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Digital technologies in shaping the image of the political elite of Saint Petersburg

Alexandra S. Merkusheva¹  , Ekaterina A. Tuzova² ,
Nikita V. Grishanin³ 

¹Scientific Research Foundation “XXI century”, *St. Petersburg, Russian Federation*

²Communication agency R.I.M. PN, *Moscow, Russian Federation*

³Plekhanov Russian University of Economics, *Moscow, Russian Federation*

 a.s.merkusheva@bk.ru

Abstract. Analyzing the modern trend of “digitalization” in various spheres of contemporary social life, the authors considered its applications in order to form the image of the political elite of Saint Petersburg in the person of representatives of the legislative power of the city — the deputies of the Legislative Assembly of Saint Petersburg. This analysis is important for the construction of competent and relevant communication with the public, as well as in the formation of the trend for openness and transparency of communication between the authorities and the population. Moreover, the authors explore how digital tools and platforms can enhance civic engagement and participation, providing a framework for understanding the dynamics of power and accountability in the digital age. The findings underscore the necessity for political representatives to adapt to technological advancements to foster trust and collaboration with constituents, ultimately contributing to a more informed and engaged society.

Keywords: the dominant stratum, computer technology, MPs, social networks, telegram channel, personal blog

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Introduction

The use of digital technologies is the leading trend of our time. One of the areas they have a direct impact on is communication practices that shape and support political elites in modern Russia [1].

This study allows to understand what changes have occurred in this process and how the introduction of digitalization has influenced the development of information activities of the political elite [2].

The study examines the problem of low awareness of citizens of modern Russia about the activities of deputies of the Legislative Assembly of St. Petersburg, and provides recommendations for the development of personal information channels (blogs) of political leaders in the context of digitalization.

The aim of the study is to describe effective digital communications of political elites in informing young audiences about the activities of municipal and city authorities.

Methods

Social networks are an important aspect in promoting political elites in modern Russia. They help to communicate with the population most quickly and interactively, providing original and open information using digital technologies [3].

In this study, the focus was on the activities of deputies of the Legislative Assembly of St. Petersburg, as well as on the role of digital technologies in maintaining personal blogs on social networks. The methodology was tested in the form of a survey conducted among more than 200 students of various higher educational institutions of St. Petersburg. The results of the survey were used as a basis for analysis of communication activities, the degree of recognition of the deputy in the context of digitalization, as well as the attitude of the audience to the content provided. During the survey, problematic questions were asked: Do you know the deputy of your district? How often do you receive information about deputies of the Legislative Assembly of St. Petersburg? Which sources of information about deputies of the Legislative Assembly of St. Petersburg do you prefer to use? Are you satisfied with the activities of deputies of the Legislative Assembly of St. Petersburg? With the help of processing and analyzing the responses from respondents, we will have to develop ideas to solve the problems of insufficient awareness and low confidence of young people in the activities of deputies of the St. Petersburg's Legislative Assembly.

Survey results

The promotion of the political elite of modern Russia is a very complex and multifaceted process in which various communication channels are actively used [4, 5]. The most popular communication channel in the era of digitalization is undoubtedly social networks [6, 7].

In our survey, it was revealed that social networks are the leading platform for young people to receive information about political events and personalities. According to the survey, it was revealed that more than 36.5% of respondents are on the current political agenda precisely thanks to the personal blogs of political leaders (Fig. 1). With the help of the digitalization process, it became possible to create their own personal blogs on social networks, in which interesting events are broadcast in an interactive format in the city. In blogs, MPs share their ideas and opinions with the public in a freer and more open format. Through these channels, politicians receive comments from the public, which introduces an element of transparency and accessibility in communicating with a representative of the government. Thus, deputies from various districts can be closer to citizens, see their current problems and requests, which can be answered more quickly thanks to the introduction of digital technologies. Social networks also made it possible to go live, answer citizens' questions in real time and without leaving home. This corresponds to previous studies [8].

What sources of information about deputies of the Legislative Assembly of the city of St. Petersburg do you intend to use?

