

Blogosphere and virtual society: Exploring new areas of research¹

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Abstract

The article aims to outline bloggings as a complex social phenomenon and identify the current role of blogs in virtual reality. The literature review revealed that the evolving paradigm of civilizational growth has led to a hybrid environment, which combines the aspects of physical world and virtual reality artefacts, resulting in a unique media landscape, significantly impacting socio-cultural and communicative dynamics. However, the field lacks studies on typical features of blogosphere, such as its inherent openness, fostering informal communication, intention to both monetization and self-expression. To address the study's objectives the research adopts an integrative interdisciplinary approach, including socio-philosophical and semiotic cultural studies, theory of computer communication, network and Internet discourse studies to use data from various fields of humanitarian knowledge. It is concluded that originally created as online diaries, currently blogs as a diverse media platform demonstrate several unique features, including high personalization, audience feedback capabilities, constant user engagement with various types of information (verbal, audial, visual). These characteristics positioned blogs as key contributors to the growth of virtual sociality, leading to the emergence of a new type of society characterized by heightened human sensory experiences and the development of new empathetic models and behavioral attitudes.

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A notable sign of these changes is that the audience's attention has shifted from professional media institutions to individual bloggers, who are increasingly adopting media-like behaviors. The current research adopts an interdisciplinary approach, merging socio-philosophical and semiotic cultural studies, as well as with theory of computer communication, network and Internet discourse studies. It also employs methods of Internet linguistics and the principles of pragmalinguistics; the axiological method helps to identify value-based socio-cultural guidelines within the framework of globalization.

Keywords

Blog, blogging, blogosphere, virtual media sphere, modern Russian media landscape.

Introduction

The changing paradigm of civilizational development has given rise to a hybrid environment where the tangible realities of the physical world are intricately synthesized with the boundless constructs of virtual reality, resulting in a unique media landscape. This networked communication space, emerging within the virtual realm, serves as a catalyst for contemporary social advancement, profoundly influencing our socio-cultural and communicative spheres. Nowadays being online has become a fundamental necessity for individuals; public institutions risk becoming outcasts from the community if they lack a virtual twin.

The new digital reality has affected the already existing digital inequality between societies and social groups within countries, sparked a heated discussion about the new dimensions of this phenomenon. Education is one of the fields facing digital inequality, which got especially aggravated in emerging countries. The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in the global closure of schools and higher education institutions, forcing a move to distance learning (Jamil et al, 2022; Abu-Kishk, & Mendels, 2024), as well as professional journalistic practices turning more to remote formats (Msimanga, Tshuma, & Matsilele, 2022; Escudero, 2023). This change significantly affected working conditions, education, the economy, and the environment. Having access to infrastructure, information and communication technologies became essential for students to pursue their academic studies (Dunas et al, 2023). To address the challenges posed by the digital divide in higher education, suggest implementing the so-called 'digital upgrades', which aim to create equal opportunities to access education (Vartanova, Gladkova, & Ragnedda, 2022). The following key

issues are to be focused upon: 1) national digital infrastructure (to enhance connectivity); 2) digital platforms (devices used by teachers and students); 3) digital platforms (to facilitate effective teaching delivery); 4) digital training (provided for students, teachers, and administrative staff).

Another relevant issue is digital inequality in functioning of media organizations. Various approaches are compared to coping with this problem, among which there is a suggestion that creating direct landscape of exchange could reduce the digital divide, so that the readers' requirements and priorities were met. Such an interaction is claimed to presuppose connecting to another wave of the digital divide, grounded upon socio-cultural, economic, educational, and political factors (Mansoori, & Musa, 2024).

Thus, the digital tools that come to the limelight today enable the mobile, one-click transmission of information and the receipt of instant feedback – the *blog* is becoming the most popular among them. Likewise, its derivatives *blogging* and *blogosphere* have become part and parcel of modern discourse. A *blog* (shortened version of *weblog* – online event log or diary) is a web page or platform featuring regularly updated content. It is hosted on a website (*blog hosting*) and includes various materials (known as *posts*), such as texts, photos and videos, typically arranged in reverse chronological order. Though blogs are often compared to personal diaries, they stand apart due to publicity and wide opportunities they provide for reader through commenting (Lukina (ed.), 2010: 277).

