International Scientific Conference «Information Society: Health, Economics and Law»

MATERIALS OF THE INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND PRACTICAL CONFERENCE

(Irkutsk, March 13-14, 2019)

ISHEL - 2019

Materials of the conferences

(collection of scientific articles)

Irkutsk, 2019

THE LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY
«NETWORK INSTITUTE OF ADDITIONAL
PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION»

INFORMATION SOCIETY: HEALTH, ECONOMY AND LAW

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ISBN (online): 978-591344-496-7

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The collection includes the texts of speeches of the participants of the International Scientific and Practical Conference "Information society: health, economy and law", organized on March 13-14, 2019. The publication is addressed to researchers, teachers of higher education and all interested persons. Articles are published in the author's edition.

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ISBN 978-591344-496-7

«MODERN ECONOMY: REGIONAL AND GLOBAL ASPECTS»

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Selection and peer-review under responsibility of the Organizing Committee of the conference

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ISBN 978-591344-496-7

TRANSFORMATION OF MORALITY IN THE PROCESS OF INTERNET COMMUNICATION (SOCIAL AND LEGAL ASPECTS)

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Abstract

Standards of morality are in the process of transformation under the influence of the rapid spread of information and communication technologies on the Internet. Researchers give conflicting estimates of the consequences of this transformation. The purpose of our work: on the basis of a specific sociological study to determine the extent of the transformation of morality in the most active part of society, the vanguard of the spread of Internet technologies – students. Every second student interviewed said that can violate the norms of morality and ethics on the Internet, every third can lie to their loved ones about the kind of activity on the Internet, every sixth-seventh for the sake of Internet communications can neglect his family and friends and does not consider cyber treason a real betrayal. Thus, Internet communication is still poorly regulated by the law, and the results of a survey of students indicate the proximity of the traditional norms of morality in the virtual space to the reference point, the point of transformation, in which, in our opinion, morality turns into immorality. Among the reasons for this situation: the high pace of technology development in the modern world, which overtake the understanding of moral consequences of their use; in the scientific discourse (not to mention ordinary ideas) is not formulated a definite answer to the most important philosophical question about the relationship of the real and virtual worlds; electronic culture, which should be part of the culture as a source of social norms and regulation of social interactions, itself is at the stage of formation.

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Keywords: internet communications, social norms, morality, law, transformation.

http://dx.doi.org/10.34648/SIDPO.2019.93.15.025

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Selection and peer-review under responsibility of the Organizing Committee of the conference

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ISBN 978-591344-496-7

1. Introduction

Social norms are the rules that regulate the behavior of people in public life. Under the influence of norms social ties are formed which arise as a result of the regular repetition of human activities. Among the social norms there are two interrelated complexes – the norms of law, that is, those that are established and protected by the state and the norms of morality (or morality) which act on the basis of ideas of good and evil, justice and are protected by public opinion or the inner conviction of the individual.

Table 01. Answers of the students to the question "is cheating on the site of erotic correspondence on the Internet a real unfaithfulness?" (% of respondents)

Variant of answer	Astrakhan		Volgograd	
	2014	2018	2014	2018
Yes	46,5	58,5	42,9	47,0
No	24,1	17,9	19,9	18,6
Difficult to answer	22,4	21,4	29,2	28,4
The refusal to answer	7,0	2,1	8,4	5,3

2. Problem Statement

The processes of globalization of information technologies provide unlimited opportunities to influence the individual and society. Their influence leads to the loss of social skills, competencies, breaking social ties, desocialization (Varlamov, Goncharov, Sokolov, 2015; Korol, Maksymets, 2016). It is believed that the consequence of the virtualization of modern society is the collapse of culture as in the virtual space, a person becomes a consumer rather than a creator of cultural goods (Ivanyushkin, 2013). Having become an integral part of life the Internet is used to commit offences against the individual, private property, morals and political order. One of the negative consequences of the development of Internet technologies is the emergence of a huge number of offenses which is quite difficult to give legal regulation and even more so to apply liability measures (Vinnichenko, Gladun, 2018; Lyutov, Golovina, 2018; Jay, 2018). Among the most common offenses in the information and communication network of the Internet is the dissemination of information of an extremist nature; propaganda, advertising of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances; libel; fraud associated with blocking software computers of users; theft committed using the Internet and computer technology; the dissemination of personal information about private life; copyright infringement (Bagautdinov, Mukhametshin, 2017).

