

BLOGOSPHERE AS A SPACE OF COMMUNICATION AND SELF-PRESENTATION: ITS FORMATION ISSUES AND FEATURES

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Abstract

The relevance of this article is to study the phenomenon of communication and self-presentation in the field of blogging. Currently, the Internet allows users from all over the world to build communication at a new level. The Internet has not only increased the speed of communication, making us more mobile, but also provided a wide variety of forms of information available for transmission. The purpose of the study is to identify the main characteristics inherent in blogs' communication. Research methods: as a research method, a questionnaire survey is used as a method that allows quickly and effectively to investigate the features and problems that arise in the process of communication and self-presentation in the field of blogging. Research results: the article analyzes private practices of blogging to determine professional self-identification in a virtual environment, defines the specifics of blogging and the characteristics of bloggers as a new subject of virtual communication. The novelty and originality of the research lies in the fact that for the first time the phenomenon of self-presentation through communication in the network is considered. It is determined that the virtual identity is more mobile than the real one. Popular topics of blogs are identified: about beauty and style; about fitness; about travel; about food; cultural observers; about health; about business; about motherhood; about hobbies; humorous; political; educational. The main goals of creating a blog are proved: a personal diary; a desire to share your activities (your life) with people, i.e. public intimacy; popularity, promotion of yourself, your activities. It is revealed that the more often a blogger publishes information, the more seriously he/she treats the selection of content, both visual and textual. It is proved that most of the time for creating posts is spent by culinary bloggers. It is revealed that the main income of the majority of the surveyed bloggers comes from their activities in real life. It is determined that bloggers consider it acceptable to post advertising posts, but only if the advertised product or service is personally tested, it is of high quality, and can be useful to their subscribers, i.e. it fits harmoniously into the blog content. The practical significance of the data obtained in this work lies in their use in educational psychology, labor psychology, marketing, social psychology, as well as for further theoretical development of this issue.

Keywords: communication space, communication, Internet, blogging.

INTRODUCTION

In the era of rapidly developing information technologies, people have the opportunity to use new means of communication. A prerequisite is the provision that these technical means must have access to the global network. Depending on the broadcast content, users build interaction on different platforms, where everyone chooses a convenient format for communication. One of the main distinguishing features of communication on the Internet is the possibility of instant feedback, where everyone can express their opinion (Vershinin, 2001; Alekseenkova, 2007; Skorodumova, 2004; Putilina et al., 2019; Kvon et al., 2019; Tikhomirov, 1993; Forman & Wilson, 1996). Becoming a user of the global network, a person forms his/her virtual, which may differ from the Self-Image in reality. The construction of this image plays an important role for the self-identification of a person. Often, when creating a virtual identity, the user tries to construct it in such a way as to get rid of the shortcomings of their real identity (Danilova, 2002; Bodker, 1992; Voiskunsky, 2001; Frindt & Koehler, 2000).

The relevance of the blogosphere study is also because today blogs have a significant impact on the consumption of information in society. The blog format allows you to express your opinion on various topics in a more free and independent form than, for example, traditional mass media allow (Antonov, 2006; Bakulev, 2005; Chudova, 2000). In addition, unlike traditional media, blogging does not require full-time involvement in a particular editorial office or news agency. At the same time, the percentage of the audience that consumes information through blogs is growing from year to year. Thus, bloggers have the opportunity to influence the formation of public opinion. Being so popular, the number of bloggers themselves is growing rapidly, for many this occupation becomes the main activity (Kirillova, 2005; Webster, 2004; Voiskunsky, 2004). In metropolitan cities, the number of bloggers is much higher than in the provinces, there is a direct relationship between the population and the number of bloggers. From the point of view of material and physical costs, virtual communication wins over real communication,

but still it does not give the fullness of sensations as in a real meeting. For a person, the virtual space provides an unlimited circle of communication, while at the same time contributing to self-identification in its own way (Cherdymova, 2010; Latysheva et al., 2018; Maslow, 1999; Myasishchev, 2000; Petrovsky, 1981; Stolin, 1983).

It is worth noting that it is easier to build communication in the virtual space on the one hand, but on the other hand, it is more difficult. The latter is because today users already have some vigilance about Internet communications, and therefore some caution, bias. Such caution is caused by numerous stories about Internet scammers. All this makes it necessary to somehow rethink your self-presentation on the web, so as not to cause doubts and suspicions. Virtual and real communication, in addition to the environment itself, have a number of distinctive features (Yasaveev, 2004; Ananyev, 2001; Bayanova et al., 2020; Lopanova et al., 2020; Tsymbalenko, Sharikov & Shcheglova, 1999). In virtual communication, psychological and social barriers are much weaker than in the real world. Competent use of the possibilities of communication in the network allows you to get rid of the existing complexes and fears of users (Harris, 2002; Evdokimov, 2011; Bauman, 2002). A blog has a certain structure, in particular cases it may differ, but there are always integral components of any blog.