Theoretical approaches and methodology

The blogosphere is frequently compared to the media, highlighting their similarities and differences. A notable similarity lies in the entertainment nature of blogs: to attract attention bloggers alter the way of presenting factual information up to inventing news and passing off fake news as if it were real. Thus, offering the audience a wide range of information, blogs prove themselves to serve as news media for everyone. Hence, a critical attitude is vital towards those blogs that claim to be legitimate news sources (Elshahed, & Tayie, 2019). The question is to be posed to define a qualified journalist in the virtual world, as well as to evaluate the impact on the journalistic sphere a blogger might produce (Karamatdinova, 2020; Baychik, 2023). Equating blogs with mass media brings new challenges to the professional journalism. Blogs have signs of periodicity, have an audience and disseminate mass information. But the difference between blogs and the media lies primarily in self-identification. Mass media are social institutions that inform, entertain, educate, which cannot be said about blogs. The media also have a social mission to society, and any

blog is created and developed in the interests of the author (Karamatdinova, 2020). Currently the following issues concerning blogging are being in focus of studies:

- *the emergence of blogging and its evolution through various stages.* Originally appeared as a personal or family diary for self-expression, over the decades blogs have evolved into a distinct system guided by specific rules and standards. Today blogs function as essential tools for building and enhancing reputation, effectively promoting individuals as brands. No longer are they mere platforms for information exchange, but comprehensive digital ecosystems. Currently, blogs are gaining key importance, particularly due to the potential for content monetization and their integration with content marketing and influencer marketing (Chechulin, 2023 et al: 88);
- *classification of blogs and blogosphere segments.* Blogs could be divided into several types, including personal, business, professional, partner, media, freelance and niche blogs that focus on specific topics: food, lifestyle, health, home decor, parenting. Some blogs operate as open and vibrant communities, while other could be closed themed communities or channels centered around specific ideas, values, and opinion leaders (ibid: 90);
- *genre and thematic features of blogs.* The genre and thematic content of the blogosphere is observed to be leaning towards personal narratives, while journalism seems to occupy only a marginal position in social networks (Kolesnichenko, 2021: 68);
- *interaction between blogs and their audience.* Since maintaining the interest of the audience is crucial for bloggers, among their key tasks are communicating with other users, consistently publishing content, short- and long-term posts planning. The blogging process includes direct creation, introspection, reflective monologues, reflective dialogues, knowledge artifact curation (Rettberg, 2014; Sahil et al, 2021);
- *promotion and monetization of blogs, features of digital marketing in social networks* (Obraztsova, & Serdotetsky, 2021; Chechulin et al, 2023). Among key advantages of blogging are its ability to influence public opinion, offering an accessible communication platform to everyone, its enhancing writing skills, as well as creating opportunities for monetization. To be noted, however, that along with providing avenues for connection, self-expression, and support, social media also comes with risks like social comparison, cyberbullying, and the fear of

missing out (Shen et al, 2006; Ursula, 2024);

- *legal and ethical aspects of blogging, privacy and security issues associated with blogs* (McCullagh, 2008; Zhang et al, 2010). Several studies explore why bloggers choose to expose their private lives publicly, despite being aware of the potential risks to their privacy. Researchers report bloggers to have indicated their prioritizing virtue and ethical principles. This first large-scale survey on blogging ethics refutes the notion on lacking in ethics in bloggers' practices (Elshahed, & Tayie, 2019: 33).
- *the impact that the blogosphere produces on social processes*, including public communication styles of politicians and officials; communicative strategies for addressing daily and interpersonal issues; the development of civic responsibility; the forming of ideas, opinions, and values (Elshahed, & Tayie, 2019). Today launching a successful blog demands a carefully crafted strategy, which triggers the need for blogging agencies, also known as influencer agencies (Iovva, & Mokrichuk, 2022). The growing focus on blogging is largely due to the influence bloggers produce on social practices and the potential abilities of blogging to change in contemporary society.

