

# DIGITAL CONTENT: NEW CHALLENGES FOR MODERN MARKETING



Nina Trubnikova

PhD, associate professor,  
Head of the Department of Advertising and Business Communications,  
The Institute of International Economics and Business (IMEB),  
RUDN University, Moscow, Russia  
e-mail: ninavadinovna@mail.ru

*Content is an essential constituent of any marketing product, instrumental in attracting the audience attention. The present work is an attempt to study the significant problem the modern mass media faced: completely erased boundaries of generating and accessing content. Author focuses on the issue of "catering" content, taking into account the modern rhythms and styles of potential target audience's life. The article specifically analyzes the realia of the so-called "users" content - the ways and means of its generating and circulating; its social and economic impact; its specificity in terms of creativity; how it affects communications industry. By undertaking this research the author strives to elaborate an aggregate of approaches which will allow today's advertisers to optimize their integration into the modern media-market.*

**Key Words:** digital technologies, content, new media, communications management, creativity, advertising, public relations

## Introduction

The technological revolution has not only changed the forms and strategies to manage informational streams within communication models but also prompted a new development round of mass media audience. Eventually, changes have occurred in the peculiarities of information interpretation, as well as of advertising consumption. Digital technologies are a powerful tool of fine-tuning information consumption to the consumer's preferences. In connection with this relevance of this research is determined by the necessity of studying the marketing communications transformations on the basis of digital instruments which allow moulding a new type of professional and user's content.

The diversity of possibilities to work with information makes it available in practically any convenient format, on any accessible gadget. Qualitative transformations of advertising communication, gradual erasing of the boundaries between advertising and various forms of promotion are legitimate consequences of a new informational epoch advent. Higher speed and quality of innovations in the digital media make systematic approach of content processing consideration increasingly relevant. A wide variety of channels and interaction formats, users' requirements-adapted content and numerous possibilities of further

information targeting turn the new media-communications into the most attractive agent of contact with the consumer. Many successful companies achieve impressive results due to their interactivity and mobile gadgets application in the dialogue with the consumers, which brings forth and emphasizes the necessity of researching the mobile marketing properties. Meanwhile, in practice, the need to use different formats for different types of generated content is widely admitted.

### **Research methodology**

In order to proceed with content management analysis, the meaning of the research main concept can be defined. Content, in this stage, is the informational component of any resource - that is, the entire graphic, textual, audio and other information which becomes accessible to the user when visiting an Internet site. Consequently, content management can be defined as an aggregate of stages of such information channeling.

Content managing includes its preparation and placement, distributing in a certain way, monitoring of its efficiency, as well as content hiding or removing. The dynamic structure of today's sites allows dividing the content from design and to upload pages as required by content addressing. This type of interactions made possible to freely form the so-called user's content. One of the important constituents of the researcher's task is considering content management through the prism of new media development (in computer technologies, media-economics, marketing and other fields). The main aspect of the researches is focusing on the new media digital component.

The modern concept of "new media" encompasses a wide spectrum of multi-platformed formats of interaction between the specialists and users. The phrase "new media" is a loan expression from the researches published in English, where it is considered mostly from points of digital and Internet technologies usage to distribute content, to organize interactive communication with the users etc. From the organizational-functional approach, the new media should be understood as organizations and individuals (bloggers) generating digital content, as well as regular Internet users who can interact with all media participants, processing and sharing information, creating their own content. The role approach allows interpreting the new media as a new stage of work with mass information characterized by an active role of regular users and non-professionals who produce and reproduce information, working with the content by classical way.

### **Literature review**

The problems of managing content and qualitative changes in the media sphere became relevant in the beginning of the XXI century when the Internet was only starting to develop and has not yet acquired its modern capacity. About a decade later, the stir around the social networks and social media in general prompted a new round of research in this field.

