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New Media in Daily Life of Educational Process Subjects: a Case of Khabarovsk Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract

The paper considers the level of presence of new information propagation media based on the use of digital and web communications and constructed on the principles of interactivity, openness, horizontal links in daily life of students and teachers of higher education institutions as a case study of Khabarovsk city. The focus is on significance of using the new media in performance of academic, upbringing, research and other processes at higher education institutions. Main results of sociological research carried out at Khabarovsk higher education institutions in 2014 are presented. The active use of the new media in daily practices of main subjects of the educational process (teachers and students) is demonstrated. The paper also considers the lack of due paying attention by regional Russian educational institutions of higher vocational education to using the new media in their functioning, which curtails the opportunities of fulfilling the professional and educational interests of teachers and students and weakens the positions of the universities in the media space.

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1. Introduction

Change of information and communication technologies, emergence of varied communication ways produces a tangible effect on society. Recently appearing new information distribution media based on the use of digital and web communication and built upon the interactivity, openness and horizontal linking principles have

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become part and parcel of modern human life and, as sociologists believe, are active in the processes of social transformation of various systems of society.

It can be quite clearly seen in the higher education system. So, world's leading universities can perform their activity of conducting the academic, upbringing, research and other processes with direct presence of their participants at the geographical location of the organization as well as in the media space, thus ensuring their attractiveness to the potential applicants, business partners and investors, as well as their stable development at the international level.

The change taking place naturally have an impact on the daily life of the main subjects of educational process (students and teachers). Certainly, the high level of students' involvement into the modern Internet communication cannot be denied. According to the data of TNS Web Index research in 2014, about 98% of the Russians aged 18-24 used the Internet, with the Russian students spending in the Internet 137 minutes a day on average (Parsons, 1977). According to the survey by the All-Russian Public Opinion Research Center, it is the Internet that serves as the main source of news in the country (47% of the respondents answered so) for the perestroika generation (born in 1985-1999), to which the today's students belong. Alongside with the young people, highly educated respondents (32%) – to which higher education institutions teachers doubtlessly belong – also prefer the Internet (Merton, 1968).

Studying the level of presence of the new media in daily practices of fulfilling the professional and educational interests of the students and teachers is of special scientific interest, which allows characterizing the conditions of media infrastructure of the higher education at the level of educational organizations – regional higher education institutions. It is in order to study the role of the new media in life activity of higher education system subjects that the questionnaire surveys of students and teachers of the main Khabarovsk higher education institutions were conducted (Merton, 1968) during which the following objectives were set:

- to study the use of media in common daily life (kinds, frequency, goals, means of using the media);
- to study the use of media in professional and educational daily life (kinds, frequency, goals, means of using the media);
- to study the use of media resources of the universities where students and teachers study and work (kinds, frequency, goals, means of using the media);
- to study the media resources of the universities as evaluated by students and teachers (quality, opportunities, requirements).

The sociological survey of students of six higher education institutions of Khabarovsk was conducted in May of 2014. The sampling was quota one at the phase of forming the selection units, and random one at the phase of selection of respondents (N=352 people). 1-4 year full-time students of bachelor's degree and specialist programs took part in the survey.

The expert survey of teachers of six higher education institutions of Khabarovsk was conducted in May-June of 2014. The sampling was quota one at the phase of forming the selection units, and random one at the phase of selection of respondents (N=37 people).

The novelty of the work is that the survey has revealed that although both students and teachers use the Internet media in their daily life on a regular basis, we cannot speak about full-fledged interaction of subjects of education based on Web 2.0 platform (which actually refers to the new media). The professional communication between teachers, administration and students are mainly exercised beyond the media space. The media used by the higher education institutions do not conform to the daily Internet practices of the educational process subjects.

The survey conducted has allowed achieving significant theoretical results. It has made the problem of Russian social specific character relevant again that manifested in interaction of the educational process subjects at the level of organizations, namely, along the vertical, which clashes the implementation of principles of construction of a web community in the media space. From the practical standpoint, the study is interesting with its obtaining the material on the basis of which recommendations on the development of the new media infrastructure can be worded for higher education institutions, with the implementation of which promoting not only the optimum reflection of activity of the higher education institutions but also performance of the latter in the media space, user-friendliness, and sensible positioning of the higher education institutions in the world educational space.

2. Research objectives

It has been found out within the questionnaire survey what Internet services are the most frequently visited ones among the education system subjects. With teachers, the most popular services are e-mail and information sites – resources characteristic for Web 1.0 networks development phase. The communication means based on Web 2.0

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