Methods

The current research adopts an interdisciplinary approach, merging socio-philosophical and semiotic cultural studies, as well as with theory of computer communication, network and Internet discourse studies. It employs methods of Internet linguistics and the principles of pragmalinguistics; the axiological method helps to identify value-based socio-cultural guidelines within the framework of globalization. Central to this work is the principle of consistency, which is the basis of the work, has determined a set of relevant research methods. The integrative method allows for the use of data from various fields of humanitarian studies to address the study's objectives.

Literature review has revealed that an essential research problem remains beyond the current studies in the field: it is the inherent openness of the blogosphere and informal communication, coupled with individuals' desire to monetize their self-realization needs. This trend raises serious concerns about socio-cultural degradation of a significant segment of the blog audience; it also poses questions regarding shifts in behavioral attitudes and changes in the typical features of the current communicative landscape. The blogosphere contributes to shaping a new society; it exposes the users to constant deep immersion and produces complex sensory effects to shape novel empathic models and

behavioral tendencies; thus, the resultants individuals experience heightened sensory modalities. These transformations need being examined, since blogging activities are giving rise to a new dimension of social reality – virtual sociality.

Thus, the study aims to outline bloggings as a complex social phenomenon. It seeks to identify the role of blogs in virtual reality, describe the main stages and mechanisms of blogging evolution, explore social topics typically addressed in blogs and uncover the prerequisites that shaping blogging.

Results

The main stages of blog evolution

Blogs originated as traditional news diaries: this was the format of the Internet page that Tim Berners-Lee – now regarded as the first blogger – launched in 1992. They quickly evolved into a dynamic tool for self-expression, gaining widespread popularity. Blog writers start to identify themselves as ‘journalists’, ‘publicists’, ‘diarists’ and ‘describers’ and position themselves as representatives of media or literature, thereby claiming public authority.

The rapid advancement of technology simplified the creating and maintaining of personal websites and blogs, making them more accessible to a broad audience of Internet users. Creating a blog or posting content no longer required specialized knowledge, so this form of online expression was increasingly winning interest. In a decade blogs have amassed a multi-million audience, transforming from a mere hobby and medium for self-expression into a significant segment of the virtual media landscape. As blogs expanded into the realms of politics and journalism, they started to gain increasing attention to finally evolve into vital tools for disseminating information and communicating key news to the public. Moreover, bloggers became influential users in shaping public opinion, whose comments on events go beyond personal preferences and get a socially significant meaning, so that not infrequently they triggered political scandals and reshaped the agenda.

The development of social communities has given rise to blogging, a new phenomenon in virtual spaces, which managed to merge novel social practices driven by individuals’ desires for self-expression and e-commercialization of these activities. While blogs may be regarded as one of the earliest forms of Internet communication, it was the surge of e-commerce that sparked a revival of blogging, transforming it into a highly popular activity and one of the most sought-after professions today.

In this context, we can pinpoint several key events that occurred almost simultaneously and marked a turning point in the evolution of blogging.

The first event is related to the issue of freedom of speech in blogs. The first event pertains to the dynamics of relationships, particularly the A notable case is a series of posts featured by an American blogger Heather Brooke about her colleagues in 2001, which resulted in her dismissal; it triggered public outcry and widespread discussions on the ethical implications of the issue. Later the motto “My blog, my rules” marked blogs transforming into free platforms enabling to express the writers’ opinions without constraint.

The second event took place a year later, in 2002, when Google launched AdSense, a service that enabled integrating a personal diary and targeted advertising. The era of blogging has started; many bloggers became ‘opinion ambassadors’ having signed contracts with corporations and brands.

The third event, dated back to the early 2000s, concerns the expansion of the media landscape, namely, the rise of cyber journalism and political blogging development driven by political figures and media-savvy politicians. Thus, the key events, such as escalation of military conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq and the Middle East, received immediate coverage and commentary through blogs.

