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# Leaders 2.0 through Crisis Communications in Ukraine: or Facebook in Use

*As the 2012 elections show, social media is no longer the "existing new frontier" for political campaigning. Social media is a normal and central form of communications with distinctly different properties than traditional mass media approaches. Obama has set the bar for future campaigns but social media and network structures should be given serious attention in the media strategy, whether it's for politicians, organizations, brands, or public service initiatives.*

Pamela Rutledge[1]

**Summary.** The purpose of this paper is to analyze the effectiveness of the use of social media in political image construction. Characteristics of popular Ukrainian politicians' communicative strategies are fixed and traced in this research. This information can be used to effectively construct the individual image of politicians who want to establish constructive interaction with the electorate through the Facebook network. The research results allow deepening of the knowledge about effective strategies of political leaders' image construction in social media through a local context.

**Key words:** crisis, political image construction, politics 2.0, leaders 2.0, Facebook, Ukraine

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[1] P. Rutledge, *How Obama Won the Social Media Battle in the 2012 Presidential Campaign*, "The Media Psychology Blog", 2013, http://mprcenter.org/blog/2013/01/how-obama-won-the-social-media-battle-in-the-2012-presidential-campaign/ [22.10.2014].

# Introduction

In the current global world the political, economic, and information spaces are being formed where, namely, the Internet presents the core factor facilitating this space formation and development. The Internet is used practically in all social communications and covers a great number of social activities: from politics to education. In politics, its main functions are to inform, communicate, and become an active political player. The role and influence of the Net in Political communication becomes so strong that even the term *cyberpolitics* has been coined to depict this phenomenon[2].

The cyberpolitics data analysis shows a great variety of web genres that are used for political communication running through the web, including e-mails, discussion groups, web pages, blogs, social networks, ad banners, and online news groups all with cutting edge opportunities provided by web technologies, including Web 2.0 (see bibliography). Earlier political stakeholders who moved online used the web only to strengthen long-standing political goals and to shape both public perceptions and media agendas. The latest research reveals that now citizens are using the net as a political vehicle in novel ways, and not only ordinary citizens, but numerous political actors including even candidates for the presidency[3]. It was Barack Obama who used the Internet effectively to organize his supporters in a way that would have in the past required an army of volunteers and paid organizers on the ground. Thus, Obama's campaign took all the advantages provided by YouTube for free advertising and the videos located there were more effective than television ads because viewers chose to watch them or received them from a friend instead of having their television shows interrupted. The Internet also lets people repeatedly listen to the candidates' words in the face of attacks, as it was with Obama's Speech on Race in 2008: 6.7 million people watched his 37-minute speech on YouTube[4]. Pamela Rutledge argues that Obama is the first social media president. In 2012, he reached "expertise on his team he had and [an] established social media machine [that was] up and running"[5]. Some scholars and media persons speak about the social media political phenomenon as Obama 2.0[6].

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[2] N. Choucri, *Cyberpolitics in International Relations*, MIT Press, 2012.

[3] P. Rutledge, op. cit.

[4] G.R. Boynton, *Political Leadership in the Web 2.0 World*, 2008, http://newpolcom.rhul.ac.uk/politics-web-20-paper-download/John-Kerry-Do-tComCommunity.html [22.10.2014]; C.C. Miller, *How Obama's Internet Campaign Changed Politics*, "The New York Times", 7 November 2008, http://bits.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/11/07/how-obamas-Internet-campaign-changed-politics/ [22.10.2014]; P. Rutledge, op. cit.; A.T. Small, *Canadian Politics in 140 Characters: Party Politics in the Twitterverse*, "Canadian Parliamentary Review" 2010, pp. 39-45.

[5] P. Rutledge, op. cit.

[6] *American politics: Obama 2.0*, "The Guardian. Editorial", 20 January 2013, www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/jan/20/american-politics-obama [22.10.2014].

The internet provides an effective tool for various aspects of political activities: in personal campaigning, crisis communication, fundraising, democratizing, and consolidating the citizenry and society on a whole, party elections, etc. (see bibliography).

# 1. Theoretic Background

## 1.1. Politics 2.0

Technological changes very often initiate a shift in social interactions[7]. The rise of Web 2.0 gave birth to Politics 2.0, the next stage of cyber-politics which influences online and offline political communications as a whole. Thus, the term Politics 2.0 was coined to differentiate political communications based on the intensive use of Web 2.0 technologies from the ones supported by Web 1.0. Generally, Web 2.0 refers to the explosion of services like social networking sites, wikis, blogs, podcasts, RSS feeds, photo and file sharing systems (e.g., Flickr, SlideShare, YouTube, Instagram) and so on. Web 2.0 has become a buzz word describing a set of social media available on the net[8]. These technologies helped make the Internet even more interactive, user-friendly, and content-rich than it was in the first stage of its development, known as Web 1.0. Due to Web 2.0 the most audacious dreams of the Internet's founding fathers, like Vinton Cerf, Tim Berners-Lee, or Robert Kahn, about the web being a global write/read blackboard for everybody, have been turned into reality[9]. Digg, a social book-mark site, announces a partnership with the CBS Company for political coverage of the elections in the USA and also hosts its own candidates' pages. MySpace holds its own presidential primary the day before the Iowa caucuses, where Barack Obama and Ron Paul won. Social network Facebook (FB) cosponsored the Republican and Democratic debates with ABC and also published its own polling data. In her recent speech, Hillary Clinton stated that America "had/s a government blogging team"[10]. In 2007 when

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[7] R. Posner, *Interviews and conversations on human evolution & transformation*, 2005, www.gurusoftware.com/gurunet/Interviews.htm [22.10.2014].

