

Political and Psychological Factors of Information and Psychological Influence in the Internet

Nestik Timofey A.¹, Mikheev Evgeny A.¹

¹*Institute of Psychology, Russian academy of sciences, Moscow, Russia*

Keywords: information-psychological influence, echo chamber, disinformation, memetics, value system.

Abstract: The article deals with the problem of information and psychological influence in the Internet associated with psychological manipulation in social networks and online media. The article says that main forms and methods of information and psychological influence in the Internet related to information and psychological influence, technologies of analysis of social networks. The main socio-psychological and political factors that are related to various forms of information and psychological influence are shown.

1. Introduction

Analysis of political and socio-psychological problems of information and psychological influence (IPI) is an urgent task of scientific research and an important object for study[19] not only in Russia, but also in other countries. Purposeful and unintended influence and its effects on people's behavior and emotions[7], the reaction of users in the post-event discourse[18], the relationship to information threats and socio-psychological characteristics[5], the IPI effects on interpersonal communication[11] and protective group mechanisms[17] - all these scientific problems are closely related to information security and global risks, their assessment, attitude, perceptions, expectations, etc.

In our work, information and psychological influence (IPI) is considered as a special form of manifestation of an individual or group subject social activity within the communicative space, consisting in the purposeful transfer of specially selected information in the form of signs (symbols), images or signals, orienting the perceived system of the object of influence with respect to the meaning and significance of this information, as a result of which the object of influence forms a psychoemotional response, leading to a change in the nature of the perceived object of the previous and subsequent information, which leads to the adjustment of its individual worldview in the desired subject of impact key[5].

IPI is divided into situational (a set of behaviors) and verbal-figurative (verbal-figurative encoding) types, has open and hidden forms. IPI channels are individuals, non-profit organizations (NGOs) and the mass communication media (MCM). None traditional MCM has recently had an increasing influence on the behavior and lifestyle of people. According to official information, today 65% of users receive information from social media [6].

2. New Forms of IPI and Online Analyzes

New forms of IPI are now available in the Internet. Among them: misinformation in social networks, «fake news», computer propaganda, «meme wars» using artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, mining and blockchain technologies. The «Online-FUD» method is widely used. It consists in the purposeful dissemination of negative and «fake» information through Internet users who are most prone to panic anxiety. The «Online FUD» method is aimed at instilling fear (Fear), uncertainty(Uncertainty) and doubt(Doubt) in the mass target audience[14].

At the same time, the Internet and social networks act as a reliable database of socio-psychological characteristics of users[9], socio-psychological processes, are a source of forecasting the dynamics of interpersonal processes, group dynamics, impact of group socio-psychological phenomena on the results of joint activities[3], forecasting group processes in virtual and real space, in the psychology of criminal behavior, interethnic tension and aggression, protest and political activity of the population[12,2,13].

3. Social and Political Aspects

The possibilities of the Internet are used in social and political processes both for the collection of data on users and for information and psychological influence. Most often, this is due to the formation of public opinion about the activities of a political leader or political party, his supporters or opponents.

Public pages and groups containing political, alternative and conspiracy information are used to create public discontent about political decisions on Facebook[16]. The purpose of conspiracy news is a simplification of reality, explaining the important social and political events as a result of a secret conspiracy action of influential persons and organizations. Conspiracy news difficult to verify[1]. Alternative information is at odds with the information of the official (mainstream) media. It is established that users who consume it are more likely to spread lies[16].

An important socio-psychological phenomenon that facilitates the spread of false information is the homogeneous composition of the Internet community, the so-called «echo chamber». Their participants listen only to their own kind and become insensitive to alternative points of view. Virtual discussions in such communities, regardless of their subject matter, increase the intensity of negative emotional States and shift participants to extreme, radical assessments[8]. The participants of echo chambers are characterized by a number of features: high emotional stability and high openness to the new, combined with low extroversion, low goodwill and low consciousness[1].

