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Social Media as the Form of Being and Social Institute

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The multiuser sites, which are constructed on web 2.0 technology and forming a special type of social networks, unite a huge part of mankind at present. Social networks are understood as alternative form of being, namely existence in communications and as the integration social institute, which takes up other social generality and realizes their key functions. From the point of view of the author, as the form of being social networks are degression, the embodiment of real and individual essence and existence of the person in the lowest form. Social networks also can be considered as consolidating kernel, the original social megainstitute, which realize all spectrum of social functions. As social institute, social networks are characterized as a strict imperious vertical, in which the user of the site can't change accepted norms and rules.

Keywords: social networks, social media, form of being, existence in communications, event, avatar, social institute, imperious relations

It is devoted to professor Albert Y. Raibekas

Introduction

The ideology of Internet users' attraction to partial or full filling of web sites by the information what for these users come on a portal, which is called web 2.0, in the beginning of the XXI-st century has led to occurrence of the multiuser web sites, forming the special type of social networks. These portals became the most popular sites in a network, uniting to 750 million of users (the quantity of users of Facebook.com in 2011 (Abelson and Harper, 2011)).

The social network represents the automated web service assuming authorization (creation and use of the account and communications within the limits of thematic (gender, age, educational and others) Internet communities (system of "friends" and "groups").

Social networks became the largest storehouse of the personal information in the history about mankind. For example, it is possible to cite the following data – every month it is loaded more than three billion of photos on servers of Facebook.com and its users exchange more than 30 billion of information units (Hird, 2011). It is difficult to overestimate the value of social networks in users' life.

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From the end of 2000th it is possible to say that social networks, or social media, such as Facebook, VK.com, Twitter are separate social institutes (look at example in Hanson et al., 2011) and for millions people they are more significant, than the church, school, army, state, science, etc.

Events of 2011 (revolutions in the countries of the Near East and the North Africa) have shown the ability of this social institute to lead to social, historical changes (look at example in Hamamsy, 2011). That's why the research of social media through their influence on the person's knowledge of the world is especially actual not only from the scientific point of view, but also in social, economic, sociopolitical and sociocultural aspects.

Ontology of social media

Objectively social networks exist in memory of servers (so Facebook.com is located on more than 30 000 servers online (the data –May, 2010 (Hird, 2011)) and they are program code which contains a huge volume of the information with the use of various systems of enciphering. From materialistic point of view, social networks are a classical example of a social substance. Structurally social networks personify all levels of social life: from the individual, a family, a collective, a class to ethnoses, the states, and mankind. Similarly in social networks all spheres of public life has already presented: production of goods, science, spiritual sphere, political sphere, service sphere.

Subjectively social networks exist at the moment of the reference to them and bear not only separate functions or system of functions, but a different way of personal being. It means subjectively social networks are perceived by the person (the user, the actor) not as the file of the information and a program code which are stored on the server, but as a personal way of existence in communications.

Also, life in social networks is not the form of being in a virtual reality and it can be considered as essentially other object for ontological knowledge (contrary opinion you can see in Rahvalova, 2011). The virtual reality in the theory and by means of pre-production models is the world created by objects and subjects means in practice, it is transferred to the person (the visitor of this world) through the complex of sensations received from sense organs: sight, hearing, sense of smell. Being in a social network is consciousness, it creates images of other (distinct from physical, objective) realities, sense organs fix a finding of the person (user) in a concrete existential situation of material existence.

Forms of organization of person's being in social networks are friends (subscribers) and groups. The form of existence, development, movement is communication. Interaction is assumed by the maximum refusal of value of the way of communications, the absence of the medium (intermediary), and direct communications between the sender and the addressee. Thus, there is an obvious contradiction. After all, social media are not only the way of being, but also the way of communications, accordingly, it a priori causes these communications to become the message in itself. Social networks start to offer a circle of contacts, communications and prompt the organization of being. This contradiction essentially influences on personal existential freedom in social networks.