3. Research Questions

The impact of Internet communications on social norms, in particular, the transformation of morality is in the subject field of our study. Thus, one of the characteristics of Internet communications is their anonymity (Baeva, 2013; Emelin, Tchostov, 2013). Some researchers believe that the anonymity of online communication leads to deformation of morality – the process legimitation already postmodern relativism (Ivanushkin, 2013). But quite a large number of violations in the Internet space especially bordering on moral norms have not found their legislative consolidation. Moreover, according to some researchers, there is a need to revise the norms of morality, as, for example, deeply rooted rules of copyright protection, perceived in the public mind as theft, are maladaptive in unauthorized exchange of content in online communications (Rendes, 2015). The mobilization of cyber-protest against the government's campaign against illegal downloading on the Internet is seen as a struggle for legality, freedom and morality in the Internet space (Odou, Roberts, 2018) «Anonymity in the online digital world is essential for the expansion of human rights such as privacy and freedom of expression. However, the digital industry, practice, ethics and techno-social design create a contradictory dynamic for online anonymity» (Ursena, 2015). Morale transformation studies cover the analysis of new, controversial social phenomena influenced by Internet technologies from the morality of ad blocking by users (as it deprives producers of a portion of income)

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(Coles, 2018) to the use of Facebook opportunities by Indonesian Muslim women to strengthen traditional norms of morality, piety (Hartono, 2018).

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of our work: analysis of the transformation of morality in the process of Internet communication on the example of a social group of students. Student youth was chosen by us not by chance as it is a group in the active stage of formation of social capital; it is the vanguard of society, the pioneers of the spread of innovation (in our case Internet technologies) (Dulina, Kargapolova, Strizoe, 2017; Koshkin, Novikov, 2018). At the same time, the researchers note the contradictory impact of social life virtualization on students (Dulina, Kargapolova, Simonenko, 2017; Li, Li, Huang, Yao, Zhao, Chen, Hu, 2017), which actualizes the need for its research as a social group.

5. Research Methods

Under the leadership of Kargapolov S. V., among the students of Astrakhan and Volgograd universities a sociological survey was carried out by the method of questioning «Electronic culture of students of the Lower Volga region» (the first stage – May/December 2014, N = 750 people; the second stage – October-November 2018, N = 1128 people). The study was probing in nature, the task of representation of the sample was not set, the results can be applied only to the sample or used as reference. However, the volume of respondents allows to make assumptions to formulate hypotheses. Data processing and analysis were carried out using SPSS 17.0. In the second phase of the study, respondents were asked a number of questions using the Kimberly-Young methodology. This technique is designed to identify such deviations from social norms as Internet addiction.

6. Findings

To the question «whether or not you violated moral norms in the virtual space of the Internet?» 42.8% of respondents answered negatively, among them – 53.3% of girls and 30.9% of boys; Astrakhan – 43.6%, Volgograd – 39.2%. However, 47.7% of students said that they violate these norms, of which every fourth chose the option «in rare cases» (among them Volgograd more than Astrakhan – 29.3% against 25.1%), every sixth – «sometimes», 6.2% – «often». It should be noted that among young men every tenth answered that often violates moral norms in the virtual space, while girls have this figure is only 3.1%. And the «sometimes» option was chosen by twice as many boys as girls (21.9% versus 10.7%). Statistically significant is the share of those who found it difficult to answer this question which was 6.7%. The answers to this question indicate the urgent need to understand the moral relativism of anonymous Internet communication, the realization that the liberation from the traditions of culture a person degrades, «that such a self-willed attitude to the social and moral principles of his personality is fraught with the danger of violations, integrity disorders, harmony of mental life, in the end – psychopathology» (Ivanyushkin, 2013).

To the question «Can you lie to your loved ones about the kind of activity on the Internet?» 54.1% of the students participating in the survey responded negatively. Among them, 62% of girls and 46.5% of boys, 58.2% of Astrakhan and 47.9% of Volgograd. That is, young men are ready to lie about the kind of their activities on the Internet much more often than girls, and Volgograd – more often than Astrakhan. And in general, among students «in rare cases» every fourth resorts to lies, «sometimes» – every tenth. At the same time, the share of those who consider it necessary to introduce censorship on the Internet decreased from the first wave of the study to the second: among Astrakhan residents from 57.1% to 43%, among Volgograd residents – from 48.5% to 39.5%. In 2018 among those who support the need for censorship in the Internet space, 53.1% of girls and 30.7% of boys

The answer to the following question illustrates the extent to which the social behaviour of young people is changing under the influence of the Internet. It is good news that 81.1% of respondents are not ready to neglect their families, relatives and friends for the sake of online presence. However, 11% of respondents are ready to do it in

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rare cases. Those who are ready to do it sometimes turned out to be 2.6%, often – 1.7%. And the sum of the answers «in rare cases», «sometimes», «often» category of those students who may prefer family and friends online spaces, was 15.3%, that is, exceeded 15% benchmark. Girls who are not ready to neglect family relatives and friends for the sake of presence on the Internet, slightly less than boys (78.9% against 83.2%)

