

## SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY



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### Riskogenics of the Internet Virtual World in Life Practices Formation

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#### Abstract

**Introduction.** In modern society, Internet is an integral part of human life. There is a process of forming a special type of culture and behavior models. The intensity of these processes determines their disorder, randomness and riskogenics. The purpose of this study is to identify social risks of the Internet virtual world as a sphere of human life practices implementation.

**Materials and methods.** Scientific sources related to the understanding of this problem are used. Theoretical analysis as the main method provides an opportunity to identify the main risks of life practices formed under the influence of the Internet virtual world.

**Results.** Social risks are highlighted, the degree of which is enhanced due to the specifics of the virtual: alienation of a person, disconnection of traditional social ties, uncertainty of social status, disregard for social norms, etc.

**Discussion and conclusion.** Specific risks emerging in the Internet virtual world, risks of an anthropological nature are identified: instability of personal identity, formation of an escapist type of behavior, risk of increasing communication deficit, Internet addiction.

**Keywords:** life practices, virtual reality, social risks, Internet

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Научная статья

### Рискогенность виртуального мира Интернета в формировании жизненных практик

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#### Аннотация

**Введение.** В современном обществе Интернет является неотъемлемой частью жизни человека. Идет процесс формирования особого типа культуры и моделей поведения. Интенсивность этих процессов определяет их неупорядоченность, хаотичность и рискогенность. Целью данного исследования является выявление социальных рисков виртуального мира Интернета как сферы осуществления жизненных практик человека.

**Материалы и методы.** Используются научные источники, связанные с осмыслением данной проблемы. Теоретический анализ как основной метод обеспечивает возможность выделения основных рисков жизненных практик, формируемых под влиянием виртуального мира Интернета.

**Результаты исследования.** Выделены социальные риски, степень которых усиливается за счет специфики виртуального: отчуждение человека, размыкание традиционных социальных связей, неопределенность социального статуса, пренебрежение социальными нормами и др.

**Обсуждение и заключение.** Исследованы специфические риски, складывающиеся в виртуальном мире Интернета, риски антропологического характера: неустойчивость личностной идентичности, формирование эскапистского типа поведения, риск нарастания дефицита общения, интернет-аддикция.

**Ключевые слова:** жизненные практики, виртуальная реальность, социальные риски, Интернет

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**Introduction.** Internet despite its relative youth as a phenomenon has become an integral part of modern life. The virtual world, created on the basis of computer digital technologies, is actively settling, becoming a sphere of activity, an implementation of life practices. In this regard, there is a process of forming a special type of culture, legal support of various types of activities, characteristic models of behavior are being formed. The intensity and novelty of these processes determine their certain disorder, randomness and riskiness. That is why understanding the socially significant processes taking place in this world is a task for social and humanitarian sciences. The purpose of this study is to identify social risks of the Internet virtual world as a sphere of human life practices implementation.

**Materials and methods.** The study used analytically developed sources within the framework of the classical research paradigm, the method of philosophical, methodological and existential analysis, as well as comparative and descriptive methods. The author relies on the works of domestic philosophers of technology V.G. Gorokhov, V.M. Rozin, who note the Gnostic potential of technology [1]. The shift in status in the “man-machine” system as a trend in the development of technology was noted by N.A. Berdyaev [2]. S.S. Horuzhiy [3] considers the problems of a person, their conditions, transformations and prospects due to the influence of technology, in particular, new digital technologies. Building life practices in the virtual world entails the risk of forming an escapist type of behavior which was studied by S.A. Smirnov [4]. The approach to the analysis of the Internet dependence formation as a specific risk proposed by S.A. Kotova [5] was also used to solve problems of this study.

**Results.** Modern technology created by man and acting as a “third nature”, like any complex phenomenon, on the one hand, creates additional opportunities for a person to realize various types of activities: production, organizational, educational, cognitive. V.M. Rozin points out: “One of the features of technology is that it allows you to solve problems, so to speak, unsolvable within the framework of the reality that existed before these technical inventions” [1, p. 21]. On the other hand, it pulls man away from nature to an even greater extent than before and requires significant efforts of adaptation to it.

