

III PMMIS 2019
Post mass media in the modern informational society
"Journalistic text in a new technological environment:
achievements and problems"

**THEORETICAL ASPECTS OF THE NEWS MEDIA STRATEGIES
AND SPECIFICIES WITHIN SOCIAL NETWORKS**

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Abstract

Every year there are more and more Internet users in the world. Many companies are trying to create their own website to be closer to the consumer. This trend has not bypassed the media sphere, which actively turns into online formats. Both scientists and experts agree that the active transition of publications to the online format will continue. At the same time, social networks are increasingly capturing and dragging the audience. Many brands and companies have relied on the product promotion through social networks. The trend is observed not only in business and finance, but also in the media. Until now, SMM (Social Media Marketing) media require many issues and concerns. However, the ability to work within social networks is becoming a prerequisite for journalistic activities, as well as the learned treatise, dedicated to the social networks promotion. The articles, books and other scientific researches on the topic of social networks promotion and the topic of the media convergence are scope of the present research. Theoretical significance of the present research is the identification of gaps in modern science of particular research interest. Practical implications lie within its implementation by practicing journalists who are promoting their media on social networks

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Keywords: Mass media, social networks, online media, promotion, SMM.



1. Introduction

1.1. Global network as a way of life

The Internet is a worldwide information computer network, which is an association of many regional computer networks and computers that communicate with through public telecommunications channels (dedicated telephone analog and digital lines, optical communication and radio channels, including satellite communication). Every year there are more and more users of the World Wide Web. According to the analytical agency “We Are Social”, the number of Internet users in January 2018 reached 4.021 billion people, which is by 7% more, compared to the same period last year (Sergeeva, 2018). It turns out that Internet access is possessed by more than half the inhabitants of the planet. According to the January 2018 report, prepared by the agency “We Are Social” together with the largest SMM platform Hootsuite, the availability of Internet access in different parts of the world is not evenly distributed (<https://digitalreport.wearesocial.com>).

The largest online users increase is performed by the countries of Central Africa. Here, the number of users has been increased by 20%, compared with last year. In Mali, the number of people with Internet access has increased almost 6 times since January 2017. The online audience in Benin, Sierra Leone, Niger and Mozambique has doubled over the past year. As for Russia, the share of the World Wide Web users in January 2018 increased by 4%, compared with January 2017. That is 5 million new users.

According to the report, people all over the world prefer to get online access by mobile phones. The traffic generated from smart phones is greater than all the total traffic from all other devices (according to the We Are Social). But in Russia, the situation is different. Only 21% of all users access the Internet from smartphones, while 75% of users access through laptops and PC. But at the same time, the dynamics of increasing traffic from mobile devices is also preserved in Russia (according to the We Are Social).

The global network has become a way of life for modern Russians (according to the statistics mentioned above). The Russians read news, make purchases and acquaintances, visit libraries, work and spend their leisure time online. Lifestyle, behavioral models, and fashion trends are formed in an online format.

1.2. Social networks as a point to the Internet

Social media, the leading place among which today is occupied by social networks, have become the point of entry into the Internet. It is extremely curious that today a lot of users get online exclusively in order to communicate via social networks. For such users, social networks are an absolute synonym for the Internet, because one can do a lot through social networks: from undertaking the pure communication to learning the media agenda; making purchases, watching and listening to audiovisual content, etc. The number of people, following the most popular social networks has increased by almost 1 million new users from January 2017 to January 2018. In total, the audience of social networks in January 2018 is 3.196 billion people, and 9 out of 10 link to them from mobile devices.

“Initially, the term “social network” appeared in James Barnes’s “Classes and Meetings in the Norwegian Island Parish” in 1954. According to Barnes, a social network is a social structure (mathematically - a graph), consisting of a group of nodes, which are social objects (people and organizations), and connections between them (social relationships)” (Simakova, 2012, p. 16). That is,

initially the appearance of the concept itself and its research had nothing to do with the world wide web. However, the rapid development of society in the field of information technology has led to a jump in the development of social networks already in the space of the Internet. Applied to the Internet, social networks are a “software service, a platform for interaction between people in a group or in groups. A social network is an interactive, multi-user website, the content of which is filled by the network members themselves. The website is an automated social environment that allows one to communicate to a group of users united by a common interest” (Bitkov, 2011, p. 279). According to Burkhanova (2017), social network will be understood in the present research as a phenomenon “with the help of which people construct their public or semi-public profile. The basis of the social network is personal user profiles, which contain all information about the field, age and other personal information that can be linked to each other” (p. 206).