[8] M. Turnek, N.W. Jankowski, *Social Media and Politics: Theoretical and Methodological Considerations in Designing a Study of Political Engagement*, paper presented at Politics: Web 2.0: An International Conference, 17-18 April 2008, p. 1, http://newpolcom.rhul.ac.uk/politics-web-2-0-conference [22.10.2014].

[9] T. O'Reilly, *What is Web 2.0: Design Patterns and Business Models for the Next generation of Software*, 2005, www.oreillynet.com/pub/a/oreilly/tim/news/2005/09/30/what-is-web-20.html/ [22.10.2014].

[10] S. Arrison, *When Web 2.0 Meets Politics*, "TechNewsWorld", 1 September 2008. www.technewsworld.com/story/61156.html [22.10.2014].

candidates began preparing for the U. S. Presidential Primaries, CNN coined the term YouTube-fication of Politics to describe this social activity[11].

The founder of the Web 2.0 concept O'Reilly, suggests that Web 2.0 is more participative in nature, contrary to Web 1.0 which is static and non-interactive[12]. Therefore, in terms of political discourse, Web 2.0 inherently encourages bottom-up communication and promotes grass-root political activities and participatory democracy[13]. Italian social scholars Mascheroni and Minucci also emphasize that the use of Web 2.0 leads to the emerging "convergence culture" which is drastically changing the boundaries between the production and consumption of media content: thanks to the "architecture of participation", Internet-users become prosumers (consumer + producer) in sharing, manipulating, and re-assembling digital media content, or producing a consistent volume of user-generated content. "These grass-root practices are changing audiences' relationships not only with cultural industries and their products, but also with politics and traditional social institutions"[14].

Jackson and Lilleker examine the differences between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0, as well as, how these web strategies are used within a political communication context, namely, how political parties (and their leaders) in Britain use Web 2.0 applications. Their paper defines Web 1.0 and Web 2.0, specifies the differences and similarities between these concepts, and discusses how they are, and can be, used by parties in the UK. They also investigate the shifts in the way British politicians communicate. Their analysis suggests that British political parties have sought to create a "Web 1.5" that offers the advantages of both Web 1.0 and Web 2.0[15].The scholars stress that the increasing move towards professionalism encourages political elites to use new technologies to gain an edge. However, when used by political elites, does Web 2.0 reflect technological, psychological, or no change? When considering the social impact of Web 2.0, these scholars fix two distinct features in play; firstly, the concept of an architecture of participation, creating an informational democracy from below; secondly, the demand for a shift in organizational thinking in terms of wishing to be an equal, non-elite, partner within that democratic structure. The question is whether these two competing forces can actually be reconciled[16].

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[11]  M. Turnek, N.W. Jankowski, op. cit.

[12]  T. O'Reilly, op. cit.

[13]  A. Chadwick, *Politics: Web 2.0: An International Conference: New Political Communication*, Unit, 17 January 2008, http://newpolcom.rhul.ac.uk/politics-web-2-0-conference/ [22.10.2014].

[14]  G. Mascheroni, S. Minucci, *European Elections in the Italian web sphere: campaigning 2.0?*, Ipsa International Conference, Luxembourg 2010, Panel: European Elections and the Internet, https://www.academia.edu/1497818/European_Elections_in_the_Italian_web_sphere_campaigning_2.0 [22.10.2014].

[15]  N.A. Jackson, D.G. Lilleker, *Building an Architecture of Participation? Political Parties and Web 2.0 in Britain*, "Journal of Information Technology & Politics" 2009, Vol. 6, Issue 3-4, pp. 232-250.

[16]  Ibidem, p. 234.

Similar results were presented in Mascheroni and Minucci's research of European Elections on the Italian web[17]. The scholars traced the influence of Web 2.0 tools during the 2009 European Election campaign in Italy. They analyzed the candidates' websites and their use of Web 2.0 tools, as well as, the monitoring of the campaign in social media (namely, FB and YouTube). The main result revealed a persisting divide existing in the distribution of parties and coalitions online. Most candidates who had a personal website integrated Web 2.0 tools. Simultaneously, nonetheless, these social media tools advance some challenges to the traditional styles and patterns of political communication. That is, the control over the flow of information traditionally held by parties or candidates in their top-down communication process becomes the main obstacle for successful communication with their electorate. The authors suggest a strategic appropriation and adaptation of Web 2.0, resulting in a hybrid communication model, in between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0, which allows to use new social media more effectively[18]. This hybrid model is labelled as "Web 1.5" referring to the "extensive use of the architecture of participation, but much less use of the community's democratic structure"[19].

