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# Post mass media in the modern informational society "Journalistic text in a new technological environment: achievements and problems"

# DIGITAL CULTURE AS A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE OF FUTURE JOURNALISTS

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## *Abstract*

The article addresses the changes in social relations among young people currently receiving their education, - changes that are due to technological innovations, digital culture, and media education as an integral part of the latter. Alternative forms of behavior, the “clip mentality”, and new paradigm forms of the kind that proclaim man to be “an appendage to the web”, define, to a great extent, not only the social and professional mobility of the younger generation but also its moral and communicative reception. The insufficient elaboration of the terminological field of notions generates a lot of questions. The authors carried out the second phase of a field study titled “Digital Culture As a Competitive Advantage of Future Journalists”. The study examined different levels of perception of digital culture by students, including the material and functional levels, the communicative and personal security level, and the mental, spiritual, and values levels. The sample selected for the study included 682 students of schools of journalism based at the universities of Moscow. The results helped to give answers to a number of important questions and confirmed the opinion of many researchers that the communication culture of the information society is based on a new type of social networking relations which changes models of people’s behavior and the language of communication. They also brought us to the conclusion that it is particularly important for future journalists to master digital culture, and that this generally gives them a competitive advantage in shaping their prospective professional careers.



**Keywords:** Digital culture, communicative level, ontological level, generation Z, media education, students of journalism.

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## 1. Introduction

The digital revolution established a dictatorship, which in turn led to a stratification of consciousness, both private and collective. These are prerequisites for the emergence of a new moral public environment, which has been called the "digital culture". Considered initially as a phenomenon mediated by the development of technology and information technology (cultural-communicative interface,) arising and functioning in the process of communication between man and computer, later digital culture expanded its mode to the spiritual spheres of society. At the same time, the strengthening of technogenic discourse generates new forms of socio-humanitarian practices in scientific reflection. One of them is media education. Unlike classical forms, the postulates of media education expand the ontological boundaries of reality, including in the educational process of individuals of all ages and social strata. The relevance of the research in this regard is that today the "generation Z" enters the sphere of higher education, which came to this world already in the era of developed digital culture and therefore bearing bright imprints and images of this phenomenon.

## 2. Problem Statement

The relevance of the research is that today the "generation Z" enters the sphere of higher education, which came to this world already in the era of developed digital culture and therefore bearing bright imprints and images of this phenomenon.

## 3. Research Questions

Study of the impact of digital culture on changing behavioral strategies of students.

## 4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the work is to show how changes in social relations, and, first of all, social network relations of the generation Z, change behavioral, mental and other behaviors of students. The goal involves the solution of a number of tasks. Among them: to identify the levels of perception of digital culture, from the methodological and socio-communicative points of view; to characterize the "Z generation" behavioral model; analyze the terminological field of the term "media education"; analyze the changes in the level of perception of cultural symbols of the surrounding reality by students - future journalists.

## 5. Research Methods

The study of digital culture uses the principles of comparative analysis of the main methodological approaches. The methodological principles on which digital culture is built, and, especially, media education as its integral part, have not yet passed the full scientific reflection, but nevertheless, the main trends, in our opinion, can already be outlined. In analyzing the development of digital culture, the ideas of McLuhan (2018), Toffler (2002), Naisbitt (2003), Kaku (as cited in Mitio, 2018) are used on the impact of information revolutions on the change of communication types, public consciousness and

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culture in general. The technocratic-oriented philosophical discourse of digital culture is presented in the works of Gere (as cited in Golovko, Kohanova, & Chereshneva, 2019), Galkin (2012), according to which the methodology of analysis of digital culture should solve two problems: to determine the prerequisites for the development of digital culture and to analyse its key phenomena.

Galkin (2012), conducting a study of digital culture, identified four methodological levels of its perception: material, functional, mental and spiritual.

The material level determines its technological imperative, the other two – functional and spiritual – predetermine the inevitability of philosophical reflection and the selection of new levels of perception. In our opinion, there is a need to consider in this series also the communicative and ontological levels of perception. The first one is dichotomous in distinguishing the binary man-machine union, generated by the industrial revolutions of the past centuries, and raised to a new level of understanding by the digital revolution. The second came from the spiritual and mental levels and rather testifies to the technological crisis of anthropo-deficiency, giving rise to the opposition "moral-technology."

These levels mediate in their unity and numerous conflicts the value bases of digital culture and raise questions about the ideological determination of the further development of digital technologies.

