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## Problems of information space protection and national information security in the conditions of the information democracy<sup>2</sup>

### Abstract

The article analyzes the legal and regulatory framework of Ukraine, which confirms the existence in the state of a number of legislative and other normative legal acts aimed at the regulation, protection and development of the domestic information space. At the same time, it is noted that some unsystematic domestic legal policy in the information sphere remains as an important problem, in particular, in view of the fact that some legislative acts are adopted in order to solve tactical tasks, without taking into account strategic orientations and objective Ukrainian conditions. The information sovereignty and security of Ukraine as an internal state aspect of the country's development are analyzed. It has been explored how the use of manipulative technologies, such as spin doctoring, threatens information security and prompts the protection of the information space from interference by foreign countries and the distortion of information. The factors that hinder the development of the information space are distinguished and characterized and the recommendations for the improvement of the information society in condition of information democracy formation are provided.

**Key words:** information, state, information security, information space, legislation, spin doctoring, danger.

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## Introduction

The relevance of the research topic is due to the fact that the issue of information security in the context of national information security is increasingly subject of consideration in scientific, political, economic circles. In Ukraine, interest in this problem is due to the rapid pace of development of the elements of the information space and the growing role of information as such. Currently, ways to overcome the dangers, variants of conducting information wars, attracting «soft power» resources, etc. are actively looked for. Based on this, the task of the research is to determine the general features of the strategy and threats to the information security of our state within the framework of the formation of information democracy. Objective is the fact that the need for information security arose with the emergence of the mass media as a means of communication between people, including the political sphere, and the awareness of the commonality of interests, the provision of which is possible through the media. Inflicting loss and harm to communications networks leads to the destruction of information exchange between the various elements of the political system. Instead, information security measures can become a new strategic impetus for the activities of state authorities, civil society institutions, and for the formation and implementation of a democratic information policy.

Each state deploys its own network of foreign-policy communication, which promotes its national interests. The task of foreign policy institutions, namely their PR units, is to develop a strategy for the management of information flows, using the technologies of public relations. Modern society is less and less exposed to the means of direct agitation. Therefore, in international relations, new technologies of influence on the target audience are used. As a consequence, foreign policy institutions in their operations actively use such psychotechnologies as spin doctor or gatekeeping. The ability to manage them is one of the conditions of information security. Therefore, we aim to investigate the problems of the information space and national information security in the conditions of information democracy; to find out the regulatory and legal foundations of Ukraine's information security; internal aspects of information sovereignty and identify threats to Ukraine's information security; to analyze manipulative technologies of interference in the information space; and provide some recommendations for protecting the information space.

## Information security as a legislative constant

The concept of «information security» was firstly defined in the «National Security Concept (the basis of state policy) of Ukraine», which was adopted by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine in 1997 (Resolution 1997: 5). It is argued that protection of national security is one of the most important functions of the state. In the context of information democracy formation, information security is considered as minimizing harm due to incompleteness, lack of timeliness or unreliability of information or negative informational influence through the consequences of the functioning of information technologies, as well as the unauthorized dissemination of information (Barinov 2001: 70–76.).

Information security envisages the possibility of unhindered realization by society and its individual members of their constitutional rights related to the possibility of the free reception, creation and dissemination of information. The concept of state information security should also be considered in the context of ensuring the secure conditions for the existence of information technologies, which include issues of information security such as state information infrastructure, the information market and the creation of safe conditions for the existence and development of information processes. The necessary level of information security is provided by a combination of political, economic and organizational measures aimed at preventing, detecting and neutralizing those circumstances, factors and actions that may harm or impair the realization of information rights, needs and interests of the country and its citizens (Galambba, Petrik). The state, performing the function of information security, should take into account the importance for further development of democratic values in Ukraine and implement an integral state program through the use of relevant doctrines, strategies, concepts and programs. According to the experts of the Ukrainian Center for Economic and Political Studies (UCEPS), the National Security Concept (the basis of state policy) of Ukraine, which had been approved by the parliament, did not fulfill the function of a basic document for the construction of the information security system of Ukraine. Therefore, in 2001, the specialists prepared their own draft of the Concept, taking into account the opinions and proposals of a wide range of specialists, scientists and representatives of state structures. The authors of the Concept believe that the negative trends in the development of the information space of Ukraine, the ineffectiveness of state information policy, the crisis situation in the country's economy, create the preconditions for escalating threats to Ukraine's information security and thereby endan-

ger informational democracy. According to some indicators, the level of information security in Ukraine is approaching the critical threshold, leading to the loss democratic principles and principles of state activity, the return to authoritarianism, and Ukraine's isolation on the international arena (Concept 2001 : 3-59).

After analyzing the legislation of Ukraine, and other documents dealing with information security issues, we can identify the following factors that threaten the formation of information democracy in Ukraine:

1. Introduction of political censorship. Public authorities are trying to conduct political censorship in print, audiovisual, electronic mass media, and on the Internet at national and regional levels. This contradicts democratic transformations in society, restricts the rights of citizens to receive and disseminate information, and forms the image of Ukraine as an undemocratic state in the eyes of the world.

