

SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS FOR TV PROGRAMMES PROMOTION

Mariana KITSА – Iryna MUDRA

ABSTRACT:

Social media are an important opportunity for communication and an efficient media promotion tool. Intelligent use of social media tools to promote media content helps to increase site traffic, build mass media image, and increase its reach. Today, the majority of young and adult viewers of the 'traditional' television get information from the social media first. According to our previous surveys, social media are the source, from which modern society get the information in the first place, and only after a working day watch TV to get the full picture of affairs. That is why, it is very important for "television" in the traditional meaning of this word to popularise itself through the social media. The most efficient methods of TV promotion via social media are personalisation, hosting news on social media, posting video, audio and photo materials, live broadcasting, direct communication with social network readers (users), etc. It is also very important to popularise both a TV channel's website and programming. Every year social networks are becoming more and more popular with businessmen and media managers alike. Managers of the most popular TV channels have already appreciated the positive trends of using social networks because social media promotion tools help to boost TV programmes' recognition and the audiences' awareness of them.

KEY WORDS:

network, promotion, social media, survey, television, users

Introduction

Today, social media are beginning to replace traditional media. The need to study social media tools for TV channels promotion stems from the fact that social networks currently serve as a 'market' for many organisations or people to do business on, and TV channels are no exception. However, not all TV channels can be found on social networks; moreover, those of them trying to promote their content on the Internet make many mistakes. Therefore, having analysed the ways well-known Ukrainian, Russian and European TV channels promote their television programmes on social networks, we define tools to help beginners make fewer mistakes and expand their reach.

Social networks have dramatically changed the work and structure of late modern media. After all, it has become possible not only to transmit information around the clock, but also to get prompt feedback and comments. Such possibility is associated with the emergence of the social network *Facebook* (in 2004), which gave users the opportunity to highlight their messages from audio and video files and stream them to friends or subscribers (i.e. followers). Can social media be an effective tool for merchants to create new



Assoc. Prof. Mariana Kitsa, PhD.
Department of Journalism and Mass Communication
National University Lviv Polytechnic
Kn. Romana St. 3
79000 Lviv
Ukraine
imkitsa@gmail.com

Mariana Kitsa is an Associate Professor at the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication of the National University, Lviv Polytechnic. Her research interests include non-quality advertising in Ukrainian print media, topics related to gender in media discourse, Public Relations, television studies, online media, etc. She has published a monograph titled *Pathogenic Advertising in the Ukrainian Print Media* and has written various scientific articles on different problems, including social networks and TV content.



Assoc. Prof. Iryna Mudra, PhD.
Department of Journalism and Mass Communication
National University Lviv Polytechnic
Kn. Romana St. 3
79000 Lviv
Ukraine
ariane@ukr.net

Iryna Mudra is an Associate Professor at the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at the National University, Lviv Polytechnic. Her research interests are management and marketing in mass media, Public Relations, the late modern press, images of fashion and human body in mass media. She has published a monograph titled *Marketing Strategies of the Modern Social-Political Newspapers in Ukraine* and written numerous scientific articles on marketing, advertising, social networks and TV promotion.

business opportunities?¹ We believe that more and more businesses are using Social Media Promotions (SMPs) as an inexpensive way to market their business and/or new items to new, old and existing customers. Social networking sites (SNSs) have emerged as a common place for social interactivity and communication in cyberspace. They have rapidly grown in fame and user acceptance globally. Many people participate in SNSs to forget the problems and worries of their everyday lives.²

People, who use social networks, are more open to the world. Social networks provide massive amount of information about users through the so-called open data mining. The social network users voluntarily disclose personal information about their work, education, interests through pages and groups they have joined. Thus, important personal data become available for intruders, organising network attacks against users through targeted information.³

Moreover, those participating in discussions on social networks tend to express rather progressive opinions on democracy and statehood. Ziberman and Mishankina say that analyses of web community representations have shown that social networks users, unlike forum participants, are more purposeful and categorical in their evaluations of the Soviets, presenting this regime as an ideal way of state structure. There are also differences in information representation within communities: the textual information available via forums is contrasted with a synthesis of graphic means and verbal language typical for social networks.⁴

Social Networking Sites as a Part of Ukrainian Media Culture

Social network on the Internet is a software service, which provides a platform for people to communicate and interact in groups through the Internet structure, aimed at creating communities of people who share common interests.⁵ But, in our opinion, this definition does not reflect the essence of social networks; therefore, we offer another definition, as follows: social network is a community of Internet users connected by common interests and registered within the same resource, which enables them to share information, communicate through video, and receive the latest news.⁶

Social networks can also be regarded as any online communities whose members participate in discussion on a special platform or service. Although companies have been slow to provide television sets that facilitate conversation, television viewers have found ways to engage in conversation by repurposing social networking sites. Social networking sites are Web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile, create a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system.⁷

Since the use of SNSs has become an integral part of the news consumption experience in today's world, it has become important to thoroughly study news organisations' social media use. Indeed, SNSs offer new opportunities for news organisations to reach more audiences, the so-called "ambient journalism" or a non-moderated platform for online readers. These platforms have become magnets for interested readers to consume, share, like and disseminate news as well as interact with others regarding a variety of issues

and in a very timely, thorough and engaging manner.⁸ *The Reuters Institute for Research on Journalism* provides the following data – 51% of people who have access to the Internet use social networks as news sources. This trend and increasing availability of news through smartphones undermine the traditional business models of journalism.

In the US, 48% of smartphones users are primarily watching news on social networks. Among the British, they make 33%.⁹ Social media are useful for journalists as a source of information. However, Kitsa says that sometimes, in case of spreading a big amount of news, they do not check the information which is published on the social media.¹⁰ Journalists can also use social media for promotion. There are two ways of promoting media on social networks: free and paid. The free ones are, as follows:

- groups, communities, fan-pages. This is the most common way of promotion. In most cases, social networks provide a free opportunity to create communities according to common interests. Friends and spectators are primarily invited to such groups.¹¹
- media content promotion. Pictures, audio files, videos, all that spreads across social networks very quickly and smoothly. Content may include a TV channel's name, programme, web address or logotype.