In this connection, in our opinion, the position of Walter Ong (as cited in Kolomietz, 2017), one of the representatives of the Toronto school of communication theory, seems to be of some interest. Considering the historical concepts of the formation of cultures, he puts forward the thesis of “secondary orality” (“secondary orality”) - this time, oral opinion of the era of digital communications” (Kolomietz, 2017, p. 426).

One of such significant aspects of modern practice is the Internet, which is currently no longer just a technical tool to meet the information needs of the individual. Developing a terminological series, we will advance the thesis about the transition of the perception of the Network from the material to the level of a new social and spiritual interaction, which is both a carrier and a generator of the most diverse, including new spheres of human life. The locus of the “Network is an appendage of man” paradigm has changed by 180 degrees, giving rise to the postmodernist paradox “Man is an appendage of the Network”. Thanks largely to this factor, studies of digital culture seem so relevant today.

An analysis of the scientific literature has shown that today many researchers are trying to grasp and formulate the concept of “digital culture”. Some authors, such as, for example, Ch. Gere, believe that, if we proceed from the classical definition, then formally the concept of “culture” is wider and therefore it includes technology (Golovko et al., 2019, p. 178). For them, the process of technological development is the implementation of certain predetermined cultural attitudes. Representatives of this trend in some way oppose analog culture to digital culture and see the latter as a threat to human nature (Prokudin, Levit, & Hossfeld, 2017, pp. 69-74). Obviously, both approaches have a right to exist, although from the point of view of the cultural approach a classical interpretation is more acceptable. But no matter what, “digital culture” is a concept that, according to Sokolova (2012), is "the recognition that digital technologies have become an organic part of modern human life" (pp. 6-10).

Let us point out one more of its characteristic features - digital culture largely determines not only social, but also social and professional mobility, which is reflected in the change in behavioral patterns of the modern generation. Without going into details, we note the most common feature of behavioral

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models generated by digital culture - the desire for individualization of strategies. In fact, the ubiquitous distribution of various forms of freelancing and downshifting, and in education - webinars, distance learning, various workshops, etc. testifies to the construction of fundamentally new nonlinear behavioral forms.

According to some of today's ideas, a new generation has been formed since 2000 – the Z generation. The Z generation is determined by globalization, computerization, virtual services of varying degrees of complexity. One of the defining characteristics of this generation, many researchers consider "clip thinking" (Koshel & Segal, 2015, pp. 15-23).

In various studies, the phenomenon of digital culture is directly associated with social transformations, pointing to the psycho-physiological barriers that the personality itself, as a subject of social development, develops to protect against information overload, that is, from actual informational aggression from the external environment.

According to Yu. Sakharova, director of the HeadHunter North-West portal, "young applicants have a clearly expressed desire to enjoy: from communication, parties, work. Work for them is not an end in itself" (as cited in Matveeva, 2014, p. 67).

In other words, under the influence of digital culture, new approaches emerge that largely determine social and professional mobility.

The subject field studied in this article is directly related to the development of such approaches and represents the dyadic option "digital culture - digital education", the modus of which is aimed at creating a single multicultural artifact called "media education".

The central and unifying concept of media education is representation. Media does not reflect reality, but represents, that is, represents it. The main goal of media education is media "denaturalization". Media education in the first place - the research process. Media education is based on key concepts that are more analytical tools than alternative content". This concept of media education is given by the British researcher Masterman (as cited in Zhulavskaya, 2018, pp. 68-71). The format of the article does not allow us to delve into the analysis of the fields of this interesting statement, but it is important to draw a conclusion about media education as the study ("denaturalization") of media and, at the same time, learning with the help of the research process — the media.

There are other points of view on the definition of a term. Thus, in the documents of the Council of Europe "media education is defined as training, which seeks to develop media competence, understood as a critical and thoughtful attitude to the QMS with the aim of educating responsible citizens who are able to express their own judgments on the basis of the information received" (Fedorov et al, 2014, p.5).

According to the Oxford Encyclopedia, "media education is the study of media, which is different from learning through media.

Media education is associated simultaneously with the knowledge of how media texts are created and distributed, and with the development of analytical skills for interpreting and evaluating their content (Fedorov, 2015, p. 450).

Theorist J. Gerbner understands media education as "forming a broad new coalition of organizations and individuals to expand freedom and diversity of communication, to develop a critical

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understanding of the QMS as a new approach to liberal education at every level" (as cited in Fedorov, 2015, p. 450).