The leader in the number of registered users at the beginning of 2018 is Facebook. There are almost 2.17 billion of users. Meanwhile, the social networks Twitter and VKontakte possess 330 and 97 million users, respectively (according to the We are Social).

In Russia, the number of users of social networks increased by 15% over the year, in particular, 8826800 users. Almost half of the country's population (47%) is registered on social networks and actively use it. On average, Russian users spend 2 hours and 19 minutes a day on social networks.

According to the Global Statistics of the Internet from SEO-AUDITOR (data collected by all counters installed on user sites registered in Yandex.Metrica, SpyLog / Openstat, LiveInternet, Hotlog, Rating@Mail.ru), the popularity rating of social networks in Russia in 2017 is as follows (<http://gs.seo-auditor.com.ru/socials/2017/pie>): VKontakte is 43.10%; Facebook is 27.73%; YouTube is 12.74%; Classmates is 12.19%; Twitter is 3.94%.

According to another All-Russian poll conducted in December 2017 by the Levada Center, 59% of Russians over 18 years old use social networks. At the same time, the majority of Internet users (54%) spend up to one hour on messengers and social networks, a quarter (26%) spend from one to four hours, 3% surf from four to eight hours, and another 3% are online through networks constantly. The most popular network in Russia is VKontakte. Odnoklassniki is on the second place of popularity among the users, while Instagram and Facebook are on the third and fourth place accordingly. That is followed by such social networks like My World, Twitter, LiveJournal and others (Berishvili, 2018).

Such a huge coverage, active representation of users of different age, gender, social status, high level of involvement of registered users could not but be noticed by the business community. As a result, social networks have become regarded as an extremely high-potential platform of goods and services promotion. This is how SMM (Social Media Marketing) has come into being.

2. Problem Statement

Not only mass media researchers, but also practicing journalists are holding a discussion about changes in the media, namely, the transition of publications to the online format (see Todorov, 2015a, 2015b). At the same time, the influence of social networks is increasing. The phenomenon has become a trend not only in the business sphere, but also in the media. The New York Times, in its Innovation Report 2014, noted the undeploy of the classical information consumption scheme: “Traffic to the main page decreases every year, month after month. The traffic to the main pages of the headings is insignificant”

(<https://ru.scribd.com/doc/224332847/NYT-Innovation-Report-2014>). At the same time, the total traffic on The New York Times website does not decrease. Simply, audience begins to follow the information differently: through the Internet search and social networks. The same issue intervenes the Russian media. Many editors state that most of the traffic comes from social networks. But at the same time, they also note that each social network possesses its own audience. One should follow the specific communicative strategies to set a dialogue with the audience of each social network (Belyaeva, 2015), as well as for promotion. It is necessary to determine the objectives, targets and possible ways to achieve them. Therefore, the present study on the synthesis of this information possesses high particular relevance

3. Research Questions

As part of the present research, an attempt was carried out to systematize the idea of social media in general, and social networks in particular, as the dominant segment of the communication space in the modern world. The operational definition of social networks is selected. The statistical data on the leading role of social media in modern culture and the communicative is summarized and confirmed.

The basis of the theoretical and methodological base consists of monographs, articles by Russian authors on the issues of journalism convergence, social networks, and media promotion in social networks. During the preparation and conduct of the present research, a large amount of scientific articles on media integration, in particular printed media, and social networks are studied.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the present research is to study the problematic and academic field, devoted to media promotion strategies within social networks.

To achieve the goal, the following tasks are set and solved: to study statistics on the Internet and social networks; to identify the main objectives of media promotion within social networks; to study the opinions of the scientific community and experts on the journalists corresponding skills; to examine theoretical information about the type of content most commonly used by the media; to summarize the findings and to make a conclusion on topics and issues that require further study.