Paid ways of promotion on social networks include following:

- targeted advertising, which is aimed at a certain group of people. This is the most common type of paid advertising seen on social networks. The advertisement may be provided to people of certain gender, age or region and to those who share certain interests. As a result, a page or a programme can be advertised only to its target audience.
- advertising included in applications. It is known that there are many different social media applications. These include games, software tools for creating pictures and avatars, etc. Using such software tools enables promotion on social networks. One can develop such an application or sponsor its development.
- TV campaigns are evaluated more positively, but SNS campaigns result in more favourable cognitive responses. Moreover, the persuasive intent of SNS campaigns is less recognised than similar content related to 'traditional' TV campaigns. Since SNSs are often combined with traditional media in advertising campaigns, the second study examines whether campaigns combining TV and SNSs lead to so-called synergic effects. Single-medium and multimedia campaigns were equally effective. SNS-TV campaigns are perceived as less persuasive than SNS-only and TV-only campaigns, resulting in more favourable campaign and brand responses. The article provides empirical evidence for the value of integrating social media with traditional media in advertising campaigns.¹²

TV channels can maintain profitability while offering promotion options via a social media site. There are different methods of promoting a TV channel on social media. They include, for example, contests with prizes, as long as the TV stations that sponsor them follow some key steps in their strategy and prepare themselves for the positive and negative effects they might experience. Thus, as a result, the reader can follow a page of a TV channel on social media for a long time. It leads to increasing profits from advertising and acquiring new followers.

1 GRENIER, E., FAIR, C., SCHUMAKER, R.: Social Media: Is It a Valid Source for Creating New Business?. In *Journal of Creative Communications*, 2014, Vol. 9, No. 2, p. 147.

2 MIR, I.: Users on Social Network Sites – Flight from Reality and Its Effects on Acceptance of Social Network Advertising: A Gratification Perspective. In *Journal of Creative Communications*, 2017, Vol. 12, No. 2, p. 98. [online]. [2017-12-22]. Available at: <<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0973258617708367>>.

3 TUMBINSKAYA, M.: Obespechenie zaschityi ot nezhelatel'noy informatsii v sotsialnykh setyah. In *Vestnik Mordovskogo universiteta*, 2017, Vol. 27, No. 2, p. 266.

4 ZILBERMAN, N., MISHANKINA, N.: The 'Soviet' in Reflection of Online Community Users. In *Tomsk State University Journal of Philology*, 2017, Vol. 47, No. 1, p. 39.

5 BYKOV, I. et al.: *Internet Technologies in Public Relations*. Sankt Peterburh: Roza Mira, 2010, p. 45.

6 MUDRA, I.: Sotsialni merezhi v interneti yak instrument prosuvannia "zarazhenoi" informatsii. In *Tele-radio zhurnalistyka*, 2015, Vol. 14, No. 1, p. 210.

7 WOHN, Y., NA, E. K.: *Tweeting about TV: Sharing Television Viewing Experiences via Social Media Message Streams*. [online]. [2017-08-23]. Available at: <<http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/3368/2779/html>>.

8 AL-RAWI, A.: News Values on Social Media: News Organizations' Facebook Use. In *Journalism*, 2016, Vol. 18, No. 7, p. 871.

9 NEWMAN, N., FLETCHER, R., KALOGEROPOULOS, A., LEVY, D., KLEIS, R.: *Digital News Report 2018*. [online]. [2017-07-22]. Available at: <<http://www.digitalnewsreport.org/>>.

10 KITSa, M.: Social Networks and Media Literacy: How to Use Safe. In *Media Education*, 2017, Vol. 54, No. 3, p. 79-90. [online]. [2017-09-22]. Available at: <<https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/social-networks-and-media-literacy-how-to-use-safe>>.

11 PROULX, M., SHEPATIN, S.: *Social TV: How Marketers Can Reach and Engage Audiences by Connecting Television to the Web, Social Media, and Mobile*. Canada: Wiley, 2012, p. 201-212.

12 VOORVELD, H., VAN NOORT, G.: Social Media in Advertising Campaigns: Examining the Effects on Perceived Persuasive Intent, Campaign and Brand Responses. In *Journal of Creative Communications*, 2014, Vol. 9, No. 3, p. 253.

According to the survey held by the international agency *We Are Social*,¹³ 58% of Ukrainian people use the Internet. 29% of Ukraine's residents use online social networks, among which 22% use social networks via mobile Internet. The most popular social network amongst the Ukrainians is *Facebook*. Nowadays, the total number of users of *Facebook* in Ukraine is 13 million. However, it is not surprising, and for several reasons. Firstly, the social network entirely depends on content generated by users. Secondly, *Facebook* makes it possible to broadcast messages directly to many users who are friends or followers of one's profile. In addition, the social network gives users the broadest set of tools that allow them to display photos, share videos, play games and more. This platform also makes it possible to transfer files, which does not apply to *Twitter*, for example. Facebook's more recent innovation offers its users the *Facebook Live* function, which allows for online broadcasting. Thus, *Facebook* seems to offer the greatest range of opportunities both for journalists and ordinary users.¹⁴

We have to acknowledge the fact that viewership is moving away from linear television towards online television services. This shift is particularly clear with younger audiences who spend more of their time using over-the-top platforms. The rising costs of cable and the increasing accessibility of online content are just some of many reasons why 'traditional' television's viewership has gone down.

Moreover, the audiences' attention is increasingly turning away from television and moving towards mobile devices and social media.¹⁵ According to *Tubular Insights*, 87% of Millennials never go anywhere without their smartphones and 92% of them use other communication devices while watching TV programmes. In other words, they often use second-screen devices to spend time on social networks, chatting about the content they are watching or seeking different contents.¹⁶

We fully agree that the concept of "social TV" is related to two phenomena: 1) TV viewers have the opportunity to react to a programme by posting tweets, *Facebook* or text messages, 2) these digital messages are integrated into the TV programme. Thus, "social TV" is intended to allow users to contribute to public discussions and to facilitate the constitution of a transmedia and digital agora.¹⁷

Having analysed famous Ukrainian TV channels' activities on social networks such as *Facebook* or *Twitter*, we found out that they actively explore their competitors' activities and apply efficient methods to promote their own TV programmes. We should also mention that until May 2017, a lot of Ukrainian TV channels had had their pages on *Vkontakte*. They had used it for popularising their contents and for communicating with young audiences.

