

Value Complexity of Virtual Communities and Information Security in the Postmodern World: Semantic Focus and Language Innovations

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Summary

Virtual communities are studied to analyze their characteristic features, types, and role to modern society. The article is aimed at creating a classification of virtual communities according to specific characteristics, which can be used to model the interaction, and necessity of components that are important for the community. The classification of virtual communities will contribute to their better performance and satisfy the users' needs in information. The study reveals the value structure of virtual communities, educational and communicative influence, and the possible threats these communities may bring to society and security.

Key words:

virtual communities, communication culture, semantic content, information security, values.

1. Introduction

At the present stage of advanced information technology, cybersecurity, which has inter-institutional nature in the globalized world, is becoming vitally significant. After all, cybersecurity is a human rights manifestation of the modern virtual world amid the innovative development of information technology in the system of legitimate capital. There is no common opinion on the content of the concept of cybersecurity. It is necessary to clarify the concept of cybersecurity, which will help to understand promising changes in cybersecurity and allow defining its content. It will also give this concept a broader and more systematic nature. B. Kormych notes that cybersecurity is the security of the rules established by law, according to which information processes take place in the country, ensuring the conditions of existence and development of a person, the entire society, and the country

guaranteed by the Constitution [11]. Some researchers offer the following definition of cybersecurity — this is the state of security of the individual, country, and society, which makes possible the achievement of the information development (technical, intellectual, socio-political, moral and ethical), in which extrinsic information influences do not cause significant harm [8]. This definition contains not only the passive component of “degree of security” but also the active component of “information development” (technical, intellectual, socio-political, moral and ethical, social, cultural and communicative).

Information technology will often act as a catalyst for changes in legal, moral, and cultural relations in the country. It is responsible for achieving the most positive results in social relations. However, at the same time, there is a problem of forming a range of negative aspects that are associated with the use of information technology: illegal use of copyright, unauthorized access to private and secret information at all levels (from private to public), unauthorized influence on computers in order to disable them via special software (cyberterrorism). All these negative factors require fundamentally new approaches to studying the correlation between the concepts of national security, moral and legal regulation of information relations, virtual communities, and cybersecurity.

Comparative analysis and method of classification is used to define a variety of virtual communities, their characteristic features and impact onto society. Systematic approach helps to study a system of values of virtual communities, develop their major categories and conditions of development.

2. Results and Discussion

2.1 Cybersecurity and Virtual Communities

Democratic society today requires access to information but also credibility of the sources. Infoculture is some sort of reflection of security in the country. "The ability of citizens to establish the credibility of information and information sources through critical assessment is often emphasized as essential for the upholding of a democratic society and for people's health and safety." [7].

Cybersecurity is a state of protection of vital interests of a person, society, and the country. It prevents harm coming from:

- incomplete, untimely, and incorrect information used;
 - negative influence of information;
 - negative consequences of the use of information technology;
 - unauthorized distribution, use, and violation of the integrity, confidentiality, and availability of information.
- However, the term itself has a rather multi-vector and not well-established interpretation.

Thus, national researchers V. Andreev, V. Khoroshko, V. Cherednichenko, M. Shelest see cybersecurity as the security of information and infrastructure that protects this information from accidental or intentional impacts of a natural or artificial nature, which can cause unacceptable harm to the subjects of information relations, including owners and users of information and supporting infrastructure [3]. O. Stepko in Strategies of Development of Ukraine considers cybersecurity as a state of protection of vital interests of the individual, society, and the country. Cybersecurity is responsible for minimizing any damage due to incomplete, untimely, and unreliable information, the negative impact of information, the negative consequences of the information technology functioning, and also through unauthorized distribution of information [20]. Cybersecurity is also described as a component of national security, the process of managing threats and dangers (the result of managing threats and dangers) by state and non-state institutions and by individual citizens – this process ensures the information sovereignty of Ukraine [9]. Yu. Maksymenko defines cybersecurity as a result of managing real or/and potential threats (dangers) in order to meet the national interests of a person, society, and the country in the digital area [12].

The term "virtual community" has the same variety of interpretations. It appeared in Howard Rheingold's research "Virtual Community": "Virtual communities are social aggregations that emerge from the Net when enough people carry on those public discussions long enough, with sufficient human feeling, to form webs of personal relationships in cyberspace" [18]. There have been attempts to find differences between community as a notion and

society. Ferdinand Tönnis considers community a natural association with a set of values, and society is created on the rational and logical basis [19]. Communities provide "sociability, support, information, a sense of belonging, and social identity" [21]. It is also noted that virtual communities unite individuals who share same values and interests. It is vitally important that their members take active part in the communities' life, "unlike many other informal learning environments in which the audience is traditionally passive or nominative groups in which audience members behave as collective individuals" [1].