Materials and Methods

The study of the features of self-presentation in the Internet environment was conducted in two stages. At the first stage, active bloggers were selected. In turn, bloggers were divided into two groups: popular bloggers and conditionally beginners.

The study addressed the following tasks: to consider the main motives for creating a blog; to determine the specifics of blogging on Instagram; to identify the main blogging styles; to determine the criteria for an active blogger; to find out the source of the blogger's main income; to describe the advantages and disadvantages of blogging as the main field of employment; to

find out how bloggers relate to traditional media and blogs; to describe what meaning bloggers themselves put in the concept of blogger; to compare how active bloggers differ from popular and novice bloggers.

Bloggers were selected for the interview, which in turn were divided into two groups. The first group included those who, by primary or formal criteria, could be classified as popular bloggers. For them, the main selection criteria were the number of subscribers; the daily frequency of posts; the presence of comments under the posts. The main and only criterion for the second group was that the user positioned him/herself as a blogger, regardless of the number of subscribers and the regularity of publications.

At the second stage of the selection of popular bloggers, it turned out that they were not so easy to contact, although it seemed, at first glance, that they were available to a wide audience, easily got in touch and actively communicated with all subscribers. This point can be explained by the fact that, firstly, popular bloggers have a continuous stream of messages from subscribers, and there is simply no opportunity to read all the messages; secondly, bloggers who found time to read the message refused due to lack of time. With the second group of bloggers, such problems did not arise. This division into groups was also because the number of subscribers and likes under publications cannot always indicated the real popularity of a blogger. Many programs cheat them, as they say.

Both popular and novice bloggers were asked the same questions in order to find out whether their positions were different. Conditionally, the study can be divided into the following units:

The first is to meet the informant. The second is to conduct a questionnaire. Sample list of questionnaire questions:

What kind of education do you have?

When did you first decide to blog?

Why did you decide to start writing your blog?

What was the original purpose of blogging?

What is the reason for choosing the topic of your blog?

How much time do you spend creating posts and selecting visual material?

What do you spend most of your time on when working with a blog?

Is blogging your main occupation or do you still work somewhere else?

How does communication with subscribers work?

If there are conflict situations, how do you resolve the conflict situations?

How do you respond to subscriber criticism?

Have you ever built up subscribers? How do you feel about this in general?

What, in your opinion, are the advantages and disadvantages of blogging as the main field of employment?

Results

Analyzing the blogosphere, it is worth noting that most often a blogger chooses a certain topic for his/her profile (88%). In a given time period, some topics become the most popular, some, on the contrary, are forgotten. The following blog topics can be distinguished: about food (food blogs); about beauty and style (beauty blogs); about travel; cultural observers; about health (fitness instructors, proper nutrition); political; about business; educational; about motherhood; about hobbies; humorous.

Talking about themselves and their lives, bloggers usually note that they had a happy childhood (92%); they were sociable children and had various hobbies (88%). Some people had these hobbies since childhood (46%), others acquired them at a more conscious age (54%), but for almost everyone, they eventually developed into the main field of employment (92%).

The majority of respondents chose their interests and hobbies as topics for blogs (72%). However, it is worth noting that some bloggers do not have a narrow focus of account (13%), they publish posts about their life in general. Such a style as lifestyle is very popular among bloggers, i.e. of course, they have publications about their activities, but the blog is not limited to this. As for the style, we note that all bloggers, no matter what topic they write on, try to develop their own style that will distinguish them from the others, but the realization that this style, in

principle, should be, did not come to them immediately. All bloggers have started their own Instagram accounts, without thinking that in the future it will become their blog. Some bloggers (44%) noted that having an Instagram at that time was simply fashionable. Almost no one pursued any commercial goals (only 7% of the respondents).

There are several main goals of creating a blog. Therefore, two groups of bloggers have the following motives: a personal diary; a desire to share their activities (their lives) with people, i.e. public intimacy; popularity, promotion of themselves, their activities.

Among the respondents of both groups, the most common motive for maintaining an Instagram account was a personal diary. Interestingly, in the group of popular bloggers, only 3% said that they wanted to be popular, while in the second group, this motive was already found in 9% of bloggers.

If initially all the respondents posted ordinary photos of their lives, without thinking much about their quality, then later, the selection of content, both visual and text, became very significant for them.