5. Research Methods

To resolve the set tasks, such general scientific and private scientific methods of research as comparison, description, and discourse analysis of the scientific space are applied.

6. Findings

6.1. Theoretical basis of the study

Before the media have decided to promote through social networks, there was a lot of controversy and discussions both in scientific (within the framework of ongoing conferences, publication of scientific articles), and in expert circles (for example, statements in an interview with editors) about what this might lead to. There were a lot of assumptions and fears. It is worth mentioning the following studies: Nosovets

(2014) “Media in the Social Network VKontakte: Structural and Substantive Specificity”, Beinenson (2016b) “Media Promotion within Social Networks: Opportunities and Problems”, Pershina (2017) “Principles of Selection of Russian News Media Sites for Creating Communities in Social Networks”, Dyachenko (2014) “Russian media in social networks Facebook and VKontakte: Interaction Practices” (2014), Zagidullina (2016, 2017) "Private Totality "in Social Media as a Challenge to Modern Media" and " Cyberghetto or Habitat? On the Political Boundaries of Total Particulars in Social Media in the Context of “Green Linguistics” , Topchii (2018a, 2018b) “Media SMM: a Combination of Visual and Emotional” and “Social Networks and Media: Interaction in the Era of “Aesthetic Turn” , which are close to the topic of the present research. However, none of them contains an extensive review of scientific papers.

6.2. Mass media and social networks

The main tasks of the media in creating accounts in social networks are: 1) an increase in the number of transitions to the website from the social network page; 2) a promotion of the mass media among social networks users. The tasks are achieved through the implementation of interactive capabilities of the media (Beinenson, 2016b, p. 239). That is, on the one hand, the media is actively working to increase the attendance of its main website, leading the user from the social network "home", and on the other, it forms, expands, groups the interested community around the brand and thus keeps a loyal audience."

Loseva (2011) advantaged to detail the tasks. The scholar wondered “Why does the social networks need media?”, while introducing RIA Novosti at the round table “The Future of Journalism: Quantity vs. Quality” several years ago. And the scholar has answered the question herself as follows: this is “an extension readership; increasing the number of loyal users; the ability to better understand the target audience, focusing on comments, ratings, feedback, comments; simple mechanisms for viral distribution of links (“like”, “share”, “I like”, etc.). No social service has ever offered such a fast mechanism with such coverage of the audience; obtaining new content and the development of topics already found: through social networks one can find participants and witnesses of events, news, photos and videos; keeping the audience “close to the brand”.

Most of these points can be called tasks that mass media set for themselves working within social networks, with the exception of point four (“simple mechanisms for viral distribution of links”). This is not a task, but an essential tool, which marketers, working in various fields of activity as well as media sphere, are trying to implement with varying degrees of success.

6.3. Viral media content

Viral content involves the voluntary content transfer from a person to person, while the speed of distribution of viral post can be enormous. The secret, as a rule, consists in a bright, creative idea, an unusual presentation, deep social message, etc. When creating a “virus”, the goal is to make it visible and to spread across the network to as many users as possible. What is especially important is to do it for free.

For the post to attract the attention of the audience and find it in an endless distribution cycle with multiple likes and reposts (not for three hours, but for days, weeks, and maybe months), SMM media players create high-quality headlines, at the proper time announcements and think through effective visual support, etc. That is, the material is being optimized for a particular social network, so that it will be able to become “a bomb”. However, the mechanisms of viral spread are not completely obvious and sometimes the posts

become successful being the least expected. That is why, each post requires optimization, formatting, refinement for the needs of each social network.

This puts journalists before the requirement to master the skills of working in social networks, and, perhaps, even be a kind of a universal soldier. Many researchers, who dealt with the issue of transferring print media to an online format, agree that editors should be convergent.