The development of the Internet and the World Wide Web owes to the active implementation of many principles and technology collectively called Web 2.0. The term "Web 2.0" first appeared in 2004. It aimed to show the qualitative changes in the World Wide Web in the second decade of its existence. By nature, Web 2.0 is not a negation of existing web technologies but rather their logical development. Another important aspect of Web 2.0 is the change of priorities in using technology and meeting user needs [16]. We should highlight such phenomena among the components of Web 2.0 as web communities and social networks, which are the cornerstone of the formation and development of the information society. It is web communities in various forms that make a necessary part of e-government systems, control over government actions, distance education, the formation of encyclopedic sources of information, e-business systems, mass media, cultural and ethnic groups in the network. Virtual communities are a popular and important factor in the development of the information society. They influence the formation of public opinion and remain a convenient and effective environment for information exchange, the basis of e-government and distance learning systems. Among the existing types of virtual communities, special attention should be paid to virtual communities on web forums, which, unlike other types of communities, are characterized by openness, accessibility, and information content.

A virtual community (online community) is a social group of people who communicate and interact over the Internet using specialized services and sites on the World Wide Web. Virtual communities are based on participants and information content. Members of the virtual community are Internet users who have a desire to participate in the community. So they register and interact within the community, creating the content. Content of the virtual community includes discussions and messages created by the participants. There are various types of virtual communities, which differ both by their organization and by their audience (global, local) and themes. Today, virtual communities operate on the basis of the Internet, and only a part of them is located in the global World Wide Web environment. According to the degree of integration into the World Wide Web, virtual communities are divided into the following types:

According to the degree of integration into the World Wide Web, virtual communities are divided into the following types:

- social networks that are not actually integrated into the web;
- discussion sheets that are partially integrated into the web;
- public social networks that are largely integrated into the web;
- web communities that are fully integrated into the web.

Virtual communities may be classified according to their characteristics:

- according to the degree of community development (how actively content is formed in the virtual community): high impact and low impact communities;
- according to the purpose of the community (based on the goals of the virtual community justified by the administrator): advertising, educational, and entertaining communities;
- by community topic (depending on the professional characteristics of the administrator and participants of the virtual community): educational, scientific, political, and everyday topics communities;
- by geographical location of participants (according to the geographical location of participants in the virtual community): city, region, country, world;
- according to the form of community management (the software used to create a virtual community; or the field of activity that the community will represent): forum, chat, blog;
- by the language of the community (the characteristics of participants and the content of the virtual community): monolingual, multilingual [14].

Cultural differences and innovative trends split society into communities. Information society has changed the communication culture and ways of self-identity. The impact of virtual communities onto self-realization of a person in the modern society is enormous and requires further research. Virtual reality can be a part of real world, a fragmented reality, an information and communication community, a role model, etc.

According to motivation and sources of incentive, the creation of certain virtual communities can be presented as follows.

A high-impact virtual community is a community where participants' activities are confirmed by a certain number of reactions to the information published in it. These reactions affect the growth of participants' performance. According to the researchers, "such a community is characterized by both short-term (one-time contest, event, etc.) and long-term topics (repeated regularly at a certain time). The administrator monitors the activity of members of the virtual community and creates a development strategy that allows seeing the participant role, information content, and software in the community's activities. Evaluating a post, a participant shows via

reaction how useful the information was. The registered members are transformed into active members of the virtual community. The content, in turn, should be elaborated, well-structured, and interesting. A productive community is affected by the environment in which it operates. Only by qualitative analysis of the impact of each component of the virtual community can it be made effective" [14].

A low-impact virtual community is a community that is characterized by a cluttered information space, low or medium level of activity of participants. Information in various fields is published, but it is not structured. There are no specific management rules. The community is created for some purpose, but it fails due to the insufficient skills of its administrators. The lack of a development strategy makes it useless for participants because they do not work to get results and only distribute the necessary information. Due to the unstructured content of posts, the information is often lost and remains invaluable to anyone. It is impossible to predict the duration of the existence of such a community. Classification of virtual communities by purpose has reasonable properties regarding its information content. Given that the content is formed at the moment of creating a virtual community, it is necessary to clearly define its goals. The goals defined by the community administrator will determine the community's purpose. In turn, the purpose is determined by the scope of use of the community. After studying the goals of virtual communities, we can define tangible and intangible goals. The former provides for obtaining financial benefits if fulfilled. The latter means getting a positive result due to the fulfillment of the goal set. Intangible goals, which the community representative wants to distribute, are indicated in the virtual community description. According to their purposes, virtual communities should be divided into advertising, educational, and entertainment communities.

