines or unambiguous quantifiers), and visual means of suggestion (such as observing and following other people online) etc.

Conclusion

1. In the last decade informal communication as a way of social bonding has been empowered with new communication channels due to the development of Internet technologies. All products of informal communication have the property of "social glue" as they are aimed at the emotional engagement, benevolence, potential for horizontal connections, relevance and hype. At the same time, the products of informal communication are represented by unverified judgments and inferences, so from this point of view, they can be defined as counter-knowledge as opposed to the proven, verified and true knowledge.

2. Since counter-knowledge becomes such when a critical mass of people begins to believe in it, it can be studied regarding the possibilities and conditions of its quantitative distribution, heuristic ability and as a factor of social bonding.

3. The number of social networks and the Internet products as means of informal communication usually increases in times of social crises and disasters due to the fact that the recipients, experiencing hardships, often lose control, plunge into the state of social deprivation and need constant communication with like-minded people or those who are in similar circumstances. In this way, the community is bonding by social glue by overcoming of common problems, and relevant information products and their rapid sharing by the Internet contribute to this.

4. The very nature of informational content in the informal communication through social networking and the Internet allows people to explain reality better and "alter" it to a more comfortable version. This is facilitated by "cognitive simplicity" of informational content, its myth-producing function, and the high status of a message addressee. The last two factors allow communicators to build a certain vision of subjects or events in the process of communicating or understanding a message and avoid personal responsibility for their assessment at the same time.

5. It is highly important that people develop certain information immunity at the wartime or during other social crises, and should be able to resist destructive information of "counter-knowledge" with its negative impact and distortion of the reality. Media literacy and critical thinking could be very helpful in these situations as they facilitate informational culture, teach media literacy, increase personal self-confidence, help people shape their own view of reality and consciously choose partners for constructive communication.

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Communicative products of social networks and the Internet as a social glue in times of social crises and disasters
Комунікативні продукти соціальних мереж та інтернету як соціальний клей в часи соціальних криз та катастроф

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Комунікативні продукти соціальних мереж та інтернету як соціальний клей в часи соціальних криз та катастроф

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У статті на підставі даних психологічних експериментів, результатів соціологічних досліджень та різних моделей поширення новин обґрунтовано кількісний та якісний вплив продуктів соціальних мереж та інтернету на соціальну згуртованість в період криз та катастроф, визначено характер такого впливу. Зокрема показано, що неформальна комунікація, яка має властивість «соціального клею», поповнилась завдяки розвитку Інтернет-технологій новими потужними каналами спілкування. Попри таку важливу характеристику як неверифікованість та інші ознаки контрзнання, ці канали використовує критична маса людей. Відповідно, на думку авторки, їх комунікативно-інформаційний продукт може буте досліджений з точки зору можливостей і умов його кількісного поширення, евристичної здатності і як чинник соціальної згуртованості. Доведено, що неформальна комунікація та її масові форми активізуються в ситуаціях соціальних криз і катастроф, оскільки люди в таких ситуаціях є травмованими, часто втрачають контроль, занурюються в стан соціальної депривації та потребують постійного спілкування з однодумцями або особами, що знаходяться в подібних до їхніх обставинах. Таким чином, спільнота згуртовується (соціально склеюється) на ґрунті спільного подолання проблем, а відповідні інформаційні продукти та швидкий обмін ними за допомогою інтернет-зв'язку сприяють цьому. Сам зміст інформаційного контенту для неформальної комунікації через соціальні мережі та Інтернет дозволяє людям ліпше пояснювати реальність та «змінювати» на більш комфортну для себе. Доведено, що цьому сприяють такі фактори як «когнітивна простота» інформаційного контенту, його міфотворчий компонент та високий статус адресата повідомлення. В статті також містяться міркування, яким чином можна було б навчати людей орієнтуватися в інформаційному просторі та обирати ті продукти соціальних мереж та інтернету, які не тільки склеюють суспільство, але й об'єднують його на підставі справжнього знання. Для цього людей слід навчати критично підходити до інформаційних повідомлень, розуміти природу та можливості медіамеседжів, їх комунікативні та деструктивні можливості. Допомагають в цьому такі інструменти як медіаграмотність та критичне мислення, які виховують інформаційну культуру, підвищують впевненість особи у собі, допомагають їй сформувати власний погляд на реальність та свідомо обирати партнерів для конструктивної комунікації.

Ключові слова: комунікативний продукт соціальних мереж та інтернету, «соціальний клей», соціальна згуртованість, «контрзнання», хайп-технології, соціальна депривація, соціальна травма, інформаційний контент, міфотворчий компонент повідомлення, медіаграмотність, інформаційна культура.