6.4. Convergence in Journalism

By convergence in journalism, the present research author follows the term by Professor of the Department of Electronic and Print Media of the Institute for Advanced Studies of Television and Radio Broadcasting Helendik, who states that “rapprochement, merging different in nature media into a single whole. From the point of view of organizational structure and technology transmission of interconnected, consolidated information” (Helemendik, 2013, p. 107). According to Raspopova (2018) journalists in such editorial offices, should be transprofessional, and

able to perform different types of activities at the same time and have skills in various, often not connected to journalism, spheres. A “new journalist” should be able to work like a “multimedia”: write short notes with catchy headlines, shoot video for posting on the website as illustrations to the text, make elementary editing of video frames to create a video sequence, use a software application to publish text with video and photo illustrations on website edition. At the same time, despite the necessity and importance of universal preparation, it makes sense for a journalist to focus on the core competence in creating socially significant media texts. (p. 98)

Kirshin (2013) also believes that a journalist should be able to:

clearly define the topic of future publication as part of their creative specialization, based on social networks, forums, polls and other sources of information; search for information on the Internet, in databases (statistical reports, etc.) with its subsequent analysis, systematization and interpretation; articulate the position on the most resonant topics (author columns); build an informational message based on functional criteria (the applied nature of the information being broadcast; social significance of information; encouraging readers to discuss about the published information); to build an informational (analytical) message on the principle from the most important to the less important; to moderate (lead) the discussion on the network on the topic of the post; work in different formats (news, analytical, journalistic); formulate headlines to meet online filing requirements; place (text-, audio-, video-) information online and transmit it over the Internet; have skills in television and audio interviews (in the first stage, in a blitz interview on current topics), as well as the skills of prompt transmission of news in audio format; have basic video and sound editing skills; create infographics; own a foreign language to search for relevant information in foreign language sources. (p. 78)

According to Simakova, the process of convergence activates the development of new technologies in the field of online media (Simakova, 2017; Kiuru & Simakova, 2018). As a result,

modern means of mass communication, trying to find their place in the conditions of information visualization, become more and more multimedia. Thanks to digital technologies, unique creolized texts are created, allowing authors to implement new creative possibilities, and the audience to reach a new level of perception and understanding of media content. (Simakova, 2017, p. 82)

6.5. Strategies for posting media materials in social networks

Each media develops its own social media placement strategy, and this strategy should be individual, moreover, unique, because a creative post is catchy only for the first time. Then it becomes boring for the audience. However, the criteria for journalistic product in social networks are in many ways universal for a wide variety of publications. Headlines should be short, informative, understandable, An announcement or text (if it is written entirely for a social network without any reference to the website) should be clearly structured, while the volume should be targeted not so much to a consumer from among the target audience, but to the average social media user.

According to the editor-in-chief of the special projects of the Kommersant Publishing House (2012–2016) Galustyan, when creating content for social networks, one should be able to uncover the essence of what is happening, while leaving “riddles” that will force a reader to link from the social network to the website to figure out the details. It is also important to be able to pick up images or videos that attract the attention of the consumer as well as to be able to process them in any of the editors. To the list of skills necessary for a universal soldier of journalism within social networks practices, Galustyan also includes skills in the field of traffic management, analysis methods, and the ability to work with statistics: to extract it using the functionality of the websites, to analyze and to apply the findings for achieving the best results (as cited in Dyachenko, 2014). That is, in order for journalistic materials to become successful, a journalist is obliged to represent clearly the image of a media consumer, the depiction from the social network. That is based on statistics on coverage, attendance, activity, gender, demographic characteristics and so on. At the same time, it is very important to save the brand of a particular media, not to blur it, following the social network that plays by its own rules. A journalist is to observe the balance and build competent strategic interactions within the triangle: mass media - social network - media consumers.

The former chief editor of Lenta.ru and the creator of Meduza Timchenko emphasizes that social network accounts should not be viewed as an embassy or representation of the mass media, but only as a separate product that adapts to the requirements of a specific network. The scholar notes:

The same mistake was made by the print media when turning online. They offered the same printed materials, only online. The audience surf the Internet to find out what is happening here and now. They do not need the news of yesterday. 5-7 years have passed, and still some editorials need about 10 years to realize that an online newspaper is a completely separate product. The same appears with social networks < ... >. As soon as you parallelize all social networks and the website, everything will start to turn out for you. (Belyaeva, 2015, para. 15)

But it is important not only to dissolve the website and social networks, it is also important to adjust the content for each network platform because there is a different audience. For example, there is a more

feminine and visually oriented audience on Instagram. VKontakte audience can be characterized as young, positive-thinking and energetic. Facebook is more popular among adult, business-like and critical thinking audience. According to Timchenko, an individual approach is necessary to be carried out.