However, when the Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko signed a decree imposing sanctions on Russia, which involved blocking access to social networks such as *Vkontakte* and *Odnoklassniki*, the majority of Ukrainian TV channels stopped to share news or post comments on the social networks *Vkontakte* and *Odnoklassniki*. After the ban took effect and Ukrainian providers blocked those social networks, Ukrainians started to use *Facebook* massively, so Ukrainian TV channels became more active on social networks *Facebook* and *Twitter*. Via *Facebook*, TV stations tended to share 'behind-the-scenes' information showing how their production processes work, advertise new projects, offer information about new anchors, organise live streams, etc. They also created different accounts specifically to promote new programmes, TV shows and so on. Such pages have their own audiences who are interested in specific TV products.

While speaking about *Twitter*, we should note that this social network is less popular amongst Ukrainian viewers than *Facebook*. Consequently, TV channels are considerably less active on their accounts on *Twitter*: Tweeting about television has always been a form of social media interaction. It has also consistently

provided key 'talking points' for Western societies.¹⁸ Every year this social network is becoming more popular among Ukrainians. As of tweeting about TV, not only do audiences 'tweet' about what they see, but television programmes themselves can be integrated partly or fully around the input provided by the viewers via social media. In such cases, producers leverage the audience conversations that occur on *Twitter*, and to some extent incorporate those 'tweets' back into the show itself. In other words, *Twitter* becomes not only a backchannel for the show, but it also becomes a part of the show itself.¹⁹

The potential synergies between TV and social media could be game-changing. But even now, reality TV products like *American Idol*, *Glass House* and *Dancing with the Stars* allow their viewers to influence content by voting. News outlets like *CNN* and *FOX* promote *Twitter* hashtags and *Facebook* discussions while displaying selected posts and 'tweets' on air.

And advertisers have got into the act too, through second-screens and supplemental content, promoting social media channels on air that encourage viewers to play games with other consumers or contribute their own brand-specific content to *YouTube*.²⁰ They use hashtags to inform users about news, to make conversations about interesting topics, to speak about popular TV shows or other contents. However, for example, in the USA 7 out of 10 *Twitter* users use social media while watching TV, and *Twitter* users are 33% more likely than the average Internet user to be on another device while watching television programming.

Out of the millions of TV viewers splitting their attention between screens, approximately 30% interact with related content on social media. Given that people often engage with content linked to their TV programming across different channels, marketers have a huge opportunity to produce relevant social content tailored towards second-screens. Plus, 42% more time is spent looking at *Twitter Ads* relevant to surrounding content.²¹

In general, TV channels create multiple accounts and groups on social networks. There is an official page of the channel, and pages for each specific television programme are also being set up. There they conduct contests and surveys, communicate with viewers, spread and adapt their content in accordance with the requirements of social media formats. Journalists respond promptly to all occurring events and questions they get from the users, as well as block bots and Internet trolls' activities. Another noteworthy detail is that visual information dominates the text; the number of photos, infographics and other visuals prevails inevitably.

Well-known TV channels' success on the Internet also provides a unique quality content, which is focused on visitors' requests. Any other technological innovations do not matter without these components. TV channels are mostly promoted by journalists or professional SMM-managers. Having analysed the regional television channels of Russia and Ukraine, it can be observed that most regional TV channels have recently created their pages on social networks. However, regional TV channels are much less active on social media than national ones. Notable has been a significant low level of TV channels' popularisation. In case of most TV channels' pages on social networks there is a lack of professional maintenance, which leads to a decrease in the number of community members and followers. And it is also evident that little money is invested in popularisation.

13 POLIAKOVA, A.: *Lyshe 58% ukrainsiv korystuutsia internetom – doslidzhennia*. [online]. [2018-09-15]. Available at: <<https://www.epravda.com.ua/news/2018/01/31/633590/>>.

14 KITSIA, M.: Social Networks and Media Literacy: How to Use Safe. In *Media Education*, 2017, Vol. 54, No. 3, p. 79-90. [online]. [2017-09-22]. Available at: <<https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/social-networks-and-media-literacy-how-to-use-safe>>.

15 O'CONNOR, R.: *Facebook and Twitter Are Reshaping Journalism as We Know It*. [online]. [2017-02-15]. Available at: <http://www.alternet.org/story/121211/facebook_and_twitter_are_reshaping_journalism_as_we_know_it>.

16 ABRAHAMSON, K.: *Social Media Is the New Television: Viewership Is Moving Away from Linear Television to Go Further Online*. [online]. [2017-11-15]. Available at: <<http://www.adweek.com/digital/kurt-abrahamson-shares-guest-post-social-media-is-the-new-television/#/>>.

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18 HARRINGTON, S., HIGHFIELD, T., BRUNS, A.: More than a Backchannel: Twitter and Television. In *Audience Interactivity and Participation*, 2013, Vol. 10, No. 1, p. 406. [online]. [2017-05-12]. Available at: <<http://www.participations.org/volume%2010/issue%201/30%20harrington%20et%20al%2010.1.pdf>>.

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20 HILL, S.: *Social TV: Linking Content, Buzz and Sales*. [online]. [2017-09-23]. Available at: <<https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/marketing-resources/social-tv/>>.

21 SOPKO, C.: *Why Supplementing TV Spots with Twitter Ads Is a Must*. [online]. [2018-09-15]. Available at: <<http://adaptly.com/supplementing-tv-spots-with-twitter-ads/>>.

Methodology

Our research is based on both theoretical and empirical methods of investigation. The main theoretical sources for writing this article were scientific works of Voorveld and Van Noort,²² Van der Haak, Parks and Castells,²³ Atifi and Marcocchia,²⁴ O'Connor,²⁵ Zalizniak,²⁶ Kitsa²⁷ or Savrasova-V'un.²⁸ The study uses the basic methods of cognition – chronological, historical, systemic and comparative methods. The use of historical and chronological methods enabled us to analyse the works of other researchers; comparative method defines the difference in views on actual methods of TV promotion through social networks.

