

# **Digital Advertising and Digital Communication as a Means of Mass Manipulation**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The article discusses such concepts as digital advertising and digital communication and analyzes their manipulative properties on the mass consciousness of mankind. The article reveals the role and feature of digital communications in the process of influencing the consciousness of members of society and the state; the tools of manipulation of mass consciousness in the context of digital communications. The study uses pragmatic analysis methods. The main goal of this article is to compare the role of digital communication and digital advertising in terms of manipulating a human audience and analyze their means, methods and tactics of manipulation. The positive and negative consequences of the influence of existing digital communications at the present stage of development of the state and society are systematized. The article considers television as the main means of digital communication. In conclusion, it is noted that digital communications spread information that is necessary for the conscious functioning of citizens and their full participation in the state life.

**Keywords:** *digital advertising, digital communication, society, manipulation, digital information, manipulation tactics*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Today, artificial intelligence is gradually penetrating into such areas of human activity as medicine, business, science, journalism, entertainment, the fight against crime, and the solution of numerous domestic issues [1, p. 184]. The modern global world, due to the influence of various technological tools as elements of the information society, is characterized by the increasing role of digital communications broadcast by media channels [7]. These communications not only comprehensively affect public consciousness and mood, but also provoke certain behaviors on the part of the population of a concrete state. The quality of the information transmitted to subjects is assigned a fundamental role that was not observed at the steps of a traditional and modernized industrial society. Moreover, the bulk of information flows doubles every two years against 50 years, an indicator of which was observed in the middle of the XIX century [5].

The modern information society provokes the intensification of all processes associated with the realization of information transactions, during which digital communications come to the fore as a means of transmitting the necessary information. Thanks to the increasing capabilities of digital communications that information with a high degree of probability, at the right time and in the right amount, reaches the addressee, it is repeatedly replicated, relayed and actively integrated into the consciousness of the masses.

The modern era of post-industrial development can be called differently, but one thing is for sure, we live in a world of “information excess”, where mass communication systems are developed at a very high level and where problems arise from the influence of information on a person. One of the global examples of informational “uproar” is the advertising, besides it is the powerful manipulation tool. It is also a factor that creates the problem of an overabundance of information. The disclosure of the problems of the impact on people of outdoor advertising and the manipulation of society, advertising mechanisms are considered in the article. The purpose of the article is to consider the problem of psychological and physical effects on a person through digital advertising.

In the modern state and society, the role of digital communications has been transformed from a tool for searching, processing and transmitting relevant information to means of control and impact on the inner world of citizens. The initial model of expanding the boundaries of human consciousness, the giving it the features of autonomy and sovereignty in judgments is gradually giving way to a tough and comprehensive manipulation of the consciousness of the masses through the spreading of certain behavior standards regulated from the outside.

The advertising is present in the life of a modern person every day, but for the most part, no one wonders what kind of mechanism it is and most importantly, what influence it has on people. This is one of the problems in a large

number of areas in science. In our case, advertising is a social phenomenon that has gone beyond human labor. Now this is not just a business, but a mechanism that affects most areas of society. It serves as a tool starting from production, ending with moral law, promoting ethical as well as legal norms. Such a system is the strongest mechanism for managing people and the sales lever; and the manipulation of the masses lies at the center of this system.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The outdoor advertising industry is rapidly shifting to digital formats. According to the owner of the Maer Group, Konstantin Mayor, today the popularity and demand for this type of advertising is growing and this is due to many factors, but one of the key is reaching a larger audience using large formats of digital billboards [14, p. 30].

The forms of communication are changing, the structure is changing, and the people mainly receive information from visual media, which enhances the psychological influence. Speaking about advertising in general and specifically about the digital format, the influence of advertising in the world today on a person is colossal. Among the second, the detrimental effect of audio-visual advertising technologies on consumers can be distinguished. First of all, turning to the knowledge about our brain we can apply to the Professor Tatyana Chernigovskaya, Doctor of Biology and Philology, Head of the Laboratory of Cognitive Studies at St. Petersburg State University. She gives interesting and useful lectures on the brain, consciousness and the unconscious, the psyche, artificial intelligence, thinking, and some of her statements about the brain are really scary, especially if you correlate this with how much unnecessary information in advertising surrounds us. For example, it is a saying: "The brain makes a decision 30 seconds before a person realizes this decision" [8, p. 119]. That is, based on this statement, scientifically proven, we can conclude that we do not have power over the brain, it makes decisions. And looking at it through the prism of the consumer, an understanding comes of how strong the impact of advertising is. After all, our brain consciously processes only 30 percent of the information; the rest is a matter of the unconscious. And everything that falls into the unconscious remains there. In fact, sooner or later it is reflected in our decisions, whether we want it or not.

It is worth noting that thanks to the presence and spreading of digital communications within the general public, including the world, the population of any state has the opportunity to get acquainted with the modern life. Moreover, digital communications promote the socialization and the formation of value orientations. However, at the same time, it is worth noting the presence of such negative trends that accompany the activities of digital communications, are below:

— information overload of the population, unable to cope with a significant amount of information;

— a large amount of integrable information, most often multidirectional and debated among themselves, further weakens the ability for critical perception by the population;

— transmitted value orientations, which are subsequently taken as the standard and basis for the development of society, are not always positive and carry a high spiritual meaning [2].