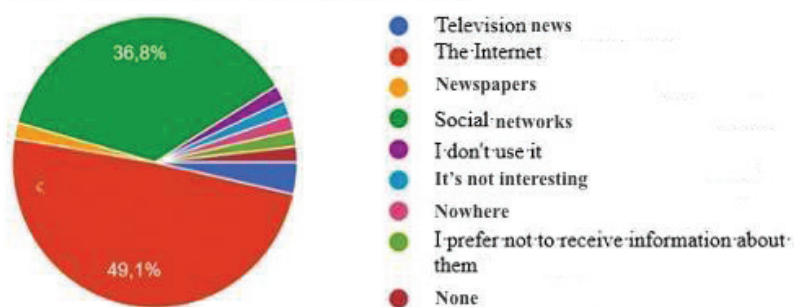


Fig. 1. The respondents' answers to the question: "What sources of information about the deputies of the Legislative Assembly of the city of Saint Petersburg do you intend to use?"

Source: made by Merkusheva A.S., Tuzova E.A., Grishanin N.V. based on online survey.

The study also determined the level of satisfaction with the broadcast information in the telegram channels of deputies. So, today the youth audience is divided into two "groupings": one does not trust — 1 point out of 10, the other — by 5 out of 10 (Fig. 2). The data may indicate that the population does not see the results of the deputies' work, therefore it believes that the political elites are not doing anything for their favorable accommodation in the area.

It is also worth saying that in the course of the study, the youth of St. Petersburg noted their extremely low interest in the information broadcast by deputies. According to the respondents' answers, 49.1% of the population

do not follow and are not interested in the work and activities of political leaders at all, and 38.6% rarely (Fig. 3). Based on the results, it can be concluded that, on the one hand, the content and information broadcast by deputies in their information channels is uninteresting and not useful to citizens. On the other hand, there is no promotion of social networks, personal websites and other platforms to promote the work of deputies.

Are you satisfied with the activities of the deputies of the Legislative Assembly? 57 responses

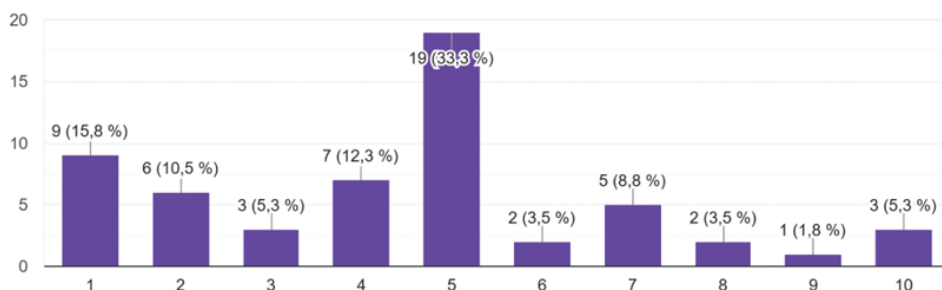


Fig. 2. The respondents' answers to the question: "Are you satisfied with the activities of the deputies of the Legislative Assembly?": horizontal — rating points from 1 to 10; vertical — number of respondents who chose this or that rating out of 10 possible ratings

Source: made by Merkusheva A.S., Tuzova E.A., Grishanin N.V. based on online survey.

How often do you receive information about the activities of deputies of the Legislative Assembly of the city of St. Petersburg?

57 responses

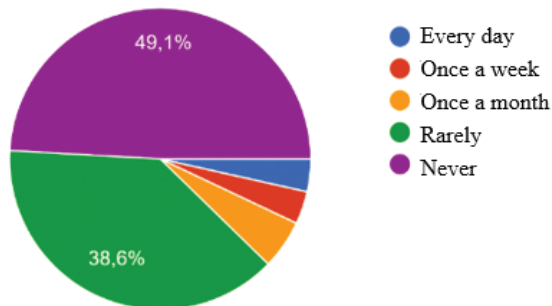


Fig. 3. The respondents' answers to the question: "How often do you receive information about the activities of the deputies of the Legislative Assembly of Saint Petersburg?"

Source: made by Merkusheva A.S., Tuzova E.A., Grishanin N.V. based on online survey.