At the moment of the reference to social network its program code becomes cognitive system of the person. User's consciousness, feelings and mind use the data about reality in refraction of social media. The person takes up certain role functions; he is the author of the message, or its addressee. Cognitive process turns to the continuous reporting about your or other's life (Braslavec, 2011). The reason

of it that today users of social media perceive dialogue, communications as the goal in itself. According to researchers (American company Pear Analytics and Russian company Yandex) about 80 % of messages in Twitter it is possible to regard as conversations, 4 % is spam, 9 % are retweets. A productive part of messages is only about 10 %. Thus, social networks are completely changing our representation about distinction between public and personal (more detailed in West et al., 2009).

The existential essence of social media is effectively described by the concept of event. From culture point of view it is birth of children, weddings, travel including pilgrimage, etc. These events find the expression in statuses, the personal messages, photos, videos etc. In social networks all events in user's life, which he considers as Events, are reflected. And for other users and from the point of view of the person the event isn't presented, if it isn't reflected in a social network. For example, the wedding of the person had taken place some years ago, but it received reflections in a network later. Other users start to congratulate him at the moment of occurrence of corresponding record on a personal page (often even if they were participants of this celebration in real life). Other example, users try not to reflect negative events in their life in the page (illness, accidents, loss of relatives). On the contrary, the mention of such event leads to instant, mass, but short response that naturally reduces the value of it, and often it leads to more stress for the person.

From the existential point of view it is necessary to reflect a death phenomenon in ontology of social networks in the given research. Pages of dead people in social networks aren't deleted and other users try not to delete them from friends. The phenomena are connected with special existential characteristics in social networks.

Time in a social network is necessary to understand through the urgency of event. It is rapid, it means instant loss of an urgency for others since that moment as event has disappeared from the section "news" at friends (subscribers). There is a contradiction – events in social networks can exist eternally, but there is a possibility of return, change of the past, copying of personal history and the history of relations (communications).

The space of social network is limited by nothing and it assumes the variety of embodiments. But social networks, thanks to modern program decisions, forcedly lead to short circuit of users in a certain circle of contacts from which it is difficult to get out and create the new. We can say there is a creation of own "worlds", not individual, but stereotypic unified by software.

The name of the world's largest social network Facebook is the book of faces. The human face is the most individual part of our body, the person is identified on its complete perception. Face expresses a mimicry, our emotions which is addressed to the world around us. Person's face in social networks is "picture", the small image, used for visual personification of the user; it is called "userpic" or "avatar". The avatar is an embodiment of god from spiritual sphere in low forms of being in Hinduism. It means in the Indian philosophy avatar is initially connected with "decrease", it is possible to translate this word also as degression.

The term "avatar" as designation of the picture personalizing the user in the Internet has appeared considerably before occurrence of social networks. The avatar shall «reflect any peculiar features of character of the user and help to make exact impression about his internal inner world and the status». Social networks have entered the requirement of use of real images of the person in avatars (photos, portraits etc.) for the first time. If our face can express a complex of emotions in their dynamics in real life, the avatar

in social networks is static emotion. It is the sign of yourself, which user conscious or unconscious sends to another, thus avatar change turns to the social act.

The exit in a World Net doesn't change the structure of spiritual life of people (contrary opinion in Basalaeva and Balabanov, 2010). The idea of the world of ideas, idea of God as all-seeing, all-thinking, the all-knowing beginning of the world and set of other similar ideas have appeared much earlier and they were permanent in human consciousness, including subconsciously in the collective unconscious. The Internet is not a noosphere, it is only its embodiment in the lowest form of life, it is digression. Button "Like" simplifies a complex of person's feelings at formation of own opinion about something. The status reduces private world, its conditions to the formulation in 40 signs. The avatar and the change of is the lowered, simplified version of a human mimicry, expression of our emotions. Each time in social networks we deal with simplification of reality from known and unknown shares of assumptions.

Social media as social institute

Making a start from classical definition of social institute as constantly repeating and reproduced relations of people; steady set of people, groups, the establishments whose activity is directed on performance of concrete public functions on the basis of certain norms and rules; it is necessary to notice that social media or social networks occupy position of the major public institute in a modern society. The institutionalization of social networks means streamlining, formalization and standardization of public relations and it is caused by social requirement of the person in communication, growing in information society.