While conducting the research, we analysed the accounts of Ukrainian TV channels on social networks *Facebook* and *Twitter* in order to detect the most prominent tools of TV promotion through social networks. We also had to investigate the preferences of the audiences who visit or follow the profiles of TV stations on the given social networks. Thus, we decided to use a questionnaire survey in order to find out more about which method of TV promotion is the most efficient in terms of influencing the audiences. We used a random sample. It was introduced by monitoring the activity of users of social networks *Facebook* and *Twitter* on the pages and groups related to Ukrainian TV channels *I+1*, *Inter*, *ICTV*, *STB* and *Ukraine*. We sent private messages asking to answer the questions of our survey to 922 most active subscribers of the given TV stations' profiles on social networks *Facebook* and *Twitter*. We received answers from almost half of the respondents (500 users), which we obtained via social networks *Facebook* (326) and *Twitter* (174).

They were people of different age groups:

- 18-24 years old (227 respondents),
- 25-40 years old (173 respondents),
- 41-50 years old (51 respondents),
- 51-65 years old (37 respondents),
- 66 and older (12 respondents).

However, we did not divide these respondents in terms of gender, education or social status, assuming that popular TV channels create their TV products universally, i.e. for different categories of people.

Results

Our study shows that most TV channels prefer to work in two ways: either SMM specialists deal with their fan-pages on social media or their social media contents are generated by TV journalists with whatever resources and time they have left. Both ways have their advantages and disadvantages.²⁹ Obviously, media activity on social networks, like any other communication activity, involves tactical and strategic thinking that requires different approaches, management styles and responsibilities. Social media pose three tasks

22 See: VOORVELD, H., VAN NOORT, G.: Social Media in Advertising Campaigns: Examining the Effects on Perceived Persuasive Intent, Campaign and Brand Responses. In *Journal of Creative Communications*, 2014, Vol. 9, No. 3, p. 253-268.

23 See: VAN DER HAAK, B., PARKS, M., CASTELLS, M.: The Future of Journalism: Networked Journalism. In *International Journal of Communication*, 2012, Vol. 6, No. 1, p. 2923-2938. [online]. [2017-11-30]. Available at: <<http://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/viewFile/1750/832>>.

24 ATIFI, H., MARCOCCIA, M.: Exploring the Role of Viewers' Tweets in French TV Political Programs: Social TV as a New Agora?. In *Discourse Context & Media*, 2017, Vol. 19, No. 1, p. 31-38.

25 See: O'CONNOR, R.: *Facebook and Twitter Are Reshaping Journalism As We Know It*. [online]. [2017-02-15]. Available at: <http://www.alternet.org/story/121211/facebook_and_twitter_are_reshaping_journalism_as_we_know_it>.

26 See: ZALIZNYAK, Y.: *Liudyna zi smartfonom abo sotsialni merezhi yak pravo na svobodu*. [online]. [2017-12-22]. Available at: <<http://www.mediakrytyka.info/onlayn-zhurnalistyka/lyudyna-zi-smartfonom-abo-sotsialni-merezhi-yak-pravo-na-svobodu.html>>.

27 See also: KITSA, M.: Social Networks and Media Literacy: How to Use Safe. In *Media Education*, 2017, Vol. 54, No. 3, p. 79-90. [online]. [2017-09-22]. Available at: <<https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/social-networks-and-media-literacy-how-to-use-safe>>.

28 For more information, see: SAVRASOVA-V'UN, T.: Social Networks and Their Role in Development of Civic Activity of the Ukrainian Youth. In *Communication Today*, 2017, Vol. 8, No. 1, p. 104-113.

29 ZALIZNYAK, Y.: *Liudyna zi smartfonom abo sotsialni merezhi yak pravo na svobodu*. [online]. [2017-12-22]. Available at: <<http://www.mediakrytyka.info/onlayn-zhurnalistyka/lyudyna-zi-smartfonom-abo-sotsialni-merezhi-yak-pravo-na-svobodu.html>>.

to the journalists: to find people for interaction, not only to speak but also to listen and to cooperate, which means to give the audiences the opportunity to engage in the communication processes.

Therefore, having analysed the social media accounts of well-known Ukrainian TV channels on *Facebook* and *Twitter*, we have identified the main tools for boosting channel content and increasing the number of followers. At present, the most popular social network is *Facebook*. It was the first major social network that gained fame in the territory of the United States and Western Europe, and subsequently embraced much of Eastern European and Asian audience.

Leading Ukrainian TV channels have several official accounts on social networks. There is one main account about each channel that hosts main video materials, and there are several secondary profiles related to various TV shows and films produced by the channel in question. Many well-known journalists who work for the TV channels tend to create their own social media accounts as well.

Ukrainian TV channels have formed their own culture of using their social media accounts. Culture affects both the design and use of any SNS platform. Through comparing and contrasting the personal profile settings on *Facebook* and *Vkontakte*, we can see that the design features of these two SNS platforms reflect the cultural characteristics of the countries from which the platforms originated.³⁰ Ukrainian TV channels often strive to appeal to their audiences' national identity and symbols. There are many posts containing greetings on occasion of Ukrainian national holidays on their social media accounts. A large number of such accounts and posts are able to attract wider audiences and 'group' them according to their preferences and interests. Moreover, journalists' personal accounts allow these media professionals to better understand their own work and audiences they are supposed to appeal to. This is already in effect in case of the most prominent media outlets such as *BBC* and *CNN*.

News hosting (publishing) on social networks

Media content should be posted once in 30 minutes, and it should contain interesting live updates and concise materials. There are TV channels that follow 'the rule of five', which means they do not publish more than 5 posts a day, but these posts should consist of the most important updates and breaking news. Here, one should take into account that social networkers are not interested in dull, mediocre reports. It is fair to say that many leading TV channels do not stick to this principle, yet they are still popular. For instance, *CNN* actively maintains its official account on *Facebook*, posting a fresh piece of news every 10-20 minutes. However, it is also necessary to note that they publish only the most interesting news.

Sites of most investigated TV channels include news feeds from which messages are posted on social networking pages. Quite often the posts include short spots from newscasts. It is also worth noting that each of the investigated channels posts only interesting news. However, some of the posted pieces of news should have been checked more thoroughly; today, information is disseminated rapidly, and if it is inaccurate, it may damage the channel's image. We have actually witnessed several instances on the channels' social media profiles of journalists posting their apologies for hosting unverified information. A lot of negative comments can be found under such posts.