Kalnesa studied Norwegian political parties' adaption of Web 2.0 before and during the long campaign of the local elections in September 2007. By 2007, most parties had learned to use their web sites as instruments of professional political marketing. The researcher asked whether the emergence of Web 2.0, with its potential for grassroots participation and networking, as well as, multilateral interactivity, was a catalyst of "e-ruptive" change towards greater pluralism or participation. His data indicated that in terms of party competition, Web 2.0 had, at best, a weak pluralizing effect, as party visibility in Web 2.0 roughly reflected party vote share. However, Web 2.0 enhanced participatory democracy by lowering the threshold for the involvement of the party grassroots and other sympathizers[20].

In their paper, Turnek and Jankowski discuss theoretical and methodological foundations of Politics 2.0[21] and point out that it is blogging that is a more researched topic in the subject field of Politics 2.0. Other Web 2.0 tools, such as social networking sites, file-sharing media, and wikis, are increasing constantly in popularity among researchers, however, none of these studies dealt with politically-oriented topics within the timeframe of their paper.

Reid Hoffman, founder of the LinkedIn professional social network, discusses both positive and negative sides of Politics 2.0[22]. He argues that in politics, more in-

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[17] S. Minucci, G. Mascheroni, op. cit.

[18] Ibidem, p. 187.

[19] Ibidem, p. 200.

[20] Ø. Kalnesa, *Norwegian Political Parties and Web 2.0*, "Journal of Information Technology & Politics", 3-4 July 2009, http://newpolcom.rhul.ac.uk/politics-web-2-0-conference/ [22.10.2014].

[21] M. Turnek, N.W. Jankowski, op. cit.

[22] S. Arrison, op. cit.; R. Coleman, P. Lieber, A. Mendelson, D. Kurpius, *Public life and the Internet: if you build a better website, will citizens become engaged?*, "New Media & Society" 2008, No. 10(2), pp. 179-201.

formation is generally a good thing, and Web 2.0 helps to provide such information. The best everyone can hope for, not only during but also after the election, is that new tech tools provide citizens with better ways to understand and control government. The more transparent government becomes, the less likely it is to be corrupt, and that's something everyone would like to see. That is of critical importance to CIS countries with emerging and unstable democracy as in Ukraine right now. Politics 2.0 based on the conceptual principles of Web 2.0 advances interactivity and provides more possibilities for creating practically unrestricted and free content on the web. It also deepens personal campaigning on the web or tries to make an illusion of it. On the downside, however, the danger is that too much information may "make people unwilling to change their views". There are worries about a personalized "massive inundation of information and massive stimulation" that creates a situation where people stop thinking and making real decisions because they can choose to listen only to others who share their similar opinions[23]. Jackson and Lilleker researching the British political web inquire: When used by political elites does Web 2.0 reflect technological, psychological, or no change? Whether Web 2.0 is a progression of Web 1.0, or something fundamentally and conceptually different? Whether the content political elites use in their Web 2.0 applications is shovel ware and more appropriate for Web 1.0, so considering whether Web 2.0 is something which only the disenfranchised can use? The analysis of the political elite's use of Web 2.0 features will determine how effectively these elites are using Web 2.0 and whether we are viewing a shift in the way politicians communicate, or whether the use of tools from FB to YouTube represents a mere fad more likely to disappear than become entrenched in practice[24] .

## 1.2. Interactivity as a driving force of Politics 2.0

Central to thinking about the potential of the Net for enhancing democracy is the notion of interactivity, as most scholars claim[25]. Recent research on interactivity and its connection with web-technologies testifies its complexity and shows the absence of a strict definition. Thus, Busy[26] asserts that in modern social thinking

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[23] E. Cone, *Web Politics 2.0, CIO Insight*, 11 May 2010, www.cioinsight.com/c/a/Case-Studies/Web-Politics-20/ [22.10.2014].

[24] N.A. Jackson, D.G. Lilleker, op. cit., p. 1.

[25] D. Endres, B. Warnick, *Text-based interactivity in candidate campaign Web sites: A case study from the 2002 elections*, "Western Journal of Communication" 2004, Vol. 68, p. 322-342; N.A. Jackson, D.G. Lilleker, op. cit.; K.D. Trammell, A.P. William, M. Postelnic, K.D. Landrevill, *Evolution of Online Campaigning: Increasing Interactivity in Candidate Web Sites and Blogs Through Text and Technical Features*, "Mass Communication and Society" 2006, No. 9, pp. 21-44.

[26] E.F. Busy, *Interactivity in Society: Locating an elusive concept*, "Information Society" 2004, No. 20, p. 373-383.

there is a lack of coherent theory to show how this phenomenon operates in our society, and studies of interactivity have been engaged only in defining the elusive concepts and describing instances of its existence through various mediated contexts[27]. Stromer-Galley stresses that the definition of interactivity is confusing as it refers to different things. One can identify interaction between people and computers, and only between computers through software, hardware, and networks[28].