Successful distribution of social networks and their institutionalization were promoted also by use of developed steady social communications between people, for example, Facebook and VK.com initially positioned itself as social networks of students and graduates of leading high schools. It means social networks don't create new social communications, social relations; it is possible to say that they «parasitize» on others. Moreover, social network often arises at the moment of actualization of dysfunction in any social institute. So, for example, in the beginning of 2000th SMS were much cheaper than calls, therefore the majority of clients of the cellular companies used them as the basic means of communication by mobile phone. By the end of 2000 calls by a mobile phone became much cheaper but price for SMS was the same. It has led to sharp reduction of using by this function. Nevertheless, requirement to write short messages to inform friends about events remained at people. Thanks to it, and also to wide circulation of smartphones and communicators, a social network "Twitter" has appeared.

Understanding of social networks as the system of values, norms, ideals, and also samples of activity and behavior of people makes possible to speak not only about their integrating role in the course of public communications as the major sociocultural process, but also about occurrence of accurately expressed structure and codified rules of behavior of members in this social institute. For maintenance of similar behavior of people, management of their certain aspirations, ways of satisfaction of requirements, a resolution of conflicts founders of social networks carry out a number of measures in a program code of sites. It means stability, institutionalization of social media is initially inherent in them and it is expressed in organizing of their functional. Besides, norms and rules of people's behavior and their social interaction are codified in terms of service, acceptance them is an integral part of reception of an account in the largest social

networks (see Statement of Rights and Regulations in VK.com, Terms of Facebook etc.).

Roles and statuses in social networks provide their internalization, described rules and functional become property of user's inner world. The person "lives" his being in social network, he perceives the account as the embodiment of himself, he connects his expectations with events in social networks, he corrects the valuable orientations and finds there space for satisfaction of the requirements (Chernyaeva, 2009).

Social networks are organizational issued, founders of social networks possess the rights of moderators, managers. In a modern society popular social networks become the successful commercial enterprises with mullions-strong (and in certain cases multi-billion) cost.

At functional level social networks bring or, at least, reflect all basic functions of social institutes. In literal sense reproduction of members of society receives the reflection in the phenomenon of events (change of biographical particulars at parents, photo albums, messages on a wall, etc.). From the point of view of internal logic of system of the given social institute, the program block of registration in a social network answers for reproduction of members of a society, it means the possibility of account's reception can be understood as the birth of human(for this phenomenon it is also possible to use adjacent concepts, such as regeneration, going out, which have stereotypical conditionality and even archetypical predefiniteness). Family, as the main institute, which is carrying out function of reproduction members of society, is exposed to influence of social networks as well as any other public institute in modern society. Realization of family connections has found expression in a program code of social media not at once but in 2 or 3 years after their triumphal distribution. The possibility to reflect members of the family in the questionnaire is realized in the form of a cross

reference and it means the exarticulation of a family cell. Nevertheless, such allocation is only designating of the family, but not its embodiment. Here it is important to notice that for founders of social networks work on a real embodiment of various social groups can become a real development, because at the present possibility of a subscription and occurrence in groups means only joining.

The founder of social network VK.com Pavel Durov considers that public lists of friends were the main reason of success of social networks: «the success of social networks is connected with changed representation about minimum possible level of confidentiality and with absence of necessity to follow out-of-date standards». The user of a social network, creating such list, joins in certain social communications that, in general, represents transfer of the samples of behavior and ways of activity which are established in given community, it means socialization (more detailed in Konstantinov, 2008). But, filling the questionnaire in social networks, the person defines him for others, but not for himself. Self-determination for others doesn't mean personal self-determination as a rule. There is no self-actualization through self-determination at questionnaire filling. Person instantly joins social communications but he isn't socialized, it means his personality isn't formed (Shalimov, 2011).

Because the largest social media are commercial organizations it is initially possible to name them as the place of production and distributions of the goods and services. At present social media are one of the most difficult social mechanisms of manufacture and distribution. On the degree of the importance it is comparable only with exchange, which occurrence as social institute concerns to XIII—XV centuries. But unlike the exchange which is directed only on a meeting of the seller and the buyer social networks have a number of others possibilities with a great

value. Firstly, social media become the largest platform for distribution of the commercial information (advertizing and PR), such kind of activity has received the name social media marketing (Salerno et al., 2010). Secondly, they have unlimited possibilities for virtual trade. In social media not distribution of the information about goods or service has the most value but the meeting of people and brands, their coexistence (event) at which relations of the seller and the buyer get in a modern society more value and duration, than «pair of the words thrown through a counter». Thirdly, social media possess huge prospects not only in sale, but in manufacture of the electronic goods and services.

