

Preserving Human Mental Health through Control of Pathogenic Text in Mass Media by Means of Indexing and Marking

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Background: Subject of this research paper is problem of pathogenic text as method for manipulating human consciousness and its dissemination through mass media, which due to their specific, make such manipulation most effective. Mass media have mastered metaphoric language, which can flawlessly influence readers' imagination. According to the theory of psychic mechanisms (reflection – projection – objectification), described in this paper, humans can create, design, build, view objects and phenomena from known and realized elements (Maksymenko, 2008). Since one of characteristic feature of human psychology is transference, analogy, building of associative series, one of the questions analyzed in the paper is: what actions would be performed by the person, what she will be capable of creating or designing, imagining and realizing, if, with everyday information flow, her consciousness will be “consuming” descriptions of awful outcomes of catastrophes, detailed descriptions (photos) of bloodied corpses, details of sexual crimes, corruption cases of governmental officials, deliberations about total decay of its country. Such technologies are used today in psychological operations (PSYOPS) carried as part of informational wars. Work (first of all intellectual), as meaningful activity (including arts), requires that its results should first be visualized in form of vision, thought or feeling (Bila, 2014). This allows to compare it with subject of work, its transformation and result of work. This way vision, which drives person activity, is realized in object form.

Purpose: Define social responsibility for quality of disseminated information, considering potential psychosocial harm from consumption by auditorium pathogenic information due to lack of control over information flows, that becomes weapon in today's information warfare; review approaches to solving this problem in the world community and propose possible alternative solution.

Methods: We use *theoretical research method* to gather information about developments and results in research on psychology of linguistic influence and existing methods of overcoming influence of pathogenic texts. Then we applied *method of inverse analysis and synthesis* making assumption that Bayesian text classifier algorithm can be used to analyze level of pathogenic information, delivered by modern mass media. Using *synergetic approach* we developed system for filtering and evaluating texts based on level of pathogenic influence by feeding them into adaptive Bayesian classifier software.

Results: It is implied that there is direct dependency between demonstration of shows with negative content and anomalies in audience behavior. Scenes of violence should cause fights or murders, erotic scenes should trigger sexual activity of audience, commercials – urge to felony, etc. Usually extreme forms of social deviations – crimes, are being highlighted as results of negative impact of information on humans.

There are other threats in consumption of pathogenic text: e.g. informational addiction. Once experiencing emotional reaction, e.g. interest, fear, shock, stress, after consuming information (text describing scandal, tragedy or sensation), person will seek to repeat experience. According to researchers, besides strong addiction to such informational drug and inability to exist without it, people exhibit:

- readiness to consume any, even very “dirty” informational drug;
- the need to increase the dose of consumption, as well as the use of stronger drugs. In the case of informational addiction, this is expressed, for example, in increasing the time spent watching TV or the attraction to texts of a pathological nature;
- narrowing of consciousness and vital interests;
- decreased insight, loss of will, responsibility and informational independence;
- the state of chronic exhaustion in the form of a syndrome of chronic fatigue.

Socially, information addiction is expressed in increased external control of people. Any addiction, including informational, is usually caused by temptation to get something with minimal efforts.

We need to separately highlight our interest in text-based mass media (printed or blogs) versus audio-visual mass media (broadcast and digital), where flow of negative information seems to be magnitudes larger. In particular, paper touches specifics of written information perception. Contrary to the TV, where information is served fragmented, creating illusion of real-time and diversity, in press and other text-based mass media information is structured, with well thought composition, which makes it more memorable. Information is imprinted in readers memory, creating so called “anchor”, which is commonly used in neuro-linguistic programming practices (Levchenko, 2001).

Nowadays, especially considering information warfare, widely conducted across the globe, discussions about effectiveness/necessity of control over information flows become extremely heated. In this paper, we analyze

existing solutions, implemented in various countries and communities, e.g., creation of community media oversight boards, content validation during licensing process, expert reviews of broadcasts, etc. Most communities approach fighting pathogenic text through creation of additional legal barriers for publisher/broadcaster. Unfortunately, none of currently used approaches are feasible, since after deeper analysis, performed by the author, all of them are either insufficiently objective or independent, or have technical flaws, which make them unfit for Ukrainian environment.

We see resolution for the pathogenic text influence on human consciousness in person herself, in her self-awareness and ability to independently assess situation and make decisions. One of approaches to protecting society from pathogenic text without censorship, could be marking of pathogenic level of each specific article or publication, in the way similar to one adopted in Germany (Volkov & Sarytchev, 2000), but marking all information products, including printed. We also suggest not to limit markings to “pathogenic” or “non-pathogenic” labeling, but show percentage of text pathogenicity. By informing consumer of level of negative impact by particular text, we give him/her opportunity to decide about necessity or desire to read this text.

Suggested system is similar to nutrition labeling for food products. Nobody should dictate a person what to eat, but we can explain, how excessive consumption of, e.g. fats and cholesterol, impacts health as well, as provide markings how much each product contains these ingredients. Decision about necessity to consume particular product is made by person independently, based on health status and, finally, appetite.

Conclusion: Approach described in this paper would allow each individual to control consumption of pathogenic texts, based on individual preferences, psychological well-being and need for adrenaline stimulation. Paper also demonstrates that for practical implementation of pathogenic text detection, there is need for an objective method of text classification and describes method developed by the author after series of psychological and sociological researches, which allows to apply criteria for detecting pathogenic text without human intervention. We propose automatic classification method based on Bayesian filters (Himmelblau, 1970), (Yerazunis, 2003).

Keywords: mental health, informational warfare, mass media, information, consciousness, influence, protection, text classification.

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