Analysis of the current state and prospects of using content in the modern digital communication is necessary to understand the tendencies of Russian informational environment evolution. The recent debates have been focused on the issues of changing approaches to the informational filling of modern media, proceeding from their revolutionary transformation in the digital medium. The often discussed question is a possible absorption by traditional media of new features in the nearest future. The traditional media are criticized for a lack of efficiency as well interactivity and personalization. Therefore, studying the Russian informational sphere peculiarities in the context of the digital revolution, trends of particular mass media audience changing is high relevant (Vartanova, 2008; Galitzkiy, 2008).

### **The users' content: peculiarities and management problems**

The given methodological basis can be used to analyze the existing content management problems in the conditions of the new media ongoing transformation. The peculiarities and characteristics of the target audience are closely linked with the types of consumed content. Thus, the new media present a platform for placing a new type of content. The modern approach to mass media also implies so-called “platform orientation”. Television, radio and printed materials are replaced by more flexible and “friendly” apparatus-program platforms in information distributing (Newell, Pilotta & Thomas, 2008, p. 135). It is just an adaptive part which determines distinctions between the platforms in and, as a rule, significantly influences the peculiarities of users' content generating. In the beginning of the century, the researchers tended to exaggerate the users' content's independence from corporations and governemn structures. The new media preserve their centralization, determining properties of Internet-communications from the technical and semantic points of view (Baluev & Kaminchenko, 2014, p. 33). Famous service “YouTube” is a vivid example. Initially it was oriented on users' content; but anyway today it's most popular content created by professionals.

The development of digital technologies prompted an emergence of new interactions' instruments of characterized by multimedia indispensability and different platforms' convergences with the purpose to form and maximally effective distribute content.

Due to the digital transformations, various types of information presentations - from text to video - were delivered to the user in an integrated form (not as separate channels of distribution). A nonprofessional user can create content which, in case of active response from a wide audience, can be complimented and modified by other users, as well as eventually distributed by official mass media, with engagement of classical channels and multiple Internet opportunities.

Active new media formats engagement is impossible without creative technologies. That's why mastering the new tools of new content generating and distributing by ordinary users became a legitimate stage of mass media development (Karyakina, 2010). This made possible to move from the traditional mass media "course" and create a great amount of

independent resources with various formats of interaction between users. At the same time the users' entering in the communicational process entailed a number of problems.

Certainly, the new media often supply relevant data which importance cannot be overestimated, but contains subjectivity and sources unreliability can mislead both the audience and the official mass media which distribute this information. Besides that, there is the question of style and quality of the generated content. Language and presentation distinctions divide professional and users' contents. The information from these respective sources is often perceived differently and depends on multiple factors part of which is unpredictable (Firsova, 2012, p.334). The consumers' interactions with the brand also changed - from the elementary level of consumer's motives to social and even civil motivation when the feeling of social responsibility, compassion, globality of the world is awakened (Young, 2014, p 25).

### **The evolution of creativity in the new media**

As it was noted above, the emergence of the new media grants each user new possibilities and instruments of self-expression (Petrova, 2014, p.131). The creativity sphere is transformed into a new quality, changing the aggregate of concepts, systematizations and values. In the first place, creativity is no longer a result of either working or leisure time. Emotions are the stem of creativity in the epoch of marketing impressions; the rational component, although presents in lesser volumes, and its only valued if combined with the emotional. The accents of the creation concept have shifted from the process to the result. The modern creativity is not only a creative process, but the way of communication with a certain audience, reinforced by marketing component ("the selling moments"). In the industrial epoch, not only product used to go in circulation - thoughts, feelings, cultural values would be cloned as well. Satisfying of standardized demand became the meaning of life for the better part of people.

The necessity of the creator's personal impressions is just the factor that determines different approaches to creative content generating. Gradually, creativity rids itself of its trade aspect, shifting the users' interest towards novelty. Creativity, analyzed in terms of ability to generate new ideas, now belongs to professional competences. While the global character of the Internet allows foregoing "reinventing the wheel" and quickly scaling the ideas. The users themselves are eventually transferred from being the consumers of creativity into its generators (Clift J. (2011) Generating information, and its outdated goes at an increasingly accelerated speed which complicates the possibilities of its analyzing and efficiently digesting by an individual. The informational field oversaturation raises an importance of emotional response from the audience.