To clarify the interactivity definition, Kiousis develops a synthesized concept of interactivity imposing the notion of medium[29]. The medium includes two-way communication, equal roles for the sender and the receiver of information, third-order dependency, and the speed of communication must be close to real. However, this newly synthesized definition borrows some weak spots, such as the requirement of equality both for the sender and the receiver of information. Some scholars try to enhance this definition by adding the notion of text-based interactivity[30]. They argue that the textual constructions must foster interactivity containing special appealing strategies, which promote immediacy, personal presence in the web-texts, and multivocality. The researchers think that the text-based interactivity must be augmented by a number of technical features such as hyperlinks, and user-contribution features (guest-book, or the possibility to make comments, etc.)[31].

At the same time scholars working in discourse studies and corporate communication research indicate that interactivity should be a goal of any organization aiming at building relationships with its consumers, supporters, and audiences[32] and this may be particularly useful for electoral political organizations who seek to interact with their potential voters.

Up-to-date views on the interactivity suggest not only a conversational, text-based character of this phenomenon, but they also imply that all parties that participate in communication can be influenced by a great number of external and internal factors. This means that the traditional top-down hierarchical political communication from parties and government to voters and citizens is replaced by a more horizontal style of communication. At the same time, are the uses of Web 2.0 tools meant to offer real interactivity allowing all parties to be influenced, or are they used purely to make the impression of seeking a dialogic relationship with voters?

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[27] Ibidem, p. 373.

[28] J. Stromer-Galley, *Interactivity-as-product and interactivity as-process*, "Information Society" 2004, No. 20, p. 391.

[29] S. Kiousis, *Interactivity: a concept explication*, "New Media and Society" 2002, Vol. 4.

[30] D. Endres, B. Warnick, op. cit.; K.D. Trammell, A.P. William, M. Postelnic, K.D. Landrevill, op. cit.

[31] K.D. Trammell, A.P. William, M. Postelnic, K.D. Landrevill, op. cit., p. 27.

[32] D. Chaffey, F. Ellis-Chadwick, K. Johnston, R. Mayer, *Internet Marketing: strategy, implementation and practice*, Prentice Hall, Harlow 2006; J. van Dijk, *The Network Society*, 2nd edition, Sage, London 2006.

Recent research on interactivity suggests that online conversations lead to relational exchanges and the building of communities[33], particularly when interaction is based upon multi-directional communication between multiple participants where control and power are shared among users. It leads to a new participatory and deliberative democracy that is taken as a basis for the concepts of e-representation and e-democracy. Jackson and Lilleker assert that "the communication most likely to have an impact on attitudes is face-to-face, relevant to the individual, tailored to their needs and concerns, and shaped as a dialogue not a monologue"[34]. This multifocal conversational interactivity is best attainable through the use of Web 2.0 tools since the very conceptual base of Web 2.0 services with possibility to create common content and communicate with an unrestricted number of Internet-users facilitates this process greatly. The concept of online interactivity can be used as an analytical tool for understanding the aims of the communicator and receiver[35], and more recently, the idea of participatory democracy was initiated[36].

However, a broader question appears whether all political actors are ready to use these Web 2.0 technologies properly adapting to the rules of the Web 2.0 user community in order to receive maximum benefits[37]. Certainly, politicians were criticized for "jumping on to the website bandwagon without having a clear communication strategy for their use"[38].

## 1.3. Ukrainian Context

Now there are 2,802,478,934 Internet users in the world. That means that 39% of the population on this globe use this network or have heard about it[39]. As for internet users in Ukraine, the number of regular Internet users (population over the age of 16) grew by almost 3 times over the last 5 years to 15 million in 2012, while the

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[33] C. McDonald, R. Chalkley, *Web-based Interactive Environments in Biomedical Research Education and Training*, in: *Proceedings of World Conference on Educational Media and Technology 2003*, eds. D. Lassner & C. McNaught, Honolulu, Hawaii, USA 2003, pp. 874-875, Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education (AACE), www.editlib.org/p/13900 [26.11.2014].

[34] N.A. Jackson, D.G. Lilleker, op. cit., p. 10.

[35] S.J. McMillan, *Exploring Models of Interactivity from Multiple Research Traditions: Users, Documents and Systems*, in: *Handbook of New Media: Social Shaping and Social Consequences of ICTs*, Leah, eds. A. Lievrouw, S. Livingstone, Updated Student Edition, Sage Publications 2010.

[36] P. Ferber, F. Foltz, R. Pugliese, *Cyberdemocracy and Online Politics: A New Model of Interactivity*, "Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society" 2007, Vol. 27, No. 5.

[37] N.A. Jackson, D.G. Lilleker, op. cit., p. 9.

[38] N. Jackson, *MPs and web technologies: an untapped opportunity?*, "Journal of Public Affairs" 2003, Vol. 3, Issue 2, pp. 128.

[39] World Internet Usage and Population Statistics 2013, www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm [22.10.2014].

number of broadband users grew by almost 10 times to 7 million people[40]. In 2013 there were 17.74 million users and the growth rate in comparison to 2012 became 21%, that is the lowest it has been since 2008[41]. Young users in villages and small cities, and pensioners prevail among the increased internet audience in Ukraine. Since 2012, the penetration rate among internet users at the age of 35 and above has been 2.7%. The average growth of internet penetration in rural areas and small towns totals 2%. Internet penetration in Ukraine is + 2.5% per year, for an audience aged 14 + years. The average internet user is online 30 hours per month and visits 1000-1300 sites monthly. Already, 14% of Ukrainians use smart phones[42].