The blog, as a tool, and blogging, as a form of social practice, have unlocked a wide range of opportunities that go beyond utilizing users’ and social communities’ private capitals. This shift empowers individual members to express their opinions, their personal preferences and desires. In contrast to the conflict and instability often seen within social communities, blogs were considered as an alternative platform. They provide a toolkit that not only fulfills personal aspirations but also opens avenues for monetising social practices. Furthermore, blogs allowed for influencing public opinion, broadening the audience and boosting the blog’s visibility and credibility, which ultimately enhance the blogger’s self-esteem.

Currently, the statistics clearly shows a significant ‘commercialization effect’ of blogging, though, to the best of our knowledge, literature review reveals an obvious insufficiency of research on this segment. According to *HypeAyditor* agency, the value of the traditional global market stands at \$5.9 billion, while the global blogger market, as reported by *Influencer Marketing Hub* (tracking the segment of online promotion of goods, brands and services), has reached \$9.7 billion, with the growth rates of 40-60% depending on the segment (Kiuru, 2014; Ulyanova, 2014; Goroshko, & Polyakova, 2015; Kolesnichenko, 2021). The Russian blog market is also witnessing robust expansion, with growth rates of 20-35% across different segments, and its volume for 2024 is estimated to be between 24-43 billion rubles, compared to 45 billion rubles in 2023. The income of the leading influencer bloggers ranges from 3 to 38 million rubles (Pil’ka, 2023).

The phenomenon of blogging in Russia dates back to the late 1990s and early 2000s, when the Internet became widely accessible to a broader audience. While Russian blogging evolved alongside global trends, it developed unique characteristics shaped by the country's cultural and social context. The following key stages of blogging development in Russia are to be mentioned:

The origins of blogging in Russia. In the early 2000s blogging was about to start in this country. The first blogs were launched on foreign platforms, such as *LiveJournal*, which became the most popular option among Russian-speaking users. Founded in 1999, by the early 2000s *LiveJournal* has evolved into a vibrant space for communication, self-expression, and opinion exchange. During this period blogs were primarily written by IT specialists, journalists, writers and other members of the intellectual elite (Ignatiev, 2024).

The rise of LiveJournal. In the mid 2000s, *LiveJournal* transformed into an influential cultural and social platform in Russia. It became a hub for discussions on political, social, and cultural issues, allowing users to express their civic views. Politicians, writers and activists began blogging, which attracted a wide and diverse audience. Between 2005 and 2007 *LiveJournal* played a crucial role in organizing protests and civic initiatives. Researchers note that the popularity of bloggers on *LiveJournal* could be estimated using two key metrics: the number of subscribers (also known as “friends”) and the number of visitors. The latter parameter is highly dynamic and most often reflects the popularity of specific posts; the former tends to be more stable, requiring longer observation periods to detect significant changes.

Platform competition. In the 2020s alternative Russian projects began to appear, such as *Ya.ru* (literary ‘me.ru’) by Yandex. Social networks such as *Vkontakte* and *Odnoklassniki* (literary ‘classmates’) started to rival blogs by offering simpler and user-friendly ways to communicate and share content. Nevertheless, *LiveJournal* remained a vital platform for political and social discussions.

Switch to social media and video blogging. During the 2010s the popularity of traditional text blogs started to wane, as users were increasingly switching to social media platforms like *Vkontakte* and *Twitter*. Simultaneously, video blogging began to actively develop. *YouTube* quickly became popular among Russian-speaking users, leading many bloggers to focus on video content. In this period the first major Russian YouTube bloggers started their carrier, such as *EeOneGuy*, *Kate Clapp*, among others.

New formats. In the 2020s short videos became a dominant format, especially on *Tik Tok*, which gained immense popularity among younger audience for

content creation. Blogging has become increasingly commercialized: bloggers collaborate with brands, promote products and services, turning blogging into a legitimate profession.