With the same approach to all networks, one will not achieve anything. The biggest mistake is made by the media who hire one and the same SMM manager and ask to transmit one piece of news to all networks at once. That is not effective, since “if Twitter is just viral, then Vkontakte is your community that you can manage. Just be prepared to receive a portion of what one do not eat to one’s face. Vkontakte is a tough social network. The communication there is undertaken without any curtsy. (Belyaeva, 2015, para. 16)

There are certain difficulties faced by mass media, which audience provides little intersection with the social network where it is necessary to enter. Beinenson (2016a) cites the example of the publication of Vedomosti, the newspaper’s audience and the social network VKontakte do not overlap, which does not mean the reason for the rejection of the idea of promotion. “The main task here is, first of all, not only to organize traffic to mainstream media, but also to create an attractive brand image for a potential, but still alien audience” (p. 239).

Nowadays a journalist is to talk with the audience, resolve conflict situations, ask for opinions, etc. Gradyushko (2012) says that journalists’ task is to activate multilateral communications using new interactive possibilities of communication with the audience. The processes of convergence in the media influence the creativity of journalists. “Mainly, the specifics of their interaction with readers change, communicative strategies are significantly transformed” (p. 71). In this context, social networks provide tremendous opportunities. By helping to bring the audience closer, social networks take the cooperation of the media and their consumers to a qualitatively new level of interaction.

So, social networks are the most important channel for broadcasting a mass media message. The media actively represent themselves in this area. However, it should be recognized that there is no universal recipe for transmitting the media into social media. Through trial and error, media market players pave the way for effective existence in these unique network structures. In this case, one can speak rather not about the secrets of efficiency, but about the general laws governing the functioning of mass media in social networks. Dyachenko (2014), having studied the features and types of materials published by the Russian media in their accounts, notes that, as a rule, the media content plan in social networking communities consists of two types of publications: 1) posts, “which follow the editorial media plan, publications in print and online versions”; 2) materials “created specifically for an audience of social networks” (possessing an entertaining nature and serving to involve users in communication with the media on their page/community). At the same time, the most frequently applied type of content in media communities on social networks are posts with images and hyperlinks, which, “according to the observations of media workers, cause the greatest interest among the audience”.

Creating accounts in social networks, media editors who are investing a lot of effort in this area today count on the number of bonuses: from increasing brand loyalty to converting traffic from social networks to the website and monetizing content). However, in practice, editors and journalists face with

many difficulties, including communication with fake accounts, dissatisfied subscribers, repost without citing the original source, fighting counterfeit communities that pretend to be official, possible evil accounts with the purpose of placing in them inaccurate information, a critical reduction of linking to the website from social networks, dependence on social networks with their own laws and rules that may change, difficulties in working with SMM outsourcers, lack of competence (and sometimes the reluctance) of full-time journalists to work in social networks, etc. (Belyaeva, 2015).

Although today social networks are already being expelled by messengers, experts are seriously considering the issue of short term decline of the social networks. However, from a marketing point of view, social media are a relatively new platforms. It takes time to create effective marketing strategies for different business areas in social networks, which also applies to the media.

7. Conclusion

As a result of the research, it can be conclude that the researchers have agreed on the importance of media promotion through such dissemination channels as social networks. It is defined that the media pursues the tasks, when using social networks as dissemination channels, that are tightly bound with setting clear strategies. Particular difficulty deals with defining a distinct media strategy within a social media network, since there is a correlation between networks formats and a stratification of audiences. Thus, for further research, it will be particularly important to identify these differences with a specific example and clarify the features of providing media strategies, using knowledge of the state, properties, and specifics of particular social media platforms

Acknowledgments

The research was carried out with funds from the grant of the Russian Science Foundation, project No. 18-18-00007

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