It is important to regulate the social norms of such phenomena of the Internet space as cyber-treason and cyber-sex. It should be noted that the legislation of the Russian Federation the concept of adultery is not considered even in real life, not to mention the regulation of «virtual» relations. Certain legislation may directly or indirectly address this issue. The article 92 of the Family Code of Russia further – FC of the Russian Federation) provides for exemption from the need for maintenance of the spouse in the event that the court will be established his misconduct. Article 1 of the Family Code of Russia confirms the freedom and voluntary nature of the marriage union of a man and a woman as well as the freedom to dissolve this union. The situation of divorce when one of the spouses objects to divorce provides for article 22 of the FC (Family Code of the Russian Federation, 1992)

The RF FC does not provide a list of grounds on which a marriage must or may be dissolved providing that the final decision to maintain or terminate the marriage relationship remains a personal matter for each of the spouses. The introduction of a detailed list of grounds for divorce is almost difficult, since each marriage can have its own causes of discord and only the spouses themselves are able to assess their seriousness and sufficiency for divorce. Adultery (as well as drunkenness or alcoholism of the spouse prolonged separation or the presence of a second family, ill-treatment, inability to give birth, etc.) is a common circumstance in judicial practice for the initiation of divorce proceedings. However, in a number of countries adultery is a violation of the law and, accordingly, for this offense may be subject to certain sanctions. Thus, in Switzerland the spouse is deprived of the right to register a new marriage for three years, in China, for adultery, both women and men are punished with two years in prison with the confiscation of half of the property. In 2013 the government of this country adopted a law under which every unfaithful spouse is obliged to pay a fine (about $45-145).

If we talk about Internet relations from the point of view of communication and even more so to talk about concepts such as «cyber-treason» or «cyber-sex», these relations relate to regulated social norms but not legal, but rather the norms of morality, justice and morality. Analysis of the results of students answers to the question «is cheating on the site of erotic correspondence on the Internet a real treason» showed an increase in the proportion of positive responses from the first wave to the second from 44.7% to 52.7% but among Astrakhan this trend is more pronounced than among Volgograd (9% vs. 4.1%). The share of negative answers among Volgograd residents remained almost unchanged and the share of those who found it difficult and refused to answer this question was higher. It should be emphasized that, despite the increase in the share of positive responses, the share of negative in both the first and the second wave exceeds 15% of the reference point (see table)

Among those who answered positively to this question in 2014 and 2018 there were more girls than boys (in 2018 63.5% against 44.6%). Both in the first and in the second wave there is a correlation in the answers to this question with the answers to the question «is There a danger of Internet addiction, withdrawal into virtual reality?»: among those who answered positively to the question of change in the virtual space, there are more those who recognize the danger of Internet addiction and, on the contrary, among those who gave a negative answer more and those who deny the danger of going into the virtual space. Among those who do not consider treason on the site of erotic correspondence on the Internet a real treason more than those who in one way or another agreed with the expression «the Virtual world is largely superior to the real world, the main function of the virtual world - the creation of a new artificial world in which all human sensations are replaced by imitation» and less than those who agreed with the opposite in the sense of the expression «the Virtual world duplicates the real world, and the main function of the virtual world - the service of the real world». That is, it is obvious that the recognition of the immorality of cyber-treason depends on the ideological choice of the respondent in favor of the real world, the recognition of the virtual world as a means to achieve the goal, not an end in itself.

7. Conclusion

Thus, we see that Internet communications are still poorly regulated by the law and the results of a survey of students indicate the proximity of the traditional norms of morality in the virtual space to the reference point, the

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point of transformation, in which, in our opinion, morality turns into immorality. Analyzing the causes of the current situation it should be noted that the pace of technology development in the modern world outstrips the understanding of moral consequences of their application. Reflections of Russian researchers expressed at the end of the XX century to ensure high contact between man and technology as the main task of our time (Moses, Frolov, 1984), do not lose their relevance at the present time. In the meantime, even in the scientific discourse (not to mention ordinary ideas) is not given an answer to the question of the relationship of the real and virtual worlds

It is necessary to remember that the very content of the concept of «virtual» has evolved paradoxically: from the ancient «strength, courage, military valor» in the ancient romans, the medieval «potency, potential» in Thomas Aquinas, «the highest ability» in Seeger Brabant, «active beginning» in N. Kuzansky (Nosov, 2000) to modern «artificial reality», «false reality», «pseudo-reality», «simulation of reality» (Elkhova, 2011; Shipitsin, 2014). The researchers draw attention to the serious terminological and methodological difficulties associated with the interpretation of virtual and virtuality, as «under the virtual reality understand the processes of interaction, entirely belonging neither to the subject nor to the object, and at the same time, implying both, steadily functioning, but not amenable to conceptual representation» (Elhova, 2011). The concept of «virtual reality» is defined by the researcher «as the created impression of a person about being in an artificially created world» (Elkhova, 2011). According to Shipitsin A. I., virtuality is «a special state (object, subject, phenomenon), different from the actual (genuine, real, present), and from the ideal (desired, perfect). This kind of being is a kind of intermediate level, a deviation from the real state, the sum of random effects that replace the real essence» (Shipitsin, 2014).