Redistribution of spheres of influence. After several foreign social networks were banned in Russia in 2022, the number of users visiting these platforms has sharply declined and the reach of popular accounts has significantly dropped. With the exit of major foreign advertisers from the Russian market and ceasing the possibility of monetization for Russian YouTube users, many bloggers have turned to online donation services to cover their content creation costs. Likewise, the geopolitical climate has influenced blog content, focusing on political topics including Russian special operation, the country's future, emigration and patriotism. Topics related to everyday life, lifestyle, fashion, design, among others have also gained attention in blogs and channels. In contrast, the popularity of entertainment content has waned. Blogging has also seen the tightening of content control on the part of the government (Lukina (ed.), 2010: 277). This redistribution of influence has reinforced the transformation of social networks into digital ecosystems; the integration of the platforms *Zen* and *Vkontakte* has resulted into a monopoly on content production within the latter platform (Chechulin et al, 2023).

The popularity of blogging in Russia is underscored by statistics: in March 2024 the number of active bloggers surged to an all-time high of over 69 million authors, while the total number of posts reached an impressive 1.9 billion, reflecting robust growth. Compared to 2023 the average month volume of blogging content increased by 29%, with active authors rising by 9%; totally, in 2023 64.6 million authors and 1.55 billion posts were recorded (TASS, 2021).

Notably, a 2021 survey revealed that 80% of Russians expressed a desire to leave their jobs to become bloggers; this interest was particularly pronounced among younger people aged 18-24 (73% female); to be noted, however, that 30% of the respondents were aged over 45, with men representing 55% (TASS, 2021). Interestingly, among professional bloggers only 16% are in the 18-24 age range, whereas the majority of professional bloggers fall into older age groups: 25-34 years old (35%) and 35-44 (25%). For 70% of the surveyed bloggers managing a blog is a hobby that provides supplementary income, while the other 30% regard blogging as their main profession and primary source of earnings (Protsenko, 2021). These data illustrate significant structural changes within the virtual sphere. However, these developments have led to troubling outcomes, as the blogosphere faced a decline in the trust it once had during its early years. Fake news, offensive jokes, racist remarks, and other inappropriate information

that undermine the dignity of others have diminished the popularity of blogs. Statistics shows that 31% of Russians consider information received from blogs as false, while only 16% believe it to be accurate; about 20% think that blogs provide equally reliable and false information (Romanova, 2024).

In recent years, restricted governmental regulations and self-regulation within the blogosphere have changed the situation. Administrators are increasingly blocking irresponsible users; both law enforcement agencies and the public are promptly auditing content to removal the negative one, as well as block its creators. Having surveyed 5,500 respondents across 43 regions of Russia, researchers found that over 53% of participants trust the opinions of bloggers, which indicates a positive trend in public perception (Romanova, 2024).

The role of blogs in the development of virtual sociality

The outlined stages and vectors of blogging development illustrate that society faced a fundamentally new form of activity, linked to the expanding possibilities of virtual space. The evolution of blogs signifies their transition from informal communication channels to a multifunctional media landscape, viewed as an independent realm of intricate and multidimensional network interactions. Blogs have emerged as a distinctive form of modern existence, characterized by information mobility and dynamism. Their daily practices have developed a specific structure, principles, rules, and genres that used to be typical of institutionalized media. This evolution has fostered the formation of a new culture, marked by diverse semantic and behavioral attitudes and network interactions. Consequently, we are witnessing the restructuring of human thought, perception of the world and self-identity; new constructs have emerged within social architecture. The virtual space has quantitatively and qualitatively transformed “the Gutenberg Galaxy”, integrating into human life, society, and governance. Immersive and interactive technologies are increasingly blurring the lines between the real and virtual worlds, merging a comprehensive set of interactions into a cohesive social field. This new social field has a well-defined structure and active participants, giving rise to new social groups and strata that contribute to a fresh dimension of social reality – virtual sociality. A key characteristic of virtual sociality is its ontological framework, which highlights the transformation of the social paradigm in real reality. This framework intertwines the experiences of social action with the unique organization of virtual social formations, underscoring the profound changes occurring in our social landscape (Rykov, 2013).