Thus, creative content relying on emotions accelerates the users' reaction to advertising messages. Essentially, creativity today figures as a kind of advantage and guarantee that the message will be assimilated by the target audience, reducing the probability of its being lost

in the informational "noise". The change of rational-verbal paradigm occurred in the 1960s and was replaced by the emotional-visual. It became possible due to the emergence of the color TV as an instrument of habitual possibilities advertising expanding. Today, the technological process does not only develop further, but accelerates. The Internet technologies have made creativity an important condition of market success (Nazarov & Vygovskaya, 2012, p. 348). Creativity is no longer exclusively a professional competence, as it used to be before the Internet and in the years of its gaining ground.

### **The micromedia as carriers of users' content**

The classical media in industrial society had a unidirectional character, and mostly advertising was mass-oriented and standardized. Dialogue by such mass media could only be possible for those who had status and capital and were the part of establishment; while in totalitarian societies there was simply no question of any feedback from the audience. The structure of creativity of those times was very different as well - that, too, was unidirectional, elitist and detached from the mass audience. The media in industrial epoch largely kept abreast of the social sentiment, acted as social glue of sorts, modeling causes for massive joys and sorrows. Today, the role of social glue has been taken over by the phenomenon of mediatization. For many people, the mediatization process has made the new media of their natural habitat which provides information's consuming and generating as well as the functions of social communication, self-development and self-assertion (Kolomic, 2009).

The essence of the mediatization process is a faculty of any individual to form own communicational field reinforced by the multimedia-technological possibilities of new digital media. In this system, personal communication becomes emotionally colored. The Internet users have taken over a part of the media functions directed at creating and spreading content, and have formed new category - micromedia. Just like the regular media, such media-units are, in many ways, oriented toward a particular circle of persons. Interpersonal communication in the Internet withdraws into the background, while the possibilities of the users to generate and distribute creative content expand. As a type of generating pragmatic information, oriented on certain goals reaching, a creativity suits to describe the micromedia content. Our habitual B2B and B2C communication types are diversified by a variant of integrated communication C2C - consumer to consumer. Accordingly, added value and "symbolic capital" are, in increasingly greater volumes, created by the consumers themselves who become public opinion's leaders, as opposed to the mass media which lose the audience's confidence. Meanwhile such tools as partisan marketing, provocative marketing techniques, viral advertising etc are used on a large scale, emphasizing the originality and creative capacity of the certain approach. Technical possibilities of the modern human-micromedia are a lot greater than even professional of the last century. Today there is no need to spend years for acquiring a skill, as the colossal informational resources contain all

the necessary information complete with the required training instruments which allow learning a trade in a record time.

The field of creativity in the modern digital world is often limited by the culture of remixes. Essentially, remixes in the modern culture are marked with characteristics of creative production which implies associative reworking of existing creative materials (styles, plots, ideas) and presents creativity in a public-oriented format. Interest to remixe is primarily explained by the fact that, for the modern informational field, creation is not as important as involvement. Another instrument of training and promotion has gained huge popularity are games. In these conditions of "life losing its seriousness", the world arrives at understanding creativity as a skill of predicting the reaction of the target audience to certain material, bringing values of different segments, and ensuring dialogue between all the communicational process participants.

### **The peculiarities of the Russian digital-marketing**

The specificity of Russian digital communications is determined by their relative youth compared to western countries, as well as their existing in the conditions of limited resources - sometimes, even of crisis. Crisis conditions tend to intensify development of digital instruments, as they help the communicators to implement measurable actions with a comprehensible economic efficiency. The factor limiting the development of digital marketing in Russia is the conservatism of the top-management which is not ready to increase the digital media contain (DMC) budget, while retaining high enough expenditure on the traditional communications. The importance of digital communications for most companies is nothigher than that of the traditional marketing means, while digital strategy is not integrated into the general strategy of marketing communications.