Based on the conducted research, we have identified the problem of low awareness of citizens about the real activities of a deputy broadcast on social networks. This may encourage political elites to make more active use of digital technology opportunities in their blogs, as well as in the process of promoting their

personal position. It is also worth saying that according to the results of the survey, today, despite the actively developing digitalization in the country, there is a problem of low awareness of the results of the work of deputies of the Legislative Assembly of St. Petersburg on social networks. Due to the lack of proper coverage of the activities of political elites, citizens have low confidence in their work [9], as well as a lack of interest in them. We can also find the data as confirmation in other sources [10—12].

To solve the problem of low awareness of citizens about the deputy's activities broadcast on social networks, it is proposed to introduce several ideas to promote a personal blog in the telegram channel [13, 14].

The personal blog of Alexander Novikov, deputy of the Legislative Assembly of St. Petersburg, was chosen as an example of the development of the telegram channel. The first thing to do is to create a telegram bot. With it, all citizens will be able to write their question on any topic in a convenient form (Fig. 4). Such bots allow to collect all comments, questions and suggestions in one place for further processing. So, in the selected personal blog, one can create a bot on entrepreneurship, ecology, publishing, citizens' appeals, etc.

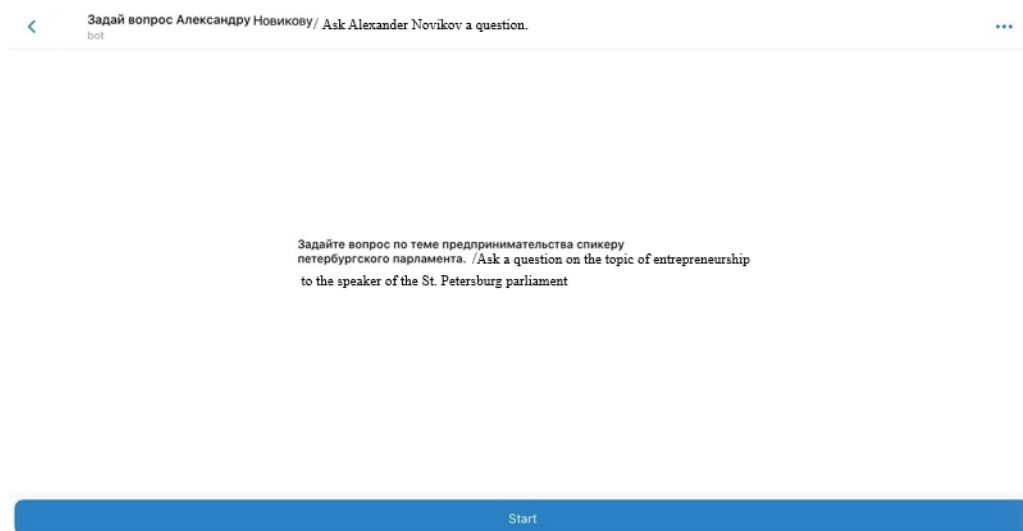


Fig. 4. Example of a Telegram Bot for a Deputy's Personal Blog

Source: made by Merkusheva A.S., Tuzova E.A., Grishanin N.V. using Telegram application with personal permission of Deputy of the Legislative Assembly of St. Petersburg A.S. Novikov.

The second idea is to create an interesting and creative column, which will become a distinctive feature of the deputy among other blogs. It is proposed to create a heading “Just about the main thing”, where a representative of the people in an informal setting gives interviews on various topics (see Fig. 5). The latest draft laws, current news in the city and country, philosophical issues and personal hobbies can be considered. This interactive format will allow voters to show different sides of the elected candidate, see his answer to their questions and create the most complete image portrait of the deputy.