More than 11 million Ukrainians use social networks. 85% use social networks and 10% go online just to use them. Among the other favorite internet-activities, Ukrainians use e-mail, download audio and video files, search the net, read the news, and use Skype and IP-services[43]. Among all the social network sites, FB is the most popular social site in the world, with the biggest number of subscribers. By the end of 2013, FB boasted 1.23 billion monthly active users worldwide, adding 170 million in just one year. According to the inner statistics of FB, as of December 31, 2013, 757 million users log onto FB daily. New Pew Research Center survey findings show that the average (mean) number of friends among adult FB users is 338, and the median comes in at 200 friends. Pew indicates that half of all FB users have more than 200 friends, and half, have less than 200. FB launched its pages applications in November of 2007. The most popular page worldwide is FB for Every Phone with 380,870,942 likes, according to FB inner statistics. Worldwide, FB's page (110,710,367 likes) and Rihanna's page (84,870,224 likes) occupie the second and third places among the most popular pages (Number of monthly active FB users worldwide from the 3rd quarter of 2008 to the 2nd quarter of 2014 [in millions], 2014). By the first quarter of 2014, FB had 1.28 billion monthly active users. Active users are those who have logged into FB during the last 30 days. Furthermore, as of the fourth quarter of 2013, the social network had 945 million mobile subscribers. The number of millennials (15-34 olds) that use FB reached 66 % by 2013 (using the numbers from 2014). In 2014, there were 3.2 million users on FB[44]. Kyiv and other cities with one-million people in their population have the greatest number of FB fans[45].

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[40] World Internet Usage and Population Statistics 2012, www.internetworldstats.com/stats. htm [22.10.2014].

[41] World Internet Usage and Population Statistics 2013, op. cit.

[42] *UA-net and Digital Trends Powered by Prodigi*, 2013, www.slideshare.net/Prodigi/prodigi-digest-2013 [22.10.2014].

[43] Ibidem, p. 7.

[44] Minchenko O., *Ukrai'nci v social'nyh merezhah: nove doslidzhennja vid Jandeksa*, "Watcher", 21 August 2014, http://watcher.com.ua/2014/08/21/ukrayintsi-v-sotsialnyh-merezhah-nove-doslidzhennya-vid-yandeksa [22.10.2014].

[45] Ibidem.

## 1.4. Research Description

The research objective is to trace and depict main communication strategies of Ukrainian politicians with their citizenry on FB. This application is chosen for this research as one of the most popular political communication instruments among all of the social media in Ukraine[46].

Content-analysis is used as the main research tool in our study. The sample is formed of all statuses of politicians' personal FB accounts dated from the period of the 1st of March, till the 31st of March 2014. The choice of Ukrainian political leaders for this research is based on the Watcher Rating of Ukrainian Facebook Users (http://watcher.com.ua/facebook-reiting/). This rating is made regularly by the Watcher Foundation, which is one of the most famous marketing and social media online foundations in Ukraine.

The top ten Ukrainian politicians were selected for our research (see Table 1). Their rank of popularity on FB is based on two indicators – the number of subscribers and the number of friends from their personal FB accounts.

Table 1. Ukrainian Politicians' Popularity Ranking on Facebook (March 2014)

| No. | Politicians' Name | FB URL Account | Number of Subscribers | Number of friends |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Arsen Avakov | https://www.facebook.com/arsen.avakov.1 | 162 085 | 5000 |
| 2 | Oleg Ljashko | https://www.facebook.com/O.Liashko | 125 147 | 4934 |
| 3 | Petro Poroshenko | https://www.facebook.com/petroporoshenko | 84 310 | 4289 |
| 4 | Lesja Orobec' | https://www.facebook.com/lesyaorobets | 82 317 | The information is closed |
| 5 | Anatolij Gricenko | https://www.facebook.com/profile. php?id=100003313481489 | 77 330 | 5000 |
| 6 | Jurij Lucenko | https://www.facebook.com/LlutsenkoYuri | 55 144 | 3136 |
| 7 | Oleksandra Kuzhel' | https://www.facebook.com/abkuzhel | 31 864 | 5000 |
| 8 | Oleksandr Aronec' | https://www.facebook.com/oleksandr.aronets | 28 774 | 4660 |
| 9 | Oles' Donij | https://www.facebook.com/oles.doniy | 17 804 | 5000 |
| 10 | Mikola Knjazhic'kij | https://www.facebook.com/mykolakn | 15 908 | 4909 |

Source: Ukrainian Segment of Facebook Use, own research.

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[46] O Ig. Goroshko , *Politics 2.0: Global Perspectives and Local Realities*, in: *Jazyk, kommunikacija i social'naja sreda*: Sbor. nauchn. trudov, ed. V.B. Kashkin, 8th edition, Voronezhsk. gos. un-t; Izdatel'skij dom Alejnikovyh, Voronezh 2010, pp. 64-104.