Viewed as a form of communicative social action, virtual reality can be viewed as a collection of network models for user interaction that facilitate both formal and informal communication through various channels and tools, such as email, corporate portal feedback channels, and social networks – “communication for communication’s sake”. Viewed as a purposeful social action, virtual reality represents a complex of models aimed at organizing social groups in both real and digital formats. It has effectively transformed the Internet into a contemporary media platform, enabling online media to emerge as a vital resource for political, economic, and socio-cultural processes. It also engages the users as active participants and ideologists, who start shaping and implementing strategies across various spheres of modern life, creating norms and social standards that define contemporary digital culture.

To create broader opportunities and expand communication potentials provided for users, the integration of following aspects should be ensured: *social aspect*, i.e. the way users define the notion of sociality (or produce social associations, according to B. Latour); *material aspect* as a collection of technologies, including artificial intelligence, neural networks, the Internet of Things, and other digital technologies; *meaningful aspect* as models of interpretive meanings and sign-symbolic meta-messages, manipulating natural reflexes of cognition and critical thinking abilities. The digital transformation of the individual is determined by the transformation of their social capabilities, a new social reality presented as a synthesis of two systems – physical and digital. For the individual the transformation into a ‘multi-self’ means changing their social action (regardless of the forms it takes) from the Aristotelian ‘matter-form’ system into Luhmann’s system of procedural and operational structures. This transformation might aim to alter the social space and create new models by establishing new logical associations and transforming the content.

The emergence of blogs was one of the notable transformations of the range of virtual social actions. This phenomenon can be viewed not merely as an alternative solution, but as a transformative force within online communities. These web pages aim to tackle various challenges, be it within professional field or for purposes of daily communication, entertainment, or knowledge-sharing. Blogs facilitate open and dynamic interpersonal interactions among individuals with shared interests, establishing clear boundaries for community membership. Additionally, the virtual integration matrices, whether focused on personal connections or broader audience engagement, have influenced the structural and social stratification in these communities.

The goals of blog users, as well as factors underlying social and digital inequality, affect the structural differentiation and hierarchy of the virtual community. The following categories of users tend to be clearly distinguished (Table 1):

Table 1

Classification of users in blogs

	Blog user category	Characteristics
1	Moderators	The dominant group, which has power, authority and control over the virtual community
2	The “elite”	Assistant moderators, who implement the policy of the social community; like moderators they have the rights to block other users
3	Common community members	Virtual community participants with certain rights, including participating in discussions, leaving comments, etc. Their activity contributes to the community’s popularity
4	Users	Non-members of the community and thus not having participation rights. Normally, they belong to the external audience, which only has the right to view public posts, news, etc.

Structural differentiation and inequality within virtual communities have given rise to new communication platforms – *social networks*. The primary distinction of these platforms is the opportunity of self-presentation provided for users. The popularity of social networks stems from their ability to unite individuals with shared interests, while also allowing users to leave the group or to change their role in the community (transforming from a common member, whose abilities are often restricted by community guidelines, into a moderator with a broader range of rights and relative independence). Social networks empower each user to create their own profile and post content, such as information, photos, graphics, and texts; at that, post sharing is not confined by any rigid rules or templates. Social networks facilitate connections with friends, interactions with other users, the exchange of messages, which enable individuals to navigate their ‘virtual lives’ according to their own preferences.

Hence, the modern blogosphere has developed a relatively stable structure, identifiable by its most popular and sustainable segments. Studies of the Russian blogosphere reveal that 68% of respondents prefer political blogs; other notable segments include information analytics at 47%, entertainment and humor at 32%, science at 30%, and travel and lifestyle at 28% (Habermas, 2022). This

structural differentiation reflects the evolving dynamics of public opinion within the blogosphere: the claimed 79% of users following news in blogs prove a growing trust in their reliability.