Apparently there is a psychological rationale of "balking" at the unknown at work here - the difficulty of mastering the Internet technologies for the managers at a senior age. (Koptev, 2016, p. 28). Other factors that should be mentioned are the insufficiently high computerization of the Russian market in general, as well as a deficiency of highly qualified professionals in the field of DMC - especially on the regional level - and, as a consequence, inefficiency of many digital-communications companies. In their choice of priority instruments, Russian companies more often than not decide to work with the content of sites, context advertising, banners and mobile marketing in its most primitive form - phone-texting. Familiarization with certain types of digital communications is in the initial stage - those including mobile apps, SMM, blogs, viral videos, Internet games - while USA and Europe already use highly developed communications instruments. Web-analytics of companies has irregular character - efficiency of only limited number of communications companies in the digital medium is subjected to analysis (usually, the costliest ones); there is a large gap in applying digital promoting between large and small organizations.

### **A communicational crisis as the catalyst for a structural-technological revolution in the Russian communication marketing**

The anatomy of communicational crises includes transformations of the means of mass communications and the advertising medium, departure of the media from the traditional forms of industrial civilization which are not anymore relevant to modern realia (Trubnikova, 2016, p. 76). Today the advertising industry is aware of its risks more acutely than ever. Those include the complicated relationship with the legislators, the general mistrust of information delivered in the ad-format, a drop in advertising profits within the framework of the traditional media, the problem of the search for mechanism to gain stable profits from network users in the social media (Milosh, 2016). The crisis affected many business activities, stopped, or stalled the some branches development, considerably limited numerous media-projects. However, a multitude of innovations oriented primarily to efficiency, came in handy just at the right time, changing not only the form but also the content of the communications (Kovylov, 2016, p. 20). In the time of crisis, the advantages of the digital media that proved the most sought-after were "advanced" interactivity, broad possibilities of obtaining diversified marketing information, individualization or "effective addressing" of marketing content messages to the consumers, expanding the possibilities of integrating companies to promote goods and services, boosting transnational marketing prospects. Apart from that, the crisis conditions of austere economy determined the relations of the new media with the advertisers. The control of commercial shows lead to the only advertiser's willing to pay for real presentation of content - that is, one actually viewed by the audience - or, even, only for the audience's connecting to the site directly from the ad.

Notable changes have occurred in the sphere of management, too. Unwieldy full-service agencies with their unpredictable relationship with the subcontractors are ousted from the Russian market. Today, the crest of the wave in offering communications services is represented by holdings, primarily international and global, which completely satisfy the client's communicational demand owing to synergy of efforts, as they encompass multifarious types of agencies - branding-, media-, creative-, event-, sports marketing-agencies etc. (Nazarov & Kovalev, 2008, p. 216). Advertising nets functioning as mediators have considerable expanded their variety of inventory and services.

The times of crisis have certainly always been the times of new opportunities. But, for the Russian industry to be able to realize those, it must learn to work in the new conditions of digital changes.

### **Conclusions**

1. Modern technologies and values of the informational society change their form and the essence of content - it becomes multimedia; while the users themselves participate in generating and spreading content, simultaneously being its consumers.

2. The new media are the main platform for developing the users' content, presenting a multitude of platform solutions and resources for interaction, both on the professional and users' levels.

3. The development and greater influence of the users' content changes the concept of creativity which is now more accessible for the wide audience in technological terms, but not yet capable of fully sustaining the level of quality which characterized the past epochs. In this connection, the culture of remixing - a phenomenon which is an integral part of development of the digital world - acquires a new meaning.