The research items cover the following:

The level of the politicians' integration into the FB surrounding is calculated based on the date of account opening and the period of its existence on FB, the number of friends and subscribers, the number of personal posts (statuses), the number of likes, comments, and reposts of another FB users' information. We consider that this information can enlighten the level of activity on FB or account for the level of integration into the communicative surrounding of FB. All personal profile data and the language of the accounts are also traced.

Furthermore, a content analysis of the politicians' personal posts (statuses) and comments is done. Additionally, the content analysis of the politicians' reactions to negative, positive, and neutral comments is conducted.

The time period of the conducted research (March 2014) is chosen for being one of the most dramatic moments in the history of Ukraine (the annexation of the Crimea region and post-maidan crisis situation within the country).

## 1.5. Data Obtained

The politicians' FB accounts practically contain complete information about their holders. They include not only social demographics such as age, sex, marital status, education, and position, but also information about favorite movies, books, music, sport teams, and events of the political leaders. However, we think that the completeness of such information on their FB account is not crucial for the popularity of the political leaders (seen in the amount of FB friends). The FB profiles of Arsen Avakov, Petro Poroshenko, and Anatolij Gricenko do not cover information about their favorite sport teams, sports, or arts, but the assumption that political leaders listen to the same music, watch the same movies, or share the same interests and hobbies with their citizenry can support the positive image of politicians both offline and online.

Concerning FB account language (Russian or Ukrainian), the research reveals that 8 out of 10 politicians use Ukrainian on their FB accounts (see Table 2); however, we think that the language factor or what language is used by politicians on their account to communicate with their friends and other FB users is not so important for their image promotion. Even in spite of the fact that the question of language is of high topicality in the Ukrainian political agenda.

The period of FB account existence counts on average from two to five and a half years (see Table 2). Mikola Knjazhic'kij was the first politician who opened his account on FB in August of 2008. Anatolij Gricenko was the last among other politicians to register his FB account in January of 2012. Accounts by Avakov, Poroshenko, Lucenko, and Donij were opened nearly in the same time frame. We

think that the increasing popularity of FB in political campaigning and maybe the events of the Arab Spring that demonstrate that social media can influence public opinion actively and coordinate mass political actions initiated the opening of these accounts namely in this period.

Table 2. The Time of Existance and Language of the Politicians' FB Accounts

| No. | Politicians' Name | The Date of Account Opening | The Account Time-of existance (in months) | The main language of Account |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Arsen Avakov | May, 10 2011 | 34 | Russian |
| 2 | Oleg Ljashko | December, 7 2010 | 49 | Ukrainian |
| 3 | Petro Poroshenko | March, 1 2011 | 36 | Ukrainian |
| 4 | Lesja Orobec' | February, 24 2010 | 48 | Ukrainian |
| 5 | Anatolij Gricenko | January, 3, 2012 | 26 | Ukrainian |
| 6 | Jurij Lucenko | The information is closed; the first status is dated April, 11 2011 | 35 | Ukrainian |
| 7 | Oleksandra Kuzhel' | September, 25 2010 | 40 | Russian |
| 8 | Oleksandr Aronec' | June 30 2009 | 56 | Ukrainian |
| 9 | Oles' Donij | The information is closed; the first status is dated January, 3 2011 | 38 | Ukrainian |
| 10 | Mikola Knjazhic'kij | August, 7 2008 | 66 | Ukrainian |

Source: Ukrainian Segment of Facebook Use, own research.

Hence, the majority of Ukrainian politicians who are currently leaders of opinion in social media could predict the growth and popularity of social media several years ago and had the opportunity to form their political image in advance.

We can also trace the originality of posts on FB. All posts on FB can be classified into personal, team-mediated, and post or repost of other opinions. In social media accounts, posts written by politicians personally can be marked by a special symbol. Sometimes this information is specified in the account information. E.g. On Mikhail Prokhorov's Page (https://www.facebook.com/prokhorovmd/info) or Serghij Tigipko's Page (https://www.facebook.com/Tigipko) it is officially indicated that the page is maintained by their press-service. In our sample there are no such cases, however, it is rather difficult to imagine that a busy person such as Oleg Ljashko could write more than 50 posts daily (see Table 3). One of the most popular Russian bloggers Ilja Varlamov depicts the situation with his personal live journal writing in the following: "Usually I write posts, make comments, download audio or video by myself but if I have no time or being in a great hurry or have a very urgent massage I dictate the text to my team. Then they

prove and correct it, make it perfect and publish on the Net. Also I have a special team-member who comments certain my posts and works with special categories of subscribers"[47]. We suppose that the same practices can be used by Ukrainian politicians, but in our research (based only on the data obtained with the help of content-analysis) it is rather difficult to pinpoint for certain the originality of the post. We consider that additional research is required (e.g. deep-interviewing of politicians) to trace this fact.