Over time, the purpose of maintaining an Instagram account for bloggers has changed. In addition, at the same time, the style of writing itself changed, its own style was directly developed. More time was devoted to blogging, publications began to be carefully worked out, and bloggers began to build a publication plan, i.e. to think about what should be posted for a certain period. Most of the time for creating posts is spent by culinary bloggers, as they need not just to take pictures and sign, but also cook. As for the frequency of publications, popular bloggers post almost every day, while in the group of novice bloggers, there are those who post one or two posts a week. Bloggers have formed a rule that can be called three publications a day, i.e. this is the number of posts that keeps the audience interested and does not irritate it. At this stage, there is another important motive for blogging, how to promote yourself, and your activities. Analyzing the results, we can say that, despite the fact that for almost all respondents, with the exception of 3%, blogging is not the main area of employment, it largely helps them to realize themselves in real life. So, in a group of popular

bloggers, all respondents work for themselves, develop their business. In the second group, the majority also works for themselves, but 9% of bloggers do not work anywhere, because they are still studying or working. In addition, thanks to the blog, the respondents find customers, telling a wide audience about their activities.

The main income of the majority of respondents still comes from their activities in real life. However, the blog also gives them the opportunity to earn money. In a group of popular bloggers, all respondents use their account as an advertising platform. In the second group, ads are sold less often, and there is a reasonable explanation for this - the number of subscribers in their blogs is not so attractive to advertisers. In general, both groups have a common position on advertising cooperation. All bloggers consider it acceptable to post advertising posts, but only if the advertised product or service is personally tested, it is of high quality, and can be useful to their subscribers, i.e. it fits harmoniously into the blog content.

If one try to highlight the main points from all the definitions and construct a generalizing concept, he/she will get the following: a blogger is a person who is a professional in any field, who shares useful information with his/her audience in an accessible form. To be a blogger, one need to be an interesting person. In turn, the respondents also highlight the image of a pseudo-blogger. They include those who do not carry any useful information in their account, but simply publish everyday moments of their lives. Based on the analysis of the results, we can distinguish the following qualities that a blogger should have: adequacy, creativity, sociability, stress tolerance, responsibility, honesty to the audience, usefulness, diligence, professionalism. In addition, of course, having these qualities, a blogger should be able to express their thoughts clearly.

Discussions

The virtual space has provided users with new opportunities, allowing people from all over the world to communicate with each other. The global network has made the individual more mobile, and the high speed of dissemination and transmission of information has brought the communication process to a new level. In addition to all these advantages of the Internet,

one more point that is important can be identified: thanks to the Internet, and in particular the blogosphere, users have the opportunity to express themselves online, to reveal themselves from different sides, including competence and professional ones. In a virtual environment, the user can construct a new image for him/herself, revealing those facets of his/her personality that are difficult to express, for one reason or another, in the real world. Self-presentation on the web allows users to construct their identity in such a way that they see themselves at a given time, that is, we can say that the virtual identity is more mobile than the real one. For bloggers, the search for identity is one of the key points in creating their profile, since it depends on who will be the reader and subscriber of their activities.

Today, the blogosphere is actively developing and rapidly gaining an Internet audience. Blogging for many users ceases to be just entertainment and develops into something more. The selection of text and visual content for some bloggers is becoming the main type of employment. A large number of subscribers makes them popular and recognizable personalities. In this regard, bloggers are increasingly invited to participate in various talk shows, where they are presented not just as bloggers, but use the term professional blogger.

Conclusion

In all the diversity of the Internet space, it is worthy to single out the blogosphere as one of the most popular formats of virtual communication and self-presentation. Among the first bloggers, it was very popular to maintain two pages at the same time, where the first blog was conducted on behalf of a real person with his/her first and last name, and the second was anonymous and written under a pseudonym. However, later, this format became less and less interesting to users, people wanted to follow the real heroes of the virtual space. Today, it is increasingly possible to meet bloggers with their real names and surnames.

Blogs are an integral part of virtual communication; they allow Internet users from all over the world to express their point of view. Some do this directly by blogging, while others do it by reading and commenting on what they read. The virtual space provides huge

opportunities for new acquaintances. Therefore, acquaintance through a blog allows the user to learn much more about the interlocutor than it can be done in the same period in the real world, but one should not forget that the information transmitted about him/herself by the blogger might differ to some extent from reality. For example, a blogger can post his/her retouched photos, where his/her image will differ from the real appearance. Nevertheless, the information published in the blog will allow someone generally to understand the interests and preferences of the blogger. Nowadays, users want to see real heroes in a virtual space, without masks.

The main motives for creating a blog are a personal diary; the desire to share with people their activities, their lives; popularity. Nevertheless, over time, with the increasing popularity of the blog, its public promotion, these motives often change and in the first place are the promotion of their activities and earnings on advertising.

Popular bloggers have more opportunities to earn money on their blog; popular bloggers publish posts more often, and differ in the presence of their own handwriting, their own unique style. Not all novice bloggers have developed their own style yet. However, between groups of popular bloggers and newcomers, there was also a lot in common, which is typical in general of the practice of blogging itself. So, a number of advantages of blogging as the main sphere of employment were highlighted: accessibility, one does not need to have any connections in society; flexibility, freedom, there is no territorial binding, no strict work schedule; doing what one loves; self-realization; blogging helps to open up, liberate oneself; a large number of new acquaintances; demand, invitation to social events; promotion of ones activities; popularity.

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