N.A. Berdyaev in his work “Man and Machine” expressed concern about whether a person would be able to “breathe in a new, electric and radioactive atmosphere, in a new cold, metal reality, deprived of animal warmth” [2, p. 152]. At the present stage of its development, technology in its new status as an all-pervasive element of sociocultural and private life is a challenge for humanity in terms of its survival, a person’s preservation of their essence and culture. The technical equipment of social facilities, in particular, the virtual space of the Internet, significantly changes the way of building life practices of a person who prefers to interact with a computer to directly with real people. Such interaction is based on unconditional trust in the machine, while a person frees themselves “from any claim to knowledge” [6, p. 76]. This trend is increasing due to the rapid spread of artificial intelligence technologies. Many authors note, in particular, M.E. Muravyova, that “strong intelligence will already be able to imitate human intelligence, that is, make creative decisions, learn, plan and communicate with a person in their language. It is assumed that it can realize itself as a person, and even have «feelings» Superintelligence as the peak of artificial intelligence development will surpass man in everything” [7, p. 54].

As is known, life practices are general and individual experience acquired in the process of activity. Life practices in the Internet virtual world have their own specific characteristics. Among the most significant, we note the following. The predominance of the individual over the collective. Activity on the Internet allows the manifestation of expressed individuality, creativity. On the one hand, this is due to the technological capabilities that the Internet provides, on the other hand, the lack of strict regulations and control, which in turn leads to the formation of various social orientation experience, including negative, which is the basis for the emergence of specific risks. The feature of life practices in the virtual world is a high degree of activity without significant real efforts. A person can spend hours and even days on the Internet, but all their actions are carried out “without leaving their place”, which forms social passivity. The specific characteristic is a kind of wide range of interests and initiatives in various fields, while the natural result is incompleteness of practices carried out. Activities on the Internet allow multiple repetitions of certain actions which is difficult to organize in real social practices. Moreover, repetitions occur not only because the result of activity does not suit a person, but there

is an opportunity to diversify your experience, compare the results. These practices in the virtual world are especially attractive. More than that, not every gained experience can be useful in a person's real social life. Sometimes it contradicts social experience and alienates a person from society, forming an autistic type of behavior.

The highlighted specifics of life practices in the Internet virtual world, on the one hand, can strengthen existing social risks, such as alienation of a person, disconnection of traditional social ties, uncertainty of social status, disregard for social norms, etc. On the other hand, it generates new ones that arise exclusively in the Internet virtual world.

As already mentioned, virtual and digital technologies that ensure functioning of the Internet can significantly increase social risks. This is due to the specifics of the capabilities that are present in the virtual space. This is the availability of almost any content; the lack of traditional geographical, administrative, cultural boundaries; the possibility of communication in any spatial and temporal directions; the lack of strict cultural regulations and social control; the possibility of addressing taking into account individual characteristics of the user, tastes and preferences. All this can multiply the effect of risky social factors.

But the virtual world is able to generate specific risks that arise in the process of life practices, and especially among young people whose social experience is insignificant and limited. Let us consider those related to personality. Immersion in virtual reality has a different "depth": from communication via e-mail, in this case the Internet is only a way to transmit information, a tool, to communication without a name, i. e., without a face or under a nickname, virtual name, mask, which may not be meaningfully connected with its owner. In these two cases, human interaction with technology occurs, which leads to internal changes in the structures of personality and identity, which indicates the expressed processes of human virtualization and their activities.

S.S. Khoruzhiy, analyzing virtual practices, speaks about anthropological threats as a consequence of increased virtualization of both the person and the communication processes. In particular, he notes: ... "information progress is accompanied by anthropological degradation. We have identified a number of steps in the deepening of virtualization, from simple e-mail to communication under the nickname, and the general appearance of their series clearly shows the main trend: the impoverishment of interhuman exchange, the disappearance of the human face, the growth of impersonality, the primitiveness of the communication content, the rudeness of masks and roles. To clarify, two main sides can be distinguished in this global trend of impoverishment. The defining features of human virtualization include a decrease in connectivity, the unified organization of their inner world, behavior and activities, as well as a decrease in the ability to control and self-control, self-report, self-observation" [3].