Moreover, the concept of blogging has undergone significant transformation. Initially viewed as personal diaries or individual websites, early bloggers focused on self-expression rather than audience engagement, often participating in auto-communication. In contrast, today's bloggers actively seek the audience's feedback and tailor their content to meet the audience's expectations. Otherwise stated, they organise their blogs in coordination with few selected memes that most resonate their style and create "memeplexes", i.t. collections of identical memes. This shift has positioned blogs as tools for shaping public opinion, employing manipulative tool not only to influence "blogosphere dwellers", but also to go beyond it, entering real society. Today, blog writers tend to become esteemed figures at national forums, conferences, and business meetings. Their lives attract considerable attention from both a wide audience and the media, with their behaviour, opinion, and lifestyles serving as role models for millions of users, particularly the youth.

These changes shift our understanding of virtual space from a mass social perspective to the one emphasizing social individualization. This shift highlights not only group social practices but also the personality of the blogger, along with the psychological motives and needs that condition their behaviour in the virtual realm.

To summarize the above stated, several *motivating factors* underling the desire of a contemporary individual to become a blogger can be singled out:

- *the first motivating factor* is the accessibility of the platform. Any Internet user, regardless of special skills, education or life experience can easily become a blogger just by creating and publishing content online. The subject matter of this content is largely unregulated, which leads many novice bloggers to gravitate toward lifestyle topics. This seemingly easy entry point for content creation presupposes sharing aspects of personal life, hobbies, social outings and daily routine. Lifestyle blogging enables bloggers to build a sense of loyalty among their subscribers, while high personalization of the blogger's image (i.e. sharing personal stories) elicit emotional responses from the audience and enhance its engagement. This strategy may ultimately ensure the blog's and thus the blogger's popularity.
- *the second motivating factor* is the individual's inclination towards conformism (the so-called 'crowd effect'). From this perspective, blogs

can be viewed as a virtual product of mass consumer culture, rooted in socialization algorithms shaped by popular culture and reinforced by the individuals' desire to "be on trend". Applied to media blogs, the crowd's collective mind leads individuals to engage in actions driven by societal obsessions and fashion trends, even if these actions conflict with their internal desires or motivations. Thus, striving at popularity, many young bloggers become notorious in search of appreciation and fame. Their spontaneous and sometimes outrageous behaviour, captured on camera or expressed through provocative posts, frequently lacks any clear purpose, but rather subconsciously justified by the crowd effect principle.

- *the third motivating factor* is conditioned by Machiavellianism and desire for money and power. This driver act as the leading for a relatively small group of influential bloggers (genuine 'opinion leaders'), having a significant amount of followers, getting substantial incomes, and producing an enormous impact on the audience. Some of these bloggers have an appropriate professional background, while the majority boast their unique talents, creativity, and artistic flair to discover unconventional content solutions.

Comprehending these factors could provoke better understanding of the blogosphere structure and differentiate between the elements it is comprised of, i.e. distinct social groups with specific social characteristics, behavioral patterns, lifestyles and worldviews. This deeper understanding will enable us to identify and analyze the various dynamics and influences within these online communities more clearly.

Conclusion

Modern goal-oriented practices have cultivated a new form of social action: a user-network social action provided in digital format. Its uniqueness lies in its being executed within an artificial space filled with digital images, often devoid of a real counterpart, and sometimes even generated by neural networks and bots.

Blogs have emerged as a distinct form of contemporary existence, where daily practices have developed into structured principles, rules, and genres typically associated with institutionalized media. This evolution has fostered the creation of a new culture. Currently, we witness the ongoing process of blogs transforming from informal communication channels into a multifunctional media environment. The distinctive characteristics of blogs have positioned

them as crucial players in the development of virtual sociality. Hence, a new society is emerging, characterized by enhanced human sensory modalities; likewise, new empathetic models and behavioral attitudes are being formed.

A significant indicator of these changes is the shift in audience focus from professional institutions (media) to a regular individual (blogger), who has been actively acquiring the patterns of media behaviour. Such characteristics as personal nature of blogs, their using as tools for self-expression and self-presentation foster alternative approaches to socio-cultural actions, information dissemination, and communicative interactions.

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