Some more definitions can be cited, but it is already obvious that such a spread of opinions indicates not so much the polarity of the researchers' opinions as the absence of a single terminological apparatus. By our research we are trying to make a certain contribution to its formation.

A brief consideration of the terminological field helps us to build a subject chain "digital culture - generation Z - media education", which, according to the logic of the research, should be confirmed by an empirical analysis of journalistic media education.

An attempt to analyze changes in the level of perception of cultural symbols of the surrounding reality associated with the active penetration of virtual reality into the cultural codes of students - future journalists - was the subject of a pilot study "Digital culture as a competitive advantage of future journalists" conducted by the authors.

One of the fragments was a field study, which suggested, in accordance with the classification given in the article, a check of the levels of perception of digital culture by young people. The sample of young students at the faculties of journalism of Moscow universities was 682 people.

At the material level, the degree of communication of the audience with the new, constantly updated equipment and information technologies was analyzed. According to the results of surveys, it turned out that the majority of new technologies are used quite professionally. Moreover, they give preference over traditional sources of information. Only 3% of the students surveyed answered that they sometimes work in a traditional library or reading room where they prepare for classes. Another 5% of the respondents said that they were in the library once out of necessity - they took textbooks that are not in electronic form. Obviously, the ontological level, along with the material, is also manifested in the statistics given.

At the functional level, communication features, attitudes and convictions of students were investigated, in particular. It is interesting that quite rarely the majority of students (79%) attend traditional exhibitions, museums, theaters. But the same 79% answered that they "go" with pleasure to virtual museums, galleries, exhibition halls, 64% use archival data when preparing term and final papers. 78% of respondents rated the process of digitizing museum collections of works of art, exhibits and records, libraries, with the highest scores.

Interesting data was also obtained when studying the level of communication culture and personal safety in the network, since, with the exception of one student, all respondents have their own blogs or accounts in social networks. Some have already created their own channels in Telegram (4%), upload videos to YouTube (18%).

As for the communication level - the level of communication in social media, so necessary in the chosen specialty, here the answers to the questionnaire questions revealed, first of all, the degree of Internet risks to which respondents are exposed.

Thus, the percentage of content risks (13%) associated with the use of materials containing illegal, unethical and harmful information (violence, aggression, erotica and pornography, obscene language, suicide propaganda, narcotic substances, etc.) is palpable. Some respondents drew attention to the emerging communication risks (19%), which are associated with interpersonal relations of Internet users

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and include illegal contacts, for example, for the purpose of meeting, cyber-stalking, cybernundering, etc. The harm caused by consumer and technical risks (purchases of poor quality, hacking account, installing malicious software, etc.) drew the attention of 36% of respondents. On the question of Internet addiction, most responded negatively. But a number of leading questions (such as “how much time do you spend daily sleeping?”) Helped to identify a more holistic picture of Internet addiction. Based on the research materials, it can be stated that to a small extent (up to 22%) it is inherent in the current younger generation.

An analysis of the mental level, which affects the “rootedness” of digital culture in a person’s mental life, led to conclusions about the extremely strong involvement of young people in online communication. So, on the question of how much time a person spends on the Internet, only about half (47%) answered that up to 12 hours a day. The rest is carried out in online communication to 14 (21%), 16 (18%) and more hours (13%). 1% of respondents indicated that he spends time on the Internet around the clock.

The study of the spiritual, value level showed that, in general, students showed a fairly high level of communication culture on the Internet. For example, a high percentage of those who show respect towards other users (75%). They do not immediately enter into a dispute when they disagree with the virtual interlocutor (71%). Since most of the respondents are girls, it is clear that they are experiencing the most difficult cases of incorrect, or rather aggressive behavior, and even direct insults from their interlocutors. After such situations, 65% of female students say that they "are in a bad mood," "I want to say everything that I think about him" and even "did not write posts for a whole month."

## 6. Findings

The data obtained confirm the opinion of researchers that “the communicative culture of the information society is based on a new type of social network relations that changes the behavior of people, the language of communication ...” (Solov'ev, 2009, pp. 36-41). Therefore, it is particularly important for future journalists to master the digital culture even at the first two levels, which gives them a competitive advantage in determining their professional destiny.

## 7. Conclusion

Six methodological levels of perception of digital culture were identified, a characteristic of the “generation Z” behavioral model at the present stage was given; analyzed the terminological field of the term "media education"; the changes in the level of perception of cultural symbols of the surrounding reality by students - future journalists are investigated.

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