## 3. RESULTS

We have already figured out that out of the colossal amount of information falling upon us, an insignificant part reaches our consciousness. There are factors that affect a person, for example, emotional factor [8, p. 38]. Digital advertising actively uses this factor for manipulation. It involves the activity of the department responsible for the emotional sphere, not addressing the sphere of consciousness, and in turn, emotions form decisions [8, p. 51].

TV images determine the manipulative impact on the audience insofar as they carry primarily an aesthetic semantic load. Thus, the logical processing of information by means of comprehension, building arguments, and consistency in reasoning is not peculiar to "television audio-visual" [3]. A television image is nothing more than a reflection of real life, which, however, is staged as the embodiment of reality presented to the masses without proper verbal argumentation and logical connection. Thus, there is an illusion of solidarity of the audience with the stream that is broadcast by television.

In this regard, as it is noted by a number of sociologists, digital communications act as a kind of hypothetical computer, which in space sets the speed and trajectory of motion to the astronauts - all members of society and the state [8; 4].

It should be noted that in the information society the Internet has gained the significant influence, which has changed the behavior and lifestyle of millions of people. On the one hand, taking into account the growth of information technologies, the acceleration of informatization of processes, the degree of maturity of public relations is increasing, as well as public opinion and social structure gain weight as certain value guidelines. On the other hand, the Internet contributes to even greater manipulation of the public consciousness of the masses. Internet technologies are becoming more popular and affordable; promote the emergence of new opportunities and ways of communication. New areas of informational impact, new types of social relations are being formed [13]. It is characteristic that the struggle for the cultural interests and preferences of citizens in the field of information technology is becoming as acute and intense as in the sales markets in the field of industrial culture.

A person often tries to consciously ignore the goods that are imposed on him, but the problem is that advertising promotes not only the product, but also a certain lifestyle; it contains a lot of background information besides the brand. For example, an advertisement which shows how

much toothpaste you need to brush your teeth. Just thinking we will understand that there is no need to apply the paste on the entire surface of the toothbrush, a drop is enough, but we received visual information about how we need to behave and as a result we spend toothpaste faster and are forced to buy a new one. The “Orbit” chewing gum brand used the same technique when it showed in its video that two chewing gum plates should be used instead of one.

According to the research results by a practicing pediatric neuropsychologist V. Paevskaya, at the age when the filters are turned off, it is easy to instill any information in the child if he will constantly see and hear it. If it is possible to protect the child from television and a computer, it is becoming increasingly difficult to protect from outdoor advertising, even in small cities. The key difference is that a small child, up to a certain age, perceives everything through a visual communication channel, even if he does not know how to read what he sees every day on digital and static outdoor advertising, his brain remembers and puts it into a memory.

Already in 1898, A. Verigin spoke about this dual influence of advertising on a person’s personality: “... The purpose of advertising is to draw the attention of as many people as possible to one fact or another, one thought or another or another person. Depending on what the advertisement bears, what attracts attention, what it preaches, and the question of its benefit or harm may be decided. In one case, it can be a blessing, in another — a disaster, like any other instrument of civilization” [2, p. 63]. Initially, advertising was considered as a way of psychological influence on a person’s will in order to create his need for the advertised product.

Today, the theory of advertising communication is built not as coercion, but as “seduction by advertising discourse” [2, p. 65]. Though the key priority of the modern development of society is the technology of artificial intelligence, it is not only the dominant trend of transformation of society, but also a sustainable strategy for the near and distant future. In this regard, it becomes vital to carry out modeling and forecasting of possible risks, challenges and threats, as well as legal and other regimes to prevent negative consequences, based on the doctrinal and legal foundations and moral and ethical standards [10, p. 402].

Modern processes of digital transformation create a new format of public relations in the economic sphere (digital economy), a new format of public relations between society and the state (digital government), a new format of public relations in the cultural sphere (digital culture), and in the near future, “digital culture” In the context of ethics (digital ethics). As a result, “in the process of integration a complex information infrastructure (digital space) is formed” [5, p. 336].

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, it must be said that there are many problems associated with advertising, especially digital, but the

world does not stand still. Today the state is trying to limit the abundance and catchiness of outdoor advertising, which is very commendable and, of course, necessary. In addition, there are companies that are creating outdoor advertising, trying to benefit. For example, in London the company of Urban Vision has equipped several billboards with means that absorb harmful substances in the air. This is a worthy example to be emulated. And finally, the higher the level of knowledge of a person, the richer his life experience, competence, the more difficult it is to instill something to him/her.

In the modern state and, society the digital communications act as an instrument of indirect, direct influence on the sphere of feelings, which form the basis of effective manipulation of the consciousness of citizens. Offering certain “recipes” for perceiving and evaluating an event, digital communications spread the information necessary for the conscious functioning of citizens and their full participation in the state life. In this context, on the one hand, communications promote the awareness of the population about the world, and on the other hand, they act as a factor in its manipulation insofar as they standardize attitudes and behavior, provoke the massification of personality, and also develop a uniformity of their reactions. There is a standardization of the way of thinking, which today has reached not just a national, but a continental scale. In this regard, it is safe to say that the one who broadcasts and controls the information transmitted through digital communications has wide opportunities to influence the behavior and views of the masses.

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