One of the forms of presenting information in social networks is a sarcastic meme. Memes are widely disseminated online and are often used as arguments in pre-election political campaigns and television debates. Potential memetic also used to achieve military and political objectives[4]. Skills of application of MEM technology in combat regularly work for the US military and NATO through joint exercises, for example the exercise «Trident Juncture». In 2015, the joint exercises of the psychological operations Forces of the United States and the University of Maryland ICONS team were held, the purpose of which were: testing in real conditions the methods of counter-propaganda of ISIS, the integration of the consequences of neurocognitive and social concepts for more accurate identification of the desired content, taking into account modern information and communication capabilities, analysis of the operational situation on the battlefield with the classification of the subjects of information and psychological warfare as «neutral», «friendly» and «enemy».

To increase the level of information and psychological influence on the audience of voters during the election campaign, psychological behavioral analysis is used, based on the comparison of

actions in social networks with personal data of users («digital traces») and targeted advertising. The technology of the analysis of «digital footprints» and profiling of the individual methods are of computational linguistics, psychological technique called «The Big five», the recognition of the photo, video, audio, voice and data smartphone using the methods of artificial intelligence and machine learning. It is worth noting that to date, the prognostic validity of «like» marks in Facebook when assessing political beliefs and socio-demographic characteristics ranges from 0.7 to 0.9[9].

4. Conclusions

Thus, information and psychological influence in the Internet at the present stage of development of society is closely connected with a number of political and socio-psychological factors determining its character and outcome. Political factors include: a) domestic political processes related to the struggle of local elites for power; b) military-political processes associated with achieving geopolitical goals. To social and psychological factors include: a) phenomena affecting the efficiency dissemination of information in social networks (for example, social perceptions of misinformation, collective emotional states, group dynamics in network communities during the spread of rumors, etc.); b) personal and group socio-psychological characteristics of the target audience and actors (for example, negative assessment of the past, the level of social cynicism, fatalistic attitudes, etc.); c) intrapersonal, interpersonal, intragroup, intergroup and societal psychological mechanisms to reduce the vulnerability of individuals and groups to misinformation (for example, maintaining social trust and positive group identity mechanisms, collective coping mechanisms, group identity reflection, etc.).

Acknowledgements

This work was supported by the Russian Science Foundation, Project (Grant) №18-18-00439 «Psychology of human in the conditions of global risks».

References

- [1] Bessi A., Petroni F., Del Vicario M. et al. *Viral misinformation: The role of homophily and polarization* // *Proceedings of the 24th International Conference on World Wide Web Companion*. 18 May 2015, 355—356.
- [2] Banner F. *Methodological Approaches to Studying Crime and Popular Culture in New Media* // *Oxford Research Encyclopedia, Criminology And Criminal Justice (criminology.oxfordre.com)*. Oxford: Oxford University Press USA, 2016. Mar 2017 DOI: 10.1093/acrefore/9780190264079.013.171.
- [3] Bersin J. *HR Technology Disruptions for 2018. Productivity, Design, and Intelligence Reign*. 2017 Deloitte Development LLC, 2017. URL: <http://marketing.bersin.com/rs/976-LMP-699/images/HRTechDisruptions2018-Report-100517.pdf>
- [4] Vilovatykh A.V. *Memetika kak instrument sovremennogo informatsionnogo protivoborstva [Memetics as a tool of modern information warfare]* // *Problemy natsional'noi strategii*. Moscow: Publ. RISI, 2018, 141—154.
- [5] Dolgov M.I. *Klassifikatsiya informatsionno-psikhologicheskikh vozdeistvii i otsenka stepeni ikh ugroz dlya obshchestvenno soznaniya [Classification of information psychological impacts and assessment of their threat to the Public Consciousness] Obshchestvo: politika, ekonomika, pravo [Society: politics, economy, law]*. Krasnodar: Publ. KhORS, 2016, 47—52.
- [6] Edelman D.J. *Edelman Trust Barometer Executive Summary [Elektronnyi resurs]*. 2018, 21. URL: https://www.edelman.com/sites/g/files/aauss191/files/2018-10/2018_Edelman_Trust_Barometer_Global_Report_FEB.pdf
- [7] Emel'yanova T.P. *Fenomen kollektivnykh chuvstv v psikhologii bol'shikh sotsial'nykh grupp [The phenomenon of collective feelings in the large social groups]* Institut psikhologii Rossiiskoi akademii nauk. *Sotsial'naya i ekonomicheskaya psikhologiya*. 2016. Vol. 1, no. 1, 3—22. URL: <http://soc-econom-psychology.ru/engine/documents/document195.pdf>