Some researchers consider virtuality to be a phenomenon of the modern stage of development of the information society (Castells, 2000) and postmodern society. Early research in this area of descriptive nature often took «one of two forms – «technological utopia» or «technological dystopia» (Murtazina, 2012). Virtual culture was considered as a qualitatively new level of development of technical means of modern information and communication systems and the prospects of their functional application in various fields of life (computer design, training systems, etc.). For example, according to Voronov A. I., «virtual reality is understood as a cybernetic space created on the basis of a computer in which technical means are taken isolation from the outside world, all channels of tactile, auditory, visual or any other connection with the surrounding world are blocked... the phenomenon of virtual reality is a fact that has unconditional technicality. And all interpretations of the artifact of virtual reality as a phenomenon of psychological or mystical nature given by some modern researchers, stems from the very mythological spaces which correlate their research methods. For this reason we do not undertake to consider as virtual reality neither art, not theater, not literature, because no matter how deeply a person plunges into them, he always has free channels of communication with the outside world. The peculiarity of virtual reality is that its reality is based mainly on the rupture of all possible channels of communication with the outside world, except for the technical device of virtual reality» (Voronov, 1999).

The researchers emphasized the impact of virtualization on the real, physical space of modern society. Thus, according to Castells M., in the information society «the reality itself (i.e. the material/symbolic existence of people) is completely captured, completely immersed in virtual images, in a fictional world, a world in which external images are not just on the screen through which experience is transmitted but become experience themselves» (Castells, 2000). As noted by Falco V. I., «the spread of the concept of virtuality in various fields of science, art and practice allow us to talk about a new paradigm, expressed in terms of self-organization, cooperative effects, formative accidents and some others» (Falco, 2000). According to Tsareva A. V., in modern society the very use of the term «reality» becomes difficult, it is easier to talk about «routine» virtual as «the Network is increasingly focused not on the creation of intra-network projects that embody the values and patterns of network culture, and active integration with the processes of real life» (Tsareva, 2008).

A number of researchers believe that the concept of «virtual» is associated not only with the modern stage of development of society but has a fundamental, supra-historical character. For example, Openkov M. Y. opposes the identification of cyberculture of modern society and virtual culture. Moreover, in his opinion, cyberculture based on the computer embodiment of virtual reality is «only a degenerate case of a deeper phenomenon. The idea of virtuality leads to a revision of the concepts of reality and the existence of other ontological categories» (Openkov, 1997). Nosov N. A. in the same context considers the virtual as a special philosophical category along with such categories as time, space; the essence that allows «in a single plan to consider the realities that usually relate to

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different types of knowledge: natural-scientific, humanitarian or technical» (Nosov, 1994). And if Kovalevskaya E. V. the beginning of virtualization of social life raises to the invention of writing and further among the landmarks of virtualization designates printing, theater, cinema, and, finally, computer virtual reality (Kovalevskaya, 1998), then, according to Mailenova F. G., «the whole spiritual life of humanity can be thought of as one huge virtual world with its inhabitants, the hierarchy of laws» (Mailenova, 1998).

In our opinion, the solution of the question of the correlation of virtual reality with real, physical reality is described in the categories of simulacra (Bodriar, 2000), problematization of validity, exclusivity of «real» space and identity, evidence of «usual time», emergence of simulation culture (Poster, 1990), «missing structure» (Eco, 2000). At the level of everyday ideas we already recognize the presence of Internet addiction as a disease of the era when the virtual becomes a kind of narcotic substance that replaces the real world, real, truly social needs, motivation of people. But at the same time, the greatest provocation of Internet communications in the field of morality is the creation of the illusion that in the virtual space violations of morality are committed as if «pretend» as in the game, so there will be no full responsibility (both moral and legal) for these offenses. And this is the greatest error, we forget that in religious, spiritual traditions there is no difference between sin in consciousness and sin in behavior.

The problem also lies in the fact that electronic culture is at the stage of formation at the stage of protoculture (Solovyov, 2009). «New technologies are changing relationships within the family; changing the way young people acquire skills and choose role models; create strange new forms of virtual experience and blur the boundaries that once divided home and work life. A new kind of culture is slowly being grafted into inherited patterns, combining, soldering «real life» and «virtual environment» in a strange, chaotic way... While «cartography» of public and private life in a technologically-mediated culture remains fairly primitive» (Bollier, 1994). That is, electronic culture is not a full source of social norms yet, including the norms of law and morality. And it also sets dangerous vectors for the transformation of traditional norms of morality.

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