Advertising virtual communities are communities that are created to promote certain products/services among their participants. The advantage can be either having monetary benefits (tangible) or encouraging users (intangible) to analyze their reactions to posts. The community must correspond to the type of service that is promoted in the virtual community. With such communities, special attention is paid to the information content of the community, which, as previously noted, should correspond to its goals. The main goals of the advertising virtual community are defined during sharing information about the product or service with the participants of the virtual community. Goals are also achieved by attracting users to share this information with other communities. A special feature of the advertising community is that members can act as advertisers that generate content. Content in such communities is dominantly graphic. Also, there may be special content with participants discussing its characteristics in the comments, for instance, sharing contact information, payment details, etc. [14].

Educational virtual communities are focused on sharing information about the activities of educational institutions or educational services. These communities are primarily focused on sharing information about training, the organization of the educational process, events, advanced training courses, etc. These communities are suitable for various types of public and private educational organizations. Administrators of such communities create posts with tasks and messages while members of the community react to them. Educational virtual communities can be used by public organizations to help students learn new things. They also contribute to the self-organization of users and the organization of various events offline. Advanced training institutions also use virtual communities for educational purposes. They are focused on helping to create educational communities as a source of information about learning processes. The content of such communities is characterized by the availability of graphic and text-based information (such as schedules, event descriptions, extra classes, and exam types). Access to sources of information can make a modern society an open education platform or cause a total secrecy [5].

Virtual entertainment communities aim at improving the human perception of the world through the publication of information in a funny segment. It includes positioning thoughts, phenomena, research, and photos that may be interesting to users of various fields via memes. A meme is a graphic image or video that uses humor. Community administrators try to find the content they need from movies, cartoons, and interviews to create a corresponding text. They carefully develop the content using modern photo and video processing tools. Members of entertainment communities show their activity by assigning their reactions to posts. The number of posts created during the day is significantly higher compared to other types of virtual communities. This is due to the excessive activity of participants who need to be constantly kept in the information environment [14].

2.2 Social network as a type of virtual community

A social network is a popular type of online community that reflects the social structure of connections between people, which can be based on trade, money, ideas, knowledge, career, relationships, etc. This structure is often a reflection of the connections that exist in real life [4]. Compared to other forms of virtual communities, social networks have become popular only in the last two decades. Multimedia, music, video, marketplace, direct messages – these features have made Facebook one of the most well-known social networks in the world. LinkedIn uses the platform of social network for professionals who exchange their contacts, resumes, and share information on professional activities.

A special feature of social network communities is their privacy from the WWW. It means that only this community's participant can access information in a social network and only if the owner of this information opens access to it. The information in social networks is not indexed by search engines, which makes the social networks the Internet service with a web interface but not part of the WWW. In such communities, the main object is not information but people, so it is difficult to analyze the information structure and integrity [17].

A social network offers the following ways of communication:

- direct messages (DM) what usually consist of several sentences united by the same topic;
- a personalized message board;
- commenting user's photos;
- communication in groups.

Social networks have common characteristic features:

- the information content is unstructured, and discussions arise spontaneously as a response to various informational occasions (photos, videos, posts of participants, discussions in groups);
- the duration of information existence is unpredictable as it depends on the mood of the person who is in charge of the content and can decide its destiny (for example, the owner can delete all comments on his photo at any time and the photo itself);
- one can track the new messages only via sequentially viewing all the sites (groups, DM, etc.) with discussions taking place.

A discussion list is a type of virtual community that operates beyond the World Wide Web via email. The content of such a community is stored in the form of email message chains. Periodically, parts of the content worthy of the users' attention (in the opinion of the organizer or participants of the discussion list) are posted online.

Along with social networks with limited or restricted access, there are also public (open or partially open) social networks. A significant part of the content of such social networks is available online. Some content is only available to community members (e.g., Twitter).

All virtual communities have either organizational or communicative purposes. Organizational communities allow performing specific tasks: operations for the purchase and sale of goods and content (eBay), trading shares on the stock exchange (Forex), implementing public projects (Wikipedia), placing ads (Craigslist). Participants of the community are unknown to each other, but they unite based on the semantics of contents of their queries. This leads to the emergence of communities of peers semantically related [2].

Communicative communities have one purpose – communication of their members. These communities fall into the following types according to technical platform and implementation method: chat, guestbook, blog, and forum.

These web communities are designed for communication, but each has its own features. We can analyze them according to the following scheme: information structure – information lifespan – an opportunity to learn about events in the community during the absence of its member – and other features.