The majority of sample posts are written in the first person; the politicians express their own thinking and opinions. Often the account holders inform not only on things concerning their political events, but also write about their private life or how they spend their leisure time. Sometimes they recall the past; such posts can sometimes have attached personal audio or video. This indirectly indicates that if the posts are not written personally by the politicians, they are created and placed on their accounts with their personal permission and approval. Hence we decided to only mark personal posts and other posts or reposts (see Table 3).

Table 3. The Political Leaders Post Originality

| No. | Politicians' Name | The number of all posts made in March | The percentage of original posts (%) | The percentage of other persons' posts (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Arsen Avakov | 34 | 100 | 0 |
| 2 | Oleg Ljashko | 207 | 99 | 1 |
| 3 | Petro Poroshenko | 10 | 80 | 20 |
| 4 | Lesja Orobec' | 103 | 90 | 10 |
| 5 | Anatolij Gricenko | 58 | 100 | 0 |
| 6 | Jurij Lucenko | 23 | 100 | 0 |
| 7 | Oleksandra Kuzhel' | 0 | – | – |
| 8 | Oleksandr Aronec' | 137 | 87 | 13 |
| 9 | Oles' Donij | 69 | 94 | 6 |
| 10 | Mikola Knjazhic'kij | 153 | 93 | 7 |

Source: Ukrainian Segment of Facebook Use, own research.

As we can see, the number of personal original posts prevails. Politicians very seldom publish posts or opinions of others. Moreover, if it is not an origian post, the account holder practically always provides their own personal comment to the post.

Additionally, we counted the number of links, video, and audio-post (see Table 4).

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[47] I.A. Varlamov, *Kak ja vedu svoj blog*, http://zyalt.livejournal.com/1019750.html [22.10.2014].

Table 4. The Number of Video, Audio, and Links on the Politicians' FB Account (in %)

| No. | Politicians' Name | Number of links | Number of video posts | Number of audio posts |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Arsen Avakov | 0 | 11 | 9 |
| 2 | Oleg Ljashko | 5 | 24 | 25 |
| 3 | Petro Poroshenko | 20 | 10 | 60 |
| 4 | Lesja Orobec' | 9 | 4 | 26 |
| 5 | Anatolij Gricenko | 19 | 19 | 2 |
| 6 | Jurij Lucenko | 0 | 0 | 60 |
| 7 | Oleksandra Kuzhel' | – | – | – |
| 8 | Oleksandr Aronec' | 8 | 3 | 24 |
| 9 | Oles' Donij | 12 | 9 | 6 |
| 10 | Mikola Knjazhic'kij | 16 | 7 | 7 |

Source: Ukrainian Segment of Facebook Use, own research.

The data show that links to other web-sources occupy around 20% of FB account post. More frequently, we can find links to web-pages connected with politicians personally or to news that they render important. Often, they provide their personal comments on the selected news. The FB account of Petro Poroshenko contains the most (40%) information (links and reposts) from other sources. Sometimes these materials are posted without any personal comment. Oleksandr Aronec's and Lesja Orobec's accounts are next in linewith 13% and 10% respectively. Nevertheless, taking in mind a politician's activity on FB in March (23 mean daily posts), unoriginal content perceived in contrast to the original ones is not so noticeable.

Analyzing the use of visual content on FB accounts we can safetly say that this type of content does not prevail. Arsen Avakov (the top politician on FB) uses it less frequently as the other top politicians do: only every fifth post contains a video or photo. Petro Poroshenko and Jurij Lucenko download visual content much more frequently; however Petro Poroshenko does not place his original visual content on FB but videos and snaps made by others. Jurij Lucenko illustrates his posts using personal snaps or any pictures illustrating the topic (even cartoons) of his posts. Oleg Ljashko, Lesja Orobec' and Oleksandr Aronec' attach photos to every forth post. Anatolij Gricenko, Mikola Knjazhic'kij and Oles' Donij download visual elements very rarely on their FB accounts.

Also politicians use video content not as frequently as photos. Oleg Ljashko uses video-content most of all (every fourth post contains a video attachment). Next. Anatolij Gricenko attaches video to every fifth post. Arsen Avakov, Petro

Poroshenko, and Oles' Donij attach videos to every tenth post. Thus, we can argue that the use of visual content is rather unstable practice and influenced substantially by a personal factor.

Concerning the use of comments as the main tool of sustaining interactivity and feedback with their virtual audience, the politicians very seldom answer comments by other FB users. Simultaneously, we fix the debate between the other FB politicians' friends and subscribers on the politicians' wall. Two-way communication between the politician and his audience is provided through separate posts where politicians answer the most frequent friends' and subscribers' comments.

## 2. Summary

The data obtained testify that the image constructed by politicians in social media corresponds to the image demonstrated by them in FtF communication. However, the online image presentations and communicative practices by politicians with their citizenry possess certain peculiarities. Based on these peculiarities, we can provide some recommendations. One of the main advantages of politicians' communication is a personal participation in this action. Usually their press-service assists them but we do not recommend delegating all online activity, especially in social media, to their press-service team.