Posting video, audio and photo materials

On social networks, users like to watch videos and photos, because it allows them not only to read but also to watch the information in detail. Many Internet users prefer to watch real events over simply reading about what has happened. Social network users often pay attention to posts that contain videos or photos predominantly. Those managing TV channels' profiles on social networks often encourage the audiences

30 ZHAO, S., SHCHEKOTUROV, A., SHCHEKOTUROVA, S.: Personal Profile Settings as Cultural Frames: Facebook Versus Vkontakte. In *Journal of Creative Communications*, 2017, Vol. 12, No. 3, p. 171.

to report on interesting facts or events and post their own videos. For instance, *BBC*'s social media account often publishes funny and interesting celebrity videos (soft news). On 21st April 2018, they published a video of the royal couple William and Catherine, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, made when they were on *BBC News Beat*. The video earned nearly 5,000 shares and more than one million views.³¹

Live broadcasting on social networks

Social networks allow live broadcasts of stand-ups and enable the audiences to view online everything happening in a TV channel's studio or watch video feeds even when the spot is not ready yet. This is a useful tool that often gives journalists an opportunity to be the first to report on events to social networking users. Also, a viewer can be involved in important events. For instance, during the US presidential election, the *CNN* audience was able to watch the debate of Donald J. Trump and Hillary Clinton. It was getting millions of views and many more were sharing the related footage.

Direct (individual) communication with social network readers (users)

The ways a media outlet communicates its own audience on social media and any feedback they provide affects the outlet's public image. Mass media (including TV channels) are bound to be successful if they never ignore their recipients but listen and consider their requests or suggestions.³² Communication with the audience enables journalists to listen more closely to the society's concerns, consider their interests and informational needs, as well as respond to all their questions and provide a real help if necessary. Direct dialogue between ordinary people/users and editors, i.e. media professionals improves a media outlet's image and increases its popularity amongst the audiences.

There are two ways of communicating with the audience through social networks: sending them personal messages or responding to their comments under the posts. Note that the more commented the publisher's posts are, the more the content can reach other social networkers.³³ Editors can sometimes resort to a trick – they may sign in via multiple fake accounts to comment on their own posts, thus artificially increasing the number of views. This practice is often called “astroturfing”.³⁴

Discussions

This is the most important social networking tool to promote a TV channel. Through the open discussion among the audience, one can improve a TV channel's ratings and visibility, as well as expand the audience. Discussion is a good way of finding new topics and experts. Journalists often openly ask the audience to express their views on important issues. After all, everyone has the right to express their opinions, even if they contradict the editors' and journalists' views. Such comments should not be deleted; on the contrary, they should be replied to in a non-judgmental manner.

31 MACKANZIE, I.: *William and Kate's World Wide Wedding*. [online]. [2018-05-03]. Available at: <<https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-13236856>>.

32 MEDVEDGHUK, M.: Moshlyvosti vykorystannia Internet-tekhnohiiu sferi PR. In *Hrani*, 2009, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 151.

33 For more information, see: VAN DER HAAK, B., PARKS, M., CASTELLS, M.: The Future of Journalism: Networked Journalism. In *International Journal of Communication*, 2012, Vol. 6, No. 1, p. 2923. [online]. [2017-11-30]. Available at: <<http://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/viewFile/1750/832>>.

34 See, for example: MENDELOVÁ, D.: Astroturfing as a Controversial Media Relations Tool. In *European Journal of Science and Theology*, 2016, Vol. 12, No. 5, p. 175-184.

Surveys

By means of surveys shared via social networks, a TV channel can evaluate its work or its audience's tastes and suggestions, examine public views on current affairs or even define its own audience. Through social media surveys, media professionals working for TV channels might also draw the audiences' attention to a certain topic. Moreover, the journalists can use the findings while preparing new television projects. There are numerous cases of journalists airing findings of such surveys conducted on social networks.

Organising contests

Organising contests amongst the social networkers is one of the most efficient tools of promoting any media content. The targeted audience can easily be stimulated by contests which involve prizes. Most users respond positively to such arrangements. A well-organised contest with interesting (or valuable) prizes always attracts a large number of visitors. The leading Ukrainian TV channels often use this method, in particular 'breakfast' TV programmes; the prizes they offer often include concert tickets, cups with famous people's autographs or bestselling books.

Media that seek to win the social media users' sympathies should regularly conduct various contests and quizzes in order to draw their attention and raise public interest. A person who has won such a gift, even a small one, tends to stay loyal to this social media account (and the medium it is associated with). Moreover, contests and quizzes can influence future ratings of a specific TV channel.

Greetings posted on social networks

Season's greetings are important for any TV channel's public image. By posting such greetings and displaying them to their viewers, professionals representing TV channels on social media make it clear that they do not forget their audience and want to join the polite exchange of pleasant greetings related to holidays. Graphic designers creating these visuals should make sure the greeting cards are extraordinary catchy, distinctive and easy to remember.³⁵

Popularisation of a TV channel's website and/or its programming

If a TV channel has a website that offers information on programming and up-to-date news, those managing the channel's social media accounts can post short, interesting news announcements on social networking sites with a link to the channel's website or a date of a specific programme's release. By doing this, one can significantly increase the website's traffic.

Posting exclusive news and news spots

Every editor possesses materials or documents social media may not know of. That might be some exclusive news about an event, interviews, comments or facts no one has heard of before. It is necessary to post them on social networks in the first place and encourage the audience to share their views under the posts.

35 O'CONNOR, R.: *Facebook and Twitter Are Reshaping Journalism as We Know It*. [online]. [2017-02-15]. Available at: <http://www.alternet.org/story/121211/facebook_and_twitter_are_reshaping_journalism_as_we_know_it>.

Hashtags and 'flashmobs'

Audiences love and actively join so-called flashmobs. A number of obvious opportunities emerge in this context: first, it becomes possible to simply track the overall activity surrounding a show (and its associated hashtags) over the course of its episodes' screening. This provides an insight into the audience's reaction to key moments of the show at a temporal resolution, which cannot be matched by most other audience measurement approaches.³⁶ For example, Bruns analyses user activity around the #royalwedding hashtag during the global telecast of the British royal wedding.³⁷ Such measurements may also be used to explore the audience's reactions to candidates and their views expressed during televised political debates.