4. The users' involvement in the digital communications with the aid of new media allows them to perform media-functions, eventually becoming micromedia, complete with all the corresponding functions and tangible impact on the audience. Managing the content of such media-units is a complex task which implies engaging various communication technologies to ensure interaction with the brand in the format convenient to the user.

5. Modern digital technologies grant the users practically unlimited freedom of acquiring, interpreting and generating marketing information which requires cardinal reforms of the traditional marketing communications, such as advertising and PR. This is one of the tasks of the modern scientific research and practical activity of the specialists.

6. Russian digital medium is formed in the complicated conditions of communicational crises which imply cutting communications costs. This leads to keen competition between various media, vying for the advertisers' budget. Today the state of marketing communications in Russia is still evaluated as crisis-afflicted. However, one of the pivotal causes of these crises is the comprehensive technological reorganization which accompanies the global change of formats and transfer to the "digital track". Learning to take into account all the aspects of the revolutionary changes will allow the modern media to retain their audience and solve the multifarious tasks of promotion in the conditions of high competitiveness.

## References

- Baluev, D.G. & Kaminchenko, D.I. (2014). The new media as a phenomenon of modern society: Problems of theoretical understanding. *Informatsionnoe obshchestvo*, N 1.
- Clift J. (2011). *Scenarios for the Future of Media: Demand-side Platforms, Branded Entertainment and Going Beyond the Click*. <http://warc.com>, (accessed 10 September 2016)
- Firsova T. (2012). The tendencies of development of digital-advertising in the world. *Teoriya i praktika mediareklamnyh issledovaniy*, Vol 2.
- Galitzkiy E.B. (2008). The Internet audience: social-demographic analysis. *Informatsionnoe obshchestvo*, Vol 3-4.
- Karyakina K. (2010). The role of multimedia technologies in creating the content of the new media. Media-almanac, No 2. Available at: [www.mediaalmanah.ru/upload/iblock/56b/2010\\_2\\_4\\_karjakina.pdf](http://www.mediaalmanah.ru/upload/iblock/56b/2010_2_4_karjakina.pdf). (accessed 10 September 2016)



- Kolomiec, V.P. (2009). Advertising mediatization. In: Veselov S.V. (Ed.), *Rossiiskij reklamny jezhagodnik-2015*, Moscow, AKAR.
- Koptev, S.I. (2016). Learn to live interesting. In: Veselov S.V. (Ed.), *Rossiiskij reklamny jezhagodnik-2015*, Moscow, AKAR.
- Kovylov, A.I. (2016). The advertising market during crisis. In: Veselov S.V. (Ed.), *Rossiiskij reklamny jezhagodnik-2015*, Moscow, AKAR.
- Milosh I. (2016). Internet advertising will overtake TV in 2016 already. Available at: <http://www.sostav.ru/publication/reklamnyj-rynok-v-rossii-smenit-lidera-v-2016-godu-22659.html> (accessed 10 July 2016).
- Nazarov M.M. & Vygovskaya E.G. (2012). The ecosystem of the digital media-advertising environment. *Advertising: theory and practice*, N 06 (54).
- Nazarov, M.M. & Kovalev, P.A. (2008). Comparative media advertising: comparative analysis of foreign and domestic markets. *Reklama: teoriya i praktika*, N 4.
- Newell J., Pilotta J. J., & Thomas J. C. (2008). Mass Media Displacement and Saturation. *International Journal on Media Management*, N 10(4).
- Petrova, E.I. (2014). Web-based media and social networks: convergence periods. *Kommunikativnye issledovaniya*. N 2.
- Trubnikova N.V. (2016). Creativity in the post-informational dimension: marketing aspects. *Vestnik RUDN, Economics series*, No 2.
- Vartanova E.L. (2008). The new media as a factor of modernization of mass media. *Informatsionnoe obshchestvo*, Vol. 5-6.
- Young A. (2014). *Brand Media Strategy. Integrated Communications Planning in the Digital Era*. Second edition, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

*Paper submitted on 04 October 2016*