It is also important for politicians to demonstrate their openness and sincerity. That is why we recommend providing all personal information as much as possible on their FB wall. The majority of politicians analyzed in our research reveal their social backgrounds and hobbies, interests, favorite places, books, music, sport teams, etc. We would like to emphasize that personal posts made by politicians are characterized by a personal standpoint, emotional coloring, manifestation of own opinions concerning certain events and persons. Namely the personal activity on FB (writing posts, comments, locating own pictures, etc) helps to form the image of an honest and open person inspiring the confidence, trust, and support of their electorate.

The language practices used by politicians also play a very important role in their online presentation and communication. Most research politicians use more frequently than in offline media. They use a publicist, conversational, and artistic style of speech more frequently: they permit sustaining informal communication – the constant conversation, dialogue with their target audience, consolidating their electorate.

Political leaders must also react to the comments of any tonality (negative, positive, and neutral) posted on their FB wall. If a politician has no time to answer all posts, we recommend writing a separate post as a collective answer to a num-

ber of identical comments. It facilitates sustaining two-way communication between the politician and the electorate. With the help of ordinary media it is more difficult and not as effective and operational.

Popularity in social media is also connected directly with the content quality published by the politician. The content must be interesting and original. When the politician makes a repost we recommend providing their own comment to any repost. The research posts from politicians' profiles on FB present a description of politicians' activity or information on events that can attract their electorate.

One can trace the trend about the increasing visual content in the FB political discourse that corresponds to a worldwide trend of deepening visualization of all content on the web[48]. Herein politicians use more photos than videos, but the frequent use of visual content does not always go to the successful communicative strategy.

Also, we can say that communicative strategies by politicians are aimed more at the young electorate audience since there are a lot of posts devoted to the problem of education, music, youth slang etc. It can be motivated by two factors:
1. Politicians understand the importance this age category of the electorate.
2. The audience of social media, including Facebook, is rather young.

Summing up our research we would like to stress that communicative strategies used by politicians on Facebook based on social relationships, openness, and trust are the most successful for results in Politics 2.0.

The research indicates that the use of Facebook with its high level of conceptual interactivity and possibility to generate common content constructs a 'social thermometer' sui generis permitting the construction of an adequate image and adjusts it according to context requirements, and measures political temperature timely and accurately. The challenge is to develop the appropriate communicative strategy to be used with this social tool.

It can also be a form of e-networking, a communicative strategy that permits finding, consolidating, and expanding the followers' community who, in the course of time, offer political support for certain candidates.

## 3. Limitations and Perspectives

Nowadays, it is rather difficult to differentiate between the real and the virtual. One can suggest that your friends and subscribers on Facebook will turn into strong supporters and volunteers in your political campaigning in real life. It will probably be the greatest impact of social media on future political developments.

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[48] *10 Reasons Visual Content will Dominate 2014*, http://blog.wishpond.com/post/703005-87846/10-reasons-visual-content-will-dominate-2014 [22.10.2014].

The increasing impact of e-networking on Politics 2.0 greatly supports the effectiveness of the election campaign offline. Online communities allow people not only to support the candidate, but also to be active in their support – becoming "an extension of the political process beyond the candidate" as Cone delineates[49].

The findings present some new tendencies of Politics 2.0 as part of a larger, national media spectrum. However, new media and digital technologies advance rather quickly and the constant monitoring of the political web on a regular basis at a national level is needed to understand how these new media shape our public sphere and political agenda.

From a methodological point of view, the cyber-society requires a mixture of quantitative and qualitative research methods, that would further look into the imbrications of different media forms and forms of political communication, examine people's relationship with various expression and information media, and observe the reshaping of traditional statuses and roles in various environments – electronic versions of newspapers, political blogs and forums, social networks and mash-up media, etc. "Finally, another step further will be to refine and expand the research questions, develop and adapt valid but also innovative methodological tools that have been proven useful in other social and political settings and draw fruitful theoretical and empirical comparisons about different new media landscapes in Central and Eastern Europe", as M. Barbovschi proposed[50].

Also, it would be useful to compare not only crisis communication on FB but online networking in everyday political life, and trace the linkage of this factor with a number of others.

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[49] E. Cone, op. cit.

[50] M. Barbovschi, *Romanian political blogs – new loci of expression and participation? An analytical framework for the investigation of the political blogging space as a new form of public sphere*, London 2008, http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/21562/ [22.10.2014].

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## Przywódcy 2.0 przez pryzmat komunikowania w dobie kryzysu na Ukrainie albo Facebook w akcji

**Streszczenie.** Celem artykułu jest zanalizowanie efektywności wykorzystania mediów społecznościowych do budowy wizerunku politycznego. Zbadano i nakreślono w nim charakterystykę strategii komunikacyjnych stosowanych przez popularnych polityków ukraińskich. Informacje te można wykorzystać do skutecznego wykreowania wizerunku polityków gotowych prowadzić konstruktywną interakcję z elektoratem za pośrednictwem Facebooka. Rezultaty badań pozwalają pogłębić wiedzę na temat efektywnych strategii budowania wizerunku za pomocą mediów społecznościowych, które mogą być wykorzystywane przez przywódców politycznych w kontekście lokalnym.

**Słowa kluczowe:** kryzys, budowa wizerunku politycznego, polityka 2.0, przywódcy 2.0, Facebook, Ukraina