- [8] Zollo F., Novak P.K., Del Vicario M., Bessi A., Mozetič I., Scala A., et al. *Emotional Dynamics in the Age of Misinformation* // *PLoS ONE*. 2015. V. 10 (9): e0138740. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0138740.
- [9] Kosinski M., Stillwell D., Graepel T. *Private traits and attributes are predictable from digital records of human behavior*//*Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*.PNAS.2013.№110. pp.5802–5805. URL:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1218772110>
- [10] Kosinski M., Youyou W., Stillwell D. *Computer-based personality judgments are more accurate than those made by humans* [Elektronnyi resurs] // *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. 2015. Vol. 112. № 4, 1036–1040. doi: 10.1073/PNAS.1418680112. URL: <http://www.pnas.org/content/112/4/1036.full>
- [11] Krasnikov M.A. *Regulyativnaya funktsiya dezinformatsii v protsesse mezhlichnostnogo obshcheniya*. Avtoref. diss. kand. psikhol. nauk. [Regulative function of desinformation in process of interpersonnal communication]. Moscow: IP RAS, 2006, 24.
- [12] Laney D. *3D Data Management: Controlling Data Volume, Velocity, and Variety*. URL: <http://blogs.gartner.com/doug-laney/files/2012/01/ad949-3D-Data-Management-Controlling-Data-Volume-Velocity-and-Variety.pdf>
- [12] Leszczynski A., Crampton J. *Introduction: Spatial Big Data and everyday life* // *Big Data & Society*. 2016.V. 3. N.2. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2053951716661366>.
- [13] *Memes That Kill: The Future Of Information Warfare/CB Insights*, 2018. URL: <https://www.cbinsights.com/research/future-of-information-warfare/>
- [14] Mikheev E.A., Nestik T.A. *Dezinformatsiya v sotsial'nykh setyakh: sostoyanie i perspektivy psikhologicheskikh issledovaniy*[Disinformation in social networks: current state and perspective research directions]// *Sotsial'naya psikhologiya i obshchestvo*. T.9, №2. Moscow: Publ. «MGPPU», 2018, 5–20. doi:10.17759/sps.2018090201. URL: http://psyjournals.ru/files/93632/sps_2018_n2_Miheeva_Nestik.pdf
- [15] Mocanu D, Rossi L, Zhang Q, Karsai M, Quattrociocchi W *Collective attention in the age of (mis) information*[Elektronnyi resurs] // *Computers in Human Behavior*. 2014. Vol.1. P.1198–1204. doi: 10.1016/j.chb.2015.01.024. URL: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/260800679_Collective_attention_in_the_age_of_misinformation
- [16] Nestik T.A. *Otnoshenie k budushchemu v rossiiskikh upravlencheskikh komandakh: liderskoe videnie i korporativnyi forsait* [Russian management commands relation to future: leadership vision and corporate foresight] // *Ekonomicheskie strategii*. 2014. № 2, 134–141.
- [17] Pavlova N.D., Grebenshchikova T.A. *Intent-analiz postsobyitiinogo diskursa v internete* [Intent analysis of post-event discourse in the Internet] // IP RAS. *Psikhologicheskie issledovaniya*. 2017. T. 10. № 52, 8 p. URL: <http://psystudy.ru/index.php/num/2017v10n52/1407-pavlova52.html>
- [18] Sosnin V.A., Kitova D.A., Nestik T.A., Yurevich A.V. *Massovoe soznanie i povedenie kak ob"ekty issledovaniya v sotsial'noi psikhologii* [Mass consciousness and behavior as objects of research in social psychology] // IP RAS. *Sotsial'naya i ekonomicheskaya psikhologiya*. 2017. T. 2. № 4(8), 71-105. URL: <http://soc-economy-psychology.ru/engine/documents/document396.pdf>