Chat is a special web page created for interactive written communication between two or more people. Discussion in chats has little or no structure, a short period of storage of information (users' messages). That is why it is unlikely to be found by search engines. It is usually not possible to learn about events that occurred during your absence. The number of community members is small because it is difficult to have an interactive discussion with too many people. Chats often are entertaining, and they can be either a separate project or part of a website [16].

A guestbook (which belongs to the Web 1.0 era) is a web page for expressing opinions, suggestions, and communication. A guestbook is usually one of the sections of the website and is intended for feedback from the website users with its owners. Less often, a guestbook serves as a place for guests to communicate with each other. As the term guestbook implies, participants are not members of the community but only guests. Information in a guestbook is unstructured with a linear presentation of discussions. Messages are stored for some time but get outdated. Trying to learn about past events, a user has to read all messages from the moment of his last visit. A guestbook is usually an integral part of the website.

Blog (or weblog) is designed so that its author could express his thoughts and discuss them with other people who read this blog [6].

Blogs have thematically unstructured information while discussions can be linear or structured. Information has a long lifespan. There are tools for tracking new messages. The author plays a central role in claiming his own thoughts. So, the term community does not express the main idea - communication between the members. A blog is associated with the author's personality rather than with discussions and actual communication.

A forum is a website with a special structure that consists of many topics and posts created by its participants. A forum is often structured so that the entire set of forum topics is divided semantically into subsets for the sake of participants' convenience and to enhance the effectiveness of moderation [15]. Information is always structured. Discussion may be either flat (structured chronologically) or hierarchical (tree-like). Information has a long lifespan. It is conveniently presented. Community members are its participants who can take an active part in the community activities. Comparing the major features of web communities, we conclude that a web forum is a special platform for creating communities. It provides information structure, information safety, convenient presentation, and tools of interaction between community members. "Due to

anonymity, accessibility, and security, a person creates trust-based relationships with barely known people and even strangers. Virtual communities are a place where an individual is free from the social barriers that arise as a result of the physical embodiment of identity" [13].

So, the national experience today regarding the role of virtual communities is more concerned with using the opportunities of virtual education communities for professional development and the specifics of attracting professionals to the knowledge base. Modern researchers study virtual communities either as a social phenomenon of a new culture formed on the basis of using the Internet or from the point of view of the specifics of the psychological traits of participants in such communities and their information content. The research takes into account the role they can play in the life of society as a whole. There is also an increase in research of the role these communities play in the society and the study of virtual communities as subjects of information security of the country. The culture of virtual communities represents the education of its participants, because "education as a process is the dialogue of generations, and education as a result is the spiritual face of a man, community, era; it is formed under the influence of moral and spiritual values, which are the heritage of a particular cultural circle. Education is a qualitative and humanistic manifestation of extrapolation of "values of the environment" to "values of life experience", which together represent the "face" of a certain person (as well as people, nation, society, epoch) [10]. Education is the intellectual potency of a person (that is why education cannot be superfluous, education either exists or does not exist).

It is possible to state that any participation (manipulative, destructive, creative) in the activities of a virtual community embodies the values of its participants, their morals, ethics, and internal culture. After all, "situations, being different in content and result, actualize and bring to the surface of being values adequate to these situations. Such values for some time become primary, centric, become the dominant of life, the fateful accent, the axis of existence. ...Values are the embodiment of a qualitative and a priori choice under the circumstances, the content of which floats between extremes and "bottom". Values are the mode, foundation, substantiation and result of a choice" [10].

3. Conclusions

Information technology advance is one of the most incredible things ever happened in the history of humanity. The ability to access everything connected to the Internet is a luxury that should not be lost. However, the more people use online systems, the more cyber threats appear. Information leaks already affect geopolitical processes and

are becoming a powerful weapon in the hands of competitors.

Not to become a victim (private or geopolitical), one needs to follow simple security rules and maintain the so-called cyber hygiene. Cyber hygiene includes a self-assessment of your risks: it is important to follow basic safety rules with your gadgets (private or corporate).

Analysis of the existing types of virtual communities and their features made it possible to define social networks and web communities as the most common types of virtual communities today. Virtual communities based on web forums attract particular attention. The web forum is a unique platform for creating communities. It provides information structure, its safety, means of its convenient presentation, and ways of interaction between community members. Current events worldwide confirm the enormous impact of virtual communities on people's lives and the development of the information society, so creating digital models of virtual communities is an urgent and significant responsibility.

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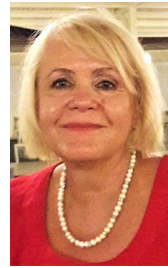
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