Television journalists can further develop currently existing flashmobs or set up their own. Promotion of flashmobs based on a TV channel's own hashtags contributes to increasing the channel's popularity and recognition. Hashtags also make it easier to get hold of information provided by the channel.

Citing users of social networks in journalistic materials

TV channels often ask their audiences active on social networks to take part in surveys or discussions on different topics. The most interesting comments are then cited (shown) on television. Moreover, good ideas may be used within the development of future programmes. A specific person participating in the discussion or commenting sometimes might become the programme's 'face' or its direct participant.

Personalization

TV needs to influence social behaviour through personalisation and indication of the personal interests of consumers. It should show information in a manner that is suitable for specific types of consumers. Social media profiles are dynamic, digital 'versions' of television spectators that are constantly updated with information about their daily lives and passion points. Abrahamson declares that TV channels looking to strengthen their customer relationships should start with the personalisation of social media rather than television.³⁸ Simultaneously, they should expand or at least maintain their audiences using the most up-to-date re-targeting tools to scale their campaigns and find people who share common traits with their existing viewers. Social media managers updating TV channels' social media accounts should motivate TV viewers to come back by sending 'catch-up' messages, as well as links to streaming services where users can binge-watch the latest episodes of TV shows and other types of broadcast content. By reaching people you know are interested in your show and adding new ones to the mix, the likelihood that a show gets positive ratings, social hype, and is successfully renewed for a second season improves significantly.³⁹

In summary, we have defined the main tools to promote TV channels and their programming via social networks. Now, let us look at the five main strategies favoured by the majority of today's TV channels in relation to communication with their audiences:

1. Listening. Study of audience's views on the programmes and spots;
2. Statements conveyed through social networks with intention to promote ads, ideas and thoughts to the audience;

36 HARRINGTON, S., HIGHFIELD, T., BRUNS, A.: More than a Backchannel: Twitter and Television. In *Audience Interactivity and Participation*, 2013, Vol. 10, No. 1, p. 405. [online]. [2017-05-12]. Available at: <<http://www.participations.org/volume%2010/issue%201/30%20harrington%20et%20al%2010.1.pdf>>

37 BRUNS, A.: *Twitter and the Royal Wedding, Pt. I: Something Processed. Mapping*. [online]. [2017-03-11]. Available at: <<http://mappingonlinepublics.net/2011/08/12/twitter-and-the-royal-wedding/>>.

38 ABRAHAMSON, K.: *Social Media Is the New Television: Viewership is Moving Away From Linear Television to Go Further Online*. [online]. [2017-11-15]. Available at: <<http://www.adweek.com/digital/kurt-abrahamson-sharethhis-guest-post-social-media-is-the-new-television/#/>>.

39 LAMBERT, A.: *TV on Social: Successful Premiere Promotion Using Social Media*. [online]. [2017-10-02]. Available at: <<https://bn.co/premiere-promotion-social-advertising/>>.

3. Stimulation. Searching for new viewers and development of cooperative relationships;
4. Providing support for TV viewers;
5. Involving viewers in content development and production design (letting them suggest their own ideas of improving TV programmes) in order to reach the set goals.⁴⁰

Dealing with social networks, television professionals should not only strive to increase the quantity of viewers and followers but also bear in mind that quality is sometimes more important than quantity. A thousand followers who read and speak about your content are worth more than a million viewers waiting just for special opportunities and lotteries.

With the spread of the hybrid war in Ukraine, social media have begun to develop very rapidly. Now it is necessary to recognise social media NGOs and associations, many different activist groups and volunteers. Also, activities of users of social networking sites have increased significantly. If in October 2013, according to research of *LiveInternet*, the daily traffic from the users aged 18-69 on social networking sites of Ukrainian media was 180,000 – 200,000 visitors, in February-March 2014, this figure increased to 2 – 2.5 million crossings every day.⁴¹ According to the results of a poll that was conducted in 2018 by the Institute of mass information online media are a source of the most objective and complete information, and therefore, an alternative to the press, television and radio.⁴²

In order to figure out which tools affect a TV channel's audience on social networks, we conducted our own survey involving 500 permanent followers of Ukrainian TV channels' accounts on social networks. We found out that most of the surveyed respondents think online social media will replace 'traditional' media (including TV) in a few years.

This prediction is related to by social networking sites' convenience and ubiquitous nature. It is no longer necessary to look for a favourite TV channel or wait for a certain programme to start to watch the news; one should just subscribe to the channel's account on a social network to get all the latest information via the news feed. There is also an opportunity to get information from several sites at the same time without switching between different TV channels' websites.

Most of the surveyed (55% – 275 respondents) get news from *Facebook*. This social network is mostly used by youngsters and young adults (18-24 years old – 31.2%, aged 25-40 – 17.6%) rather than by middle-aged and older people (aged 41-50 – only 2.8%; aged 51-65 – only 2.6%; 66 and older – only 0.8%). It is also noteworthy that the social network *Vkontakte* is used by a considerably lower amount of the respondents than *Facebook* or *Twitter*. However, 16% (145) respondents included in the surveyed sample continue to get news from *Vkontakte*. Amongst them 10.6% are respondents aged 18-24, 4.4% respondents aged 25-40 and 1% respondents aged 51-65. We can explain this fact on basis of anonymous answers provided by the inhabitants of the occupied areas of Donbas and Crimea to which the ban of Russian social networking sites does not apply. As the data suggests, they are usually young and faithful to the first social network they have ever used, which in most cases is *Vkontakte*.

29% of people included in the surveyed sample (83 respondents) receive news from *Twitter*. These are mostly people aged 25-40 (12.6%). Some research participants aged 41-50 (6.4%) also get news from *Twitter*, along with a few of those aged 51-65 (4.8%), 18-24 (3.6%) and 66 and older – 1.6%. (see Figure 1). It is also worth noticing that in Ukraine, TV channels available nationwide use the social network *Twitter*; however, regional TV channels do not use this SNS actively. We can also notice that *Twitter* is actively used by foreign TV channels. Speaking of Russian TV channels specifically, they mostly use *Vkontakte*.

40 HRYSHCHENKO, O., NIESHEVA, A.: Social Media Marketing as a Tool for Product Promotion. In *Marketing and Innovation Management*, 2013, Vol. 4, No. 1, p. 89.

