Chapter 18
Communication in the E–Culture and Media:
New Trends and Features

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ABSTRACT

Online and media cultures have a dominant influence on modern society. This type of culture is characterized by specific forms of expression and ethical and aesthetic features mediated by technology. Virtual communication is one reflection of the phenomena of culture reflected through technology. The chapter identifies the typology of virtual communication using a systems approach as an example of online and media culture. This is based on the analysis of the development of social networks and forms of communication and shows the trends in the dynamics of virtual communication. The new environment, with its distinctive characteristics, indicators, forms, and images, creates new opportunities and new risks for humans and their cultures.

INTRODUCTION

Global technological development, with its own unique characteristics requires detailed study. Its consequences have already caused significant changes in psychology, world views, values, and society. One of the most striking phenomena of the digital age is the formation of online culture and media-culture. Although, the concept "e-culture" is still developing, already it is evident it cannot be compared with anything that has ever existed, necessitating detailed study of the phenomenon.

E-culture, digital or online culture is a new sphere of human activity, associated with the creation of the electronic versions of spiritual and material objects as well as the creative work of virtual objects of science, communication and art. "Electronic" means the representation in a digital form. According to the European tradition, e-culture was originally understood as a form of cultural heritage preservation (Ronchi, 2009), but also a distinction from e-commerce. Later, the term was used for the idea of different objects having electronic or other digital form. Nowadays, "e-culture" is an interdisciplinary concept

having components from Philosophy, Cultural Studies, Sociology, Political Science, Economics and of course in the field of information technology. Its subjects and creators are scientists, programmers, artists, representatives of mass media and average users of information systems, who use technology to create electronic forms representing their self-image in the global network Internet. The most important characteristics of e-culture is transparency, global nature and availability for every user. Everyone can become both an user and a creator of online phenomena, enjoying creative freedom and few limitations.

The information age and electronic culture generated virtual space and virtual time, the electronic status of a person, forms a kind of 'third nature' in the world of virtual phenomena. For the last two decades, many of the key spheres of human existence (education, communication, art, science, and creative activity) have dramatically changed. They have primarily been virtualized, that is, transferred from a real-life form into simulated and digital ones. In this sense, the information age has not only united people into a uniform network, but changed the essence of their communication and relations. The invention of remote access technology and the ability for remote communications t resulted in the virtualization of the interpersonal communication. The consequences of this technological leap have changed the way human relate, generated a special electronic form of the culture, and induced new existential and ethical problems that require solutions.

The new trend in the development of electronic cultures is the unique global openness of the information space that creates new opportunities and risks. Virtual communication is more than a transition to a new form of traditional communication.

The goal is to develop a systematization of electronic cultures and virtual communication under the conditions of the information age. Objectives of the study are to better understand the nature and manifestations of electronic culture, the characteristics of virtual communication as one of its forms, and to identify the forms of virtual communication, its types and new trends.

BACKGROUND

Researchers and theorists of the postindustrial or information society have focused on the study of the influence of information technology on culture, society and human beings (Toffler, 1980; Naisbitt, 1982; McLuhan, 1992; Castells, 1997; Drucker, 1998; Stiglitz, 2015). How the society and human beings develop in the technological age is also of interest to theorists (Habermas,1983; Baudrillard, 1995) in terms of socio-cultural approach. Several centers study the general issues of the development of an information society including different aspects of this area of investigation. Examples of the areas under investigation include the development of e-culture, Internet-communication, and the ethics of the information society. Scientists of the University of Milan headed by A.M. Ronchi (2009) and the Virtual Maastricht McLuhan Institute (Netherlands) study the problems of the electronic culture development. The researchers of the International Center for Information Ethics (Karlsruhe, Germany) (Capurro, 2006), the London School of Economics, Department of Media and Communications (UK) (Haddon, 2004), the Center on Computing and Social Responsibility (De Montfort University, UK) (Rogerson, 1998), and the Center for the Study of Information Society of the University of Haifa (Israel) (Raban, 2009), focus on the problem of techno-ethics (Rocci, 2012) that deals with the study of ethical and anthropological issues of the information space.

One of the major problems in modern investigations is the virtualization of the modern human life style, the shift of people from a real being to virtual being. The term 'virtuality' and the concept 'virtual

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