Specific risks include the instability of personal identity, its underdevelopment or "diffusivity" as a permanent state. Modern man inevitably turns out to be the inhabitant of two worlds: social and virtual, which leads to the formation of qualities within personality that ensure such a dual existence. But self-awareness objectively gravitates towards integrity, completeness, otherwise an internal imbalance, disharmony arises, and as a result, a "pseudo" identity develops. The search for oneself leads to the formation of a whole world of illusions, the world that is built by the person and perceived as real. This is exemplified by the numerous cases of the existence in the Internet virtual world of "doubles" of a real person, and these "doubles" are only by the authorship of their creator, but in content they differ significantly from each other, reflecting the contradictory inclinations and features of a real person. Trial options of one's own appearance design, the subsequent performance of a "new" role corresponding to this appearance can act as an adaptation stage in determining one's sexual identity, tolerance for transgenderism.

The significant specific risk is the formation of an escapist type of behavior. Dissatisfaction with their own social life existed at all times, but being a social being, a person continued to act and interact within certain social groups, which, through direct influence, through the culture, social control, actively participated in the formation of human life practices. The virtual world creates an opportunity to move away from society and transfer your activity to virtual reality. As S.A. rightly notes: "A person goes into virtual reality because as a social and cultural being he chooses values and criteria for their own eventfulness, being unable to find them in the social world. This retreat into virtual reality means walking away from yourself, ... this retreat is primarily value-based, semantic, event-based, and not purely technological" [4, p. 31]. In this artificial world, a person is busy looking for a new self, connecting to virtual reference groups, in which they are looking for recognition of their own value, significance and a sense of freedom, attention to their own person.

The flip side of this is the situation when each Internet user inevitably becomes the target of influence through an individual selection of materials that at least once interested him, invitations to various groups, which affects human consciousness and behavior. In the virtual world, this kind of influence is chaotic, contradictory, spontaneous. One influence vector can contradict another, which ultimately forms an experience that is of little effect in social life, and behavioral practices based on it do not bring the expected result.

At the same time, a new type of addiction is being formed that is dependence on the Internet, the virtual world of which is perceived by the user as more attractive, bright and even festive in comparison with the real world. It is easy to feel freedom, satisfaction and absence of problems. As S.A. Kotova notes Internet addiction is formed faster than all other types, such as alcohol, drugs, it takes six months/a year with daily being online for more than two hours, after which human behavior begins to undergo noticeable negative changes [5, p. 23]. An example of this type of addiction is obsessive type (obsessive desire to spend time on the Internet), “nomadism”, wandering through sites and pages, game addiction, etc. Nowadays, this type of addictive behavior is a serious social problem, because it reinforces the tendency to alienate a person from society and social life. In this case, there is a contradiction between virtual experience (experience formed as a result of a long active stay in the Internet space) and social experience that arises in the process of human life in society, which inevitably leads to the formation of negative content and orientation of social behavior.

The fact that the Internet has turned almost the entire planet into a single network of communication without temporal and spatial boundaries, significant social restrictions and cultural barriers is clear. However, at the same time, there is a risk of increasing communication deficit, substitution of real interpersonal communication with pseudo-communication, communication with artificial intelligence, reduction of communication to surface contacts, de-ethnization of communication. This is due to the underdevelopment of social intelligence, the lack of formation of ethical principles and moral ideals, the lack of proper communicative competence (the lack of understanding of facial expressions, inability to express emotions in an adequate form). But it is communication and understanding achieved in its process that underlies successful life practices.

**Discussion and conclusion.** As a result of the analysis, we can conclude the following: the Internet, used as a tool for the implementation of its life, creates exceptional opportunities in professional, educational, leisure spheres. However, subject to deep and prolonged immersion in its virtual world, risks of an anthropological nature are inevitably formed, which have destructive consequences and carry social threats. These include instability of personal identity, formation of an escapist type of behavior, Internet addiction, risk of increasing communication deficit, substitution of real interpersonal communication with pseudo-communication, degradation of social intelligence. In this regard, a number of problems arise to minimize these risks. First of all, there is a need to create real social platforms for active participation in the formation of life practices. Perhaps the introduction of a number of restrictive measures on the use of Internet resources. As well as the development of ethics of behavior norms in the Internet space.

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