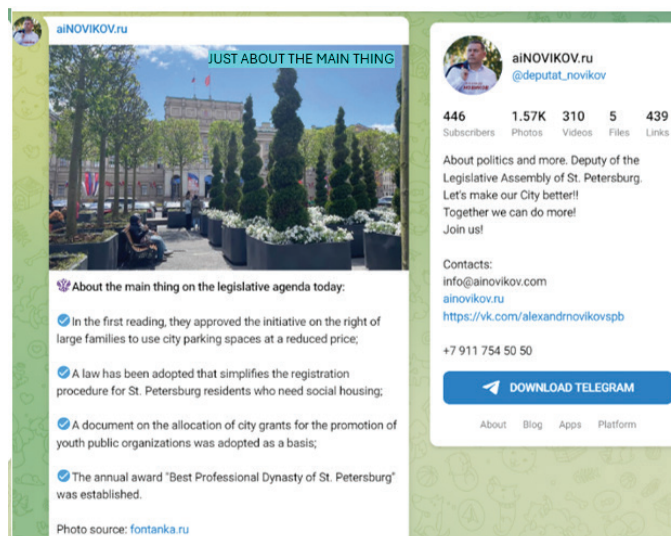


Fig. 5. Example of the “Just About the Main” section in the telegram channel

Source: made by Merkusheva A.S., Tuzova E.A., Grishanin N.V. using Telegram application with personal permission of Deputy of the Legislative Assembly of St. Petersburg A.S. Novikov.

It is also proposed to add visibility and reporting in the telegram channel through several actions. So, it is worth taking off “circles” more often with a momentary reaction to questions or other important topics in a Telegram. In addition to the above, it is possible to introduce a heading “In the fields”, where the deputy will show the reception of citizens and the solution of real tasks from the scene. Also, to promote the deputy’s work, it is recommended to create business cards with a QR code, which will be an excellent opportunity to expand the audience in a personal blog. Thus, these ideas will contribute to solving the problems identified by the survey of the youth of our city. Interesting content will be generated, including aimed at young people, visual results and live communication will also be shown, which will build trust with voters.

Conclusions

In the contemporary world, there is a significant change in communication practices. The development of new information technologies in the era of digitalization, especially the Internet and social networks, has led to the emergence of new communication channels and opportunities for information exchange among political elites. Deputies are now actively developing their social media and online platforms to establish direct communication with voters and form public opinion. However, there are unrealized opportunities in the communications of deputies with the people — the full use of digital technologies. Apathy of young people towards the political life of the city is also noted, which leads to a decrease in public confidence in the activities of political leaders. As recommendations, it may be proposed to systematize

the communication activities of deputies in terms of publication activity and feedback on social networks, more careful formation of the content plan and its diversity. It is useful to shoot video content more frequently in real time, as well as provide a video report of the results of the work done. The deputy's initiative and regular contact with the residents of his district will also play a positive role. Thus, people will be able to get to know their deputy better, appreciate his work and work, watching the real results of his work.

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Information about the authors:

Alexandra S. Merkusheva — Head of the Public Relations Department, Research Foundation “XXI CENTURY”, 28 Bolshaya Deshchinnaya st., St. Petersburg, Russian Federation, 115054 (ORCID ID: 0009-0007-8638-5982) (e-mail: a.s.merkusheva@bk.ru).

Ekaterina A. Tuzova — Employee, Communication Agency “RIM PN”, 36 Bolshaya Novodmitrovskaya st., bld. 1, Moscow, Russian Federation, 127015 (ORCID ID: 0009-0000-0456-4856) (e-mail: tuzova@rim-pn.ru).

Nikita V. Grishanin — PhD of Cultural Studies, Plekhanov Russian University of Economics, 36 Stremyanny lane, Moscow, Russian Federation, 115054 (ORCID ID: 0000-0001-8872-633X) (e-mail: nikitag@bk.ru).

Цифровые технологии в формировании имиджа политической элиты Санкт-Петербурга

А.С. Меркушева¹  , Е.А. Тузова² , Н.В. Гришанин³ 

¹Фонд научных исследований «XXI век», Санкт-Петербург, Россия

²Коммуникационное агентство «Р.И.М. ПН», Москва, Россия

³Российский экономический университет им. Г.В. Плеханова, Москва, Россия

 a.s.merkusheva@bk.ru

Аннотация. Проведен анализ современного тренда «цифровизации» в различных сферах жизни, рассмотрено применение цифровизации для формирования имиджа политической элиты Санкт-Петербурга в лице представителей законодательной власти города — депутатов Законодательного Собрания Санкт-Петербурга. Этот анализ важен для построения грамотной и актуальной коммуникации с общественностью, а также формирования тренда на открытость и прозрачность общения представителей власти с населением.

Ключевые слова: господствующая прослойка, компьютерные технологии, депутаты, социальные сети, телеграм-канал, личный блог

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