41 SAVANEVSKYJ, M.: *Za ostanni 5 mistatsiv perekhody z sotsialnykh merezh na sayty ZMI zrosly u 8-10 raziv*. [online]. [2018-09-15]. Available at: <<http://watcher.com.ua/2014/03/17/za-ostanni-5-misyatsiv-perekhody-z-sotsialnyh-merezh-na-sayty-zmi-zrosly-u-8-10-raziv/>>.

42 HOLUB, O.: *10% of News in Ukrainian Media Are Doubtful - Research of IMI*. [online]. [2018-05-15]. Available at: <<http://imi.org.ua/news/10-dzherel-v-novynah-rehionalnyh-media-je-sumnivnymy-doslidzhennya-imi/>>.

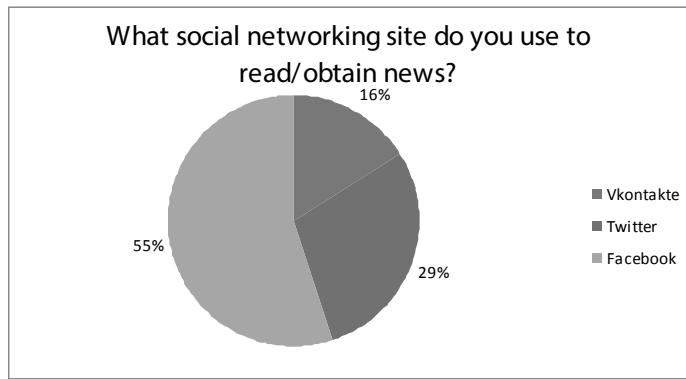


Figure 1: What social networking site do you use to read/obtain news?
Source: own processing

Such situation is not strange, however, because Ukrainian media channels do not use all possibilities *Twitter* offers (such as broadcasting or online streaming), but often complement them, providing its users with alternative opportunities to contribute more actively to the wider media sphere. But it stands to mention that only the leading TV channels in Ukraine promote their programmes on this social network, and the regional ones usually ignore it; at the same time, foreign TV channels use it actively.

Interesting news, of course, plays an important role. The surveyed respondents claim that they do not click on the news they see in the news feed very often. However, when a headline catches their eye, they will proceed to the news site. If their social media news feeds were not maintained continuously, TV channels would start to lose their viewers and followers on social networks.

Interesting headlines are immensely important. Having read a headline, one understands whether she/he wants to click on and read the rest (76%). 24% of the surveyed people do not trust headlines and never pay attention to them. It is common to see an extraordinary provocative, yet catchy headline, which does not always correspond with the message (Fig. 2).

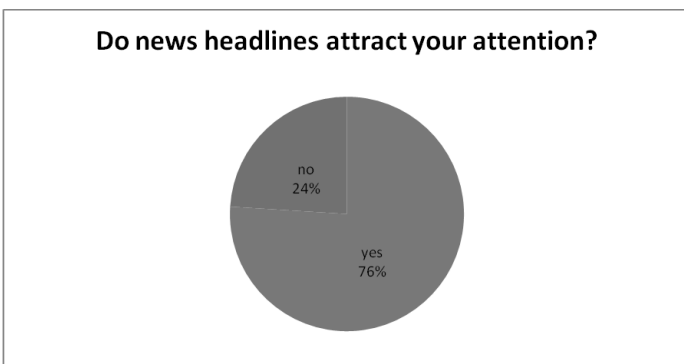


Figure 2: Do news headlines attract your attention?
Source: own processing

Photos and videos are also important for TV channel promotion on social networks. We asked the research participants whether photos in news posts were important to them, and whether they watched live broadcasting: 60% of the surveyed people claim that photos are important as they draw their attention to the message. 31.2% of these respondents are aged 18-24, 19.2% are aged 25-40, 6.4% of these research participants are aged 41-50, 2.4% are 51-65 years old and 0.8% of them are aged 66 and over.

Only 22% of the respondents declare that they see a headline first and then notice a photo (8.4% of them are aged 25-40; 4.4% aged 51-65; 4% aged 18-24; 3.8% aged 41-50; 1.4% aged 66 and more). 98% of the surveyed respondents have shared interesting information posted on social networking sites by journalists working for TV channels at least once and stand ready to do so again.

As of live broadcasting, this option is not very popular yet, but it is gradually getting its reach. 14% of the surveyed always watch online TV channels via social networks. These respondents are mostly younger; in particular, 10.4% of them are aged 18-24; 2.4% aged 25-40 and 1.2% aged 41-50. 46% of all research participants watch live broadcasting if they are interested (different age groups almost equally), and 20% of the respondents never watch it because they do not want to spend their time by doing so (usually elderly people). Another 20% use the function of automatically displaying live broadcasts (these respondents are young predominantly). By selecting the news events carefully, the TV channels providing live broadcasting via SNS will be able to draw attention of their (mostly younger) audiences and thus use the live broadcasting as an effective promotion tool.

The question whether a large number of posts from one TV channel annoys the audience brought interesting results. 53% of the respondents claim that frequent posts from one TV channel bother them, but they are still not ready to unsubscribe their favourite TV channels' accounts on social networks. Among them, 16.6% are aged 18-24; 17.4% aged 25-40; 9.6% aged 41-50; 7% aged 51-65 and 2.4% aged 66 and older. However, 13% of all our respondents are ready to unsubscribe the TV channels' social media profiles which bother them due to excessive posting (5.4% of them are aged 18-24, 7% aged 25-40, 0.2% aged 41-50, 0.4% aged 51-65). And finally, 34% of all respondents are satisfied with the amount of information TV channels' accounts on social networks provide them with.

TV channels' audiences active on social networks like holiday greetings as well as being invited to respond to surveys these media outlets publish. They are pleased to express their views and take up discussions. However, not everybody takes part in contests. Only 2% of the surveyed respondents have even won a prize on basis of participating in such a contest, but they claim the memory of winning it evokes positive emotions. The viewers would rather join flash mobs than participate in contests. 22% of the research participants stand to continue supporting initiatives of the TV channels' accounts they watch or follow. Among them, young respondents (13.4% are aged 18-24) prevail over adults (only 7.2% aged 25-40, 1% of those aged 41-50 and 0.4% of the respondents aged 51-65 share this opinion).