The unique person in the world which has the right to write in Twitter messages more, than 170 signs is the president of USA Barack Obama. In general, appearing of Barack Obama and the President of the Russian Federation Dmitry Medvedev in social networks is a symbol of presence the Power at social media as a major social institute.

Soon after the creation of social networks there was a set of responses that they will be used as the mechanism of social control, even shadowings, suppression and managements of manpower resources. It seemed unbelievable that the recent student of philology department Pavel Durov could create a site which number of users began to be estimated in thousand in the beginning, then in millions, and then in tens millions. Similar responses were about the project of student Mark Zuckerberg behind the ocean several years earlier. In spite of the fact that in these social networks preservation of the information without user's knowledge (a photo, video and the whole accounts) and in management of revolutions in the North Africa and the Near East in 2011 through Facebook, Google and Twitter it is visible the interest of US State department there aren't authentic

acknowledgement of that the personal data are used, for example, by special services as one of government and even suppression tools.

For us it's very important not external realization of imperious relations with use of social networks as social institute but their internal features providing realization of function of management and control. So, for example, presence of sanctions and encouragements is the major sign of realization of such function. So for encouragement of users in social network VK.com there was a rating system, first of all, directed on stimulation of detailed filling of personal page. The system of sanctions for this social network is provided by Terms of service on which the site Administration «reserves the right to itself at sole discretion, and also at reception of the information from other users or the third parties about infringement by the User of the present Rules, to change (moderate) or to delete any information published by the User». Despite existence of the whole codes, which are regulating mutual relations of users and administrations of sites, managers of social networks have exclusive rights of entering of unilateral changes in rules of functioning of the given public institute. Social networks in the given sense realize authoritative control mode with vertical of the power. In spite of the fact that social networks are social institute only thanks to the people; these people, users of sites, possess as much as possible limited rights, mainly, without having possibility of influence on use of social networks, they can't make rules.

Resume

As alternative to real form of being social networks are degression, the embodiment of real and individual essence and existence of the person in the lowest form. Even in spite of the fact that the subject by means of functions of social networks often tries to show himself better than he really is, the decrease, a lowering trend

are determined by the essence of social networks. Social networks try to personify the essence of communications, it means the person turns to knot, a link of such communicative network. The person is embodied in signs, in language system and he is determined of it. The person, as the thought, embodied in a word, loses the essence, the boundless complexity and he becomes only the sign of himself.

If to consider social networks as consolidating kernel, the original social megainstitute, which is realized all spectrum of social functions, they are characterized by a strict imperious vertical in which the user of site can't change the accepted norms and rules in any way. The authoritative anthropological model of social networks is constructed on suppression of freedom in choosing and creation of the routes, the circle of contacts, interests which are set by the system. It doesn't mean that social networks transform people into the zombie, but, nevertheless, their mechanism as social institute is constructed on simplification, making strict frameworks.

Thus, social networks as the form of being and social institute on existential and social level is degression of the real person. And the copy is always worse than the original but only if there is an original.

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Социальные медиа как форма бытия
и социальный институт

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Многопользовательские сайты, построенные по технологии веб 2.0 и образующие особого типа социальные сети, объединяют на данный момент огромную часть человечества. В статье рассматриваются социальные сети как альтернативная реальной форма бытия, а именно существования в коммуникациях, и как интеграционный социальный институт, постепенно поглощающий другие социальные общности, воплощая в себе их ключевые функции. С точки зрения автора, как форма бытия социальные сети есть нисхождение, воплощение в низшей форме реальных и индивидуальных сущности и существования человека. Социальные сети также можно рассматривать как консолидирующее ядро, своеобразный социальный мегаинститут, реализующий весь спектр социальных функций. При этом как социальный институт, социальные сети характеризуются как строгая властная вертикаль, в которой пользователь сайта никак не может изменить принятые нормы и правила.

Ключевые слова: социальные сети, социальные медиа, форма бытия, существование в коммуникациях, событие, аватар, социальный институт, властные отношения.