

E–Culture

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INTRODUCTION

This article is devoted to the study of a new information age phenomenon - the electronic culture. The author introduces the review of electronic culture research, its definition, characteristic features and functions within the society.

The e-culture was first mentioned at the end of the 1990s. According to the European tradition, e-culture was originally understood as a form of cultural heritage preservation and the opposition to the e-commerce. Later, the term was used for the notion of different objects having an electronic or other digital form. Nowadays, the “e-culture” is an interdisciplinary concept having connotations in Philosophy, Cultural Studies, Sociology, Political Science, Economics and of course in the field of information technologies.

It is concluded and proved that the most important characteristics of e-culture are: transparency, globality and availability for every user. Moreover, every subject can become both a user and a creator of the given phenomena, being enough free in creative work and not having strict limitations. E-culture or digital culture is first of all a new sphere of the human activity, associated with the creation of the electronic copies of spiritual and material objects as well as the creative work of the virtual objects of science, communication and art.

BACKGROUND

In general, E-culture represents cumulative results of creative activity and communication of people under the conditions of the information technology implementation, characterized with creating of free information space, a virtual form of expression, distant technology, and content liberality.

Advanced high technologies represent a vector of the civilization development, mediating economic and communicative processes of the world formation.

Under these conditions, the crisis of socio-cultural and individual identity escalates, “technogenic” values extrapolate on the sphere of the interpersonal interaction. The ideologeme of technocentrism devaluates the traditional axiological models, informative and technogenic directivity of social and anthropological dynamics and determines new types of interaction both on structural and spiritual levels of social being. Under the domination of new technogenic institutes the dysfunction of cultural and spiritual regulators of the social development occurs, in particular, the traditional ethical and epistemological mechanisms of the public conscience shifting to massive, irrational and virtual sphere are broken. The sphere of the social discourse, mediated by electronic mass media, separates from subjects, making human beings feel the quasi reality being, solitude and desolation in the “boundless” information space.

The peculiarity of the present day age became the situation of the uncontrolled technological development, that is unique in its own way and requires detailed study, as its consequences have already caused significant deformation of psychology, world view, values and society. One of the most striking phenomena of the digital age becomes the formation of new digital culture (e-culture). Although, the concept “e-culture” has been still developing, it is evident it cannot be compared as a phenomenon with anything that has ever existed what requires the necessity of its detailed study.

The researchers and theorists of the postindustrial or information society A.Toffler, P.Drucker, M.McLuhan, M.Castells, J.Naisbitt, J.Stiglitz and others already engaged in the issues of studying the influence of information technologies on culture, society and human beings. The development of the society and human beings under the age of high technologies are analyzed by J.Habermas, N.Luhman, U.Beck, R.Barthes, J.Baudrillard, P.Bourdieu and M.Epstein in terms of socio-cultural approach. Within recent decades scientific centers were organized that study the general issues of the information society develop-

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ment as well as several aspects of this issue, e.g., the development of e-culture, Internet-communication, the ethics of the information society, etc. Thus, the scientists of the University of Milan headed by A.M. Ronchi (2009), Virtual Maastricht McLuhan Institute (Netherlands) headed by K.Veltman (2004) study the problems of the electronic culture development. The researchers of the International Center for Information Ethics (Karlsruhe, Germany) (Capurro, 2006), London School of Economics, academic department Media and Communications (UK) (Haddon, 2004), the Center on Computing and Social Responsibility (De Montfort University, UK) (Rogerson 1998), the Center for the Study of Information Society of the University of Haifa (Israel) (Raban, 2009), etc. deal with the study of ethical and anthropological issues of the information space. These studies influenced greatly on the author's research representing the theoretical basis for the further development of the ideas.

The analysis of the specific character of e-culture should be started with the definition of this concept, as it is polysemantic and requires its content specification. E-culture or digital culture is first of all a new sphere of the human activity, associated with the creation of the electronic copies of spiritual and material objects as well as the creative work of the virtual objects of science, communication and art (Ronchi, 2009). "Electronic" means the representation in a digital form. E-culture first was mentioned at the end of the 1990s. According to the European tradition, e-culture was originally understood as a form of cultural heritage preservation (Ronchi, 2009) and also as some opposition to e-commerce. Later, the term was used for the notion of different objects having electronic or other digital form. Nowadays, "e-culture" is an interdisciplinary concept having connotations in Philosophy, Cultural Studies, Sociology, Political Science, Economics and of course in the field of information technologies. Its subjects and creators are scientists, programmers, artists, representatives of mass media and average users of information systems, creating electronic forms of self-representation and self-manifestation in the global network Internet by the means of technological facilities. The most important characteristics of e-culture is transparency, globality and availability for every user besides every subject can become both an user and a creator of its phenomena, being enough free in creative work and not having strict limitations.

E-culture comprises the following phenomena: first of all electronic forms of modern communication (Internet, cellular communication and smartphone applications, social networking sites, virtual communities, chats, blogs, web-forums, and web-sites), electronic cultural heritage (on-line museums, galleries and exhibitions), on-line education, electronic reconstruction of cities and objects of cultural heritage in their historical and space perspective, computer games including network games, electronic mass media (on-line magazines and newspapers), digital modern art (animation, photo, cinema, music and advertizing, created by means of advanced information technologies), electronic reference systems (archives, encyclopedias, dictionaries and libraries), and information programs (security, forms of data security, etc.).

The distinctive features of e-culture are a digital form, virtuality, freedom of access, openness for the members of "information community" (those who have electronic resources), remotability, real distance from a subject, activity in gaining access to electronic information, possibility to participate in developing of the information content from any point of "information space," liberality, linguistic description, absence of strict rules and norms, dominance of visual things over conceptual ones, innovativeness, technocracy, and a high speed of changing.

There are two main structural types of e-culture expression: 1. electronic form of former (traditional, classical – here not electronic) cultural objects (e.g., on-line museums, libraries, exhibitions, etc.) 2. electronic cultural objects in form and essence (computer games, social networking sites, Internet, digital art pieces, etc.)

Each of the above-mentioned types has its own characteristics, although they are formally similar and intercross. Culture having electronic form and essence is the continuation and the development of the former one, having become an electronic one in its expression nowadays (to maintain its value and competitiveness).

The real "live" culture is changing in part its traditional form to compete successfully with new electronic one. E-culture significantly turned out to be the transformation of real artifacts, ideas and creatures of human beings into virtual forms. The area where e-culture became the continuation and "shell" for "classical" ("pre-informational") one is more than the products of e-culture and is beyond measure. Because of it, the value of this phenomenon and the former

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