Conclusions

TV channels' audiences, who read and view journalistic materials on SNS, are willing to join online discussions, as well as flash mobs. Some of them also take part in contests organised via social networks. According to the results of our survey, young audiences are the most users of social networks. The most popular social network amongst this audience segments is *Facebook*. The respondents of the age 18-24 and 25-40 get news from social networks, pay attention to visual materials and watch live broadcasts provided by TV channels' accounts on social networks. Besides, they want to get exclusive information and stay in touch with the behind-the-scenes events related to their favourite TV channels through live videos or photos posted on the TV channels' social media accounts. Thus, TV channels' social media accounts should include new information, possibilities of permanent interactive communication, quizzes, challenges, surveys, live broadcasts, opportunities to communicate with famous anchors, actors, etc. It is desirable for TV channels to create different profiles on social networks to promote their most popular TV programmes, reality shows or serials. Thanks to this, users can talk to each other, discuss what they have seen on the screen, communicate with journalists or actors, ask or speculate about what will happen next, etc. Audiences also like to take part in contests and get prizes like T-shirts with their favourite actors, souvenirs, free tickets, etc.

Speaking about adult and elderly audiences (aged 51-65 and 66 and older), we should notice that they also get information from social networks, but mostly read headlines and sometimes pay attention to photos; however, they are much less likely to watch videos or online broadcasts than younger recipients. Consequently,

TV promotion must be focused on social media users of different age groups and spread in different ways. In order to strengthen TV channels' presence on social networks, we offer recommendations that may help them effectively promote their programming via SNS.

It is necessary to learn how to 'dumb down' effectively and present information that is easy to understand. Social media content's creators are not supposed to look smarter than their audiences. These posts are read and watched by different people who might not be able to understand difficult terms or smart phrases. The balance needs to be maintained.

Pieces of information should be presented in a striking manner, because social networkers pass over mediocrity. TV channels should not be afraid to publish different kinds of social media content than their competitors maintaining their own social networking accounts. Professionals managing such social media profiles should be as objective as possible and creative. Such efforts are always appreciated, especially if they result in entertaining ways of information dissemination. For instance, *Radio 24's Facebook* page constantly posts interesting, sometimes even funny information to distract the users from negativity included in most breaking news, and *zaxid.net* submits amusing photos from *The Simpsons* to every post.

It is a common mistake to use the same materials on a TV channel's social media account and in its 'traditional' broadcasting. When promoting television content on social networking sites, one should mind the reasons why people spend some much time on social networks. They need to communicate and provide immediate feedback, while 'traditional' TV broadcasting is based on rather one-way communication. Many TV channels tend to make these mistakes since they have to follow certain economic imperatives and cannot resist the temptation to post the same materials on their social media profile and websites. For example, *BBC*, while it maintains multiple specialised social media accounts related to various programmes and spheres of interest, posts only the most important news of the world, always searching for something innovative and interesting.

We should also emphasise that 'quiet' time on social networks is from 2 a.m. to 6 a.m. At this time journalists should serve only the most urgent, force majeure news that the reader will notice later, i.e. in the morning. However, the audiences still appreciate such efficiency. Other pieces of information of lower importance should be submitted in the morning. *Facebook* even allows media professionals to 'plan' publishing of news. After creating a post, a journalist can select the function of 'planning' and choose the right time so the news will be published on time.⁴³

There are also additional aspects to consider. Since social networking is a two-way street, it is necessary to constantly monitor the Internet community bound to a specific TV channel's social media account and communicate with the users. Those who engage in this communication and shape the account's content also represent the TV channel's brand and online reputation. The needs and preferences of the targeted users cannot be ignored or underestimated, especially today, when 'traditional' TV channels have to face strong competitors such as Internet-based over-the-top television services and their strong presence on social media.⁴⁴ All TV channels present on social media should place greater emphasis on subliminal advertising and associative visuals so that most messages are perceived in relation with their brands. It is unwise to ignore a chance to remind the audiences what is (presumably) most important and interesting, but the users cannot be bothered by excessive and repetitive contents. Social networks are developing very quickly. It is clear that some tools for TV channels' promotion are more advanced, while others are – at least supposedly – less efficient. In order to maintain a TV channel's social media account's popularity and progress, the account's managers cannot focus on a single promotion tool, strategy or tactic which may fail or will be inefficient in the near future. New promotional tools can be discovered at any moment. When working with social networking sites, media professionals affiliated with TV channels have to stick to the officially approved rules. However, there are also some unspoken ones, breaking of which can immediately cause negative response of the Internet community. It is essential to study the communication environment where these kinds of advertising campaigns will take place. Advertising campaigns related to TV programming, future messages that may be

generated in this regard and the ways of presenting such campaigns have to comply with the established rules and 'cultural norms' related to social networking. It is necessary to figure out all possible steps and remember that competitors constantly watch all the steps taken. Provocative or unverified information and unethical photos are often risky to publish via social media.

Having seen 10 similar posts on her/his the news feed in a short time, the reader may get tired and simply unfollow a TV channel's social media page or set different preferences of seeing its content. Professionals managing such accounts should always consider what to publish and post only the most interesting and striking information.

Social media tools for promoting TV channels should not only appreciate the social networkers who follow them but also provide them with multiple chances to win prizes in exchange for posting their own videos, ideas and thoughts. Dealing with the audiences who are active on social networks requires rewarding their interest and communication, including 'likes', comments, posts, etc. Moreover, television broadcasting itself must not forget to invite the viewers to join or follow the TV channel's social media accounts and communities.

In summary, TV channels' messages and communication activities related to social networks provide available and operative pieces information to any user. Social media help media professionals acquire immediate feedback and thus eliminate their previous mistakes, monitor public views, communicate with the audience and promote their TV programmes in many different ways. Therefore, further research is needed to define what social media strategies can (and should) television networks employ to facilitate and manage audience interactions. It is also necessary to find out what programmes are not conducive to this form of engagement, and therefore limit the potential applications of social media as television enhancements. And last but not least, media scholars need to investigate how does research into television audiences' social media activities compare and connect with more conventional approaches to obtaining television ratings and conducting market research.

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