2. Different kinds of pressure on the media. The media is influenced through economic sanctions and selective financial support from the state. The heavy tax burden on the media, high paper prices, the monopolization of certain types of information services, limited advertising market and investment, low solvency of the population are responsible for the non-profitability of the vast majority of the media, especially the socio-political direction (Concept 2001: 3–59). We consider it appropriate to solve the first two problems by recognizing a fundamentally new status at the legislative level for the mass media – independent from the pressure of state structures. Furthermore, the rejection of state regulation of the media sphere in those issues in which international practice proves the expediency and efficiency of the sector's self-regulation (Mytko 2010: 205–206).

3. Manifestation of political extremism against journalists. The manifestation of political extremism against the media in the form of physical harassment with journalists are notoriously known, cases of violence and their death, which are not disclosed by law enforcement agencies. This creates fear in society and hinders the democratization of public life, and creates a negative Ukraine's image in the eyes of the world.

4. Insufficient openness of public authorities for public accountability. The information society puts forward new requirements for public authorities, which is connected with the transition from administrative-command to democratic variant of functioning in the system of «power – mass media». In our opinion, openness of power as an axiom is a key to protecting the population from the negative effects of manipulation through the MMC (Mytko 2010 : 205).

## Information Sovereignty and Security of Ukraine: the Internal Aspect

The need to create opportunities for reaching information adequacy for decision-making by public authorities, citizens and associations of citizens, other subjects of law in Ukraine; guarantee of freedom of information activity and right of access to information in the national information space of Ukraine; the comprehensive development of information infrastructure are also mentioned in the draft Law of Ukraine «On Information Sovereignty and Information Security of Ukraine», which was submitted for consideration by the People's Deputy of Ukraine Levko Lukyanenko. Converting the media into mass media of propaganda and manipulation, the emergence of new information products in the country is almost always clearly oriented to the fulfillment of political tasks in the interests of founders political parties or financial groups, which are focused on the incumbent power. In fact, all mass media is distributed between influential financial and political circles. The function of informing is minimized and turned into propaganda. The media, as an important element of political capital, proves the «usefulness» of financial and political groups for the authorities, generating the spread of non-objective information, self-censorship of journalists, reducing their social status, especially on a regional level, high rates of staff turnover in the media and other negative phenomena (Concept 2001: 3–59).

Regional studies confirm that the vast majority of mass media cannot be called independent, financially independent publications, as most of the founders of Volyn mass media are the authorities and local self-government. There are still a large number of state and municipal MMCs. Despite the existence of isolated examples – both at the national and regional levels – of the development of the media as successful projects, media are broadly seen as a tool for political manipulation (Mytko 2010: 210). According to E. Makarenko, the task of legislative, executive and departmental structures, the mass media and communications is the formation of a politically mature Ukrainian society, the establishment of state authorized national cultural values. Practitioners and theorists, legislators, and politicians should think about the future: will the Ukrainian information space become an instrument, a means of establishing state priorities, or will the media space become a field for a large business without any political prospect for the state (Makarenko). During the round table discussion «Information Security of Ukraine: The Essence and Problems» in 1998, O. Baranov also drew attention to the problem

of overcoming the manipulation of the media space, and, based on the classical interpretation of the information space, believes that the state should ensure each subject of information relations the right to receive complete, reliable and timely information; no one has the right to violate the interests of the subject of information relations by some informational influence. Self-interests should be combined with the interests of others (Barinov 2001: 70–76).

Only ten years after the adoption of the «National Security Concept of Ukraine» National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine (NSDC) completed the preparation of the draft of the «Doctrine of Information Security of Ukraine». The document of 2008 emphasized the task of overcoming the same problems faced by the Ukrainian state in 1997. The NSDC proposes to provide information security of Ukraine, on the basis of the principles of information democracy:

- freedom of creating, collecting, storing, using and disseminating of information;
- ensuring the reliability, completeness and impartiality of information;
- limiting of access to information solely by law;
- harmonization of personal, public and state interests;
- prevention and neutralization of offenses in the information sphere of economic feasibility;
- harmonization of Ukrainian and international legislation in the information sphere;
- priority of the national information product.

## Threats to Ukraine's information security

The insufficient regulatory and legal framework pertaining to the development of the information society and ensuring the protection of the information space is exacerbated by other factors. In particular, such examples include:

1. The lack of systemic and mutually beneficial communication in the triangle «society – media – power», although this kind of communication is the fundamental basis for the existence of any developed democracy. Despite the positive dynamics of freedom of speech in Ukraine against the backdrop of global indicators and the intensive development of the domestic information sphere, an increasing percentage of our citizens feel themselves isolated from access to information guaranteed by the legislation «open, accessible, objective, complete and accurate» on public life and activity of state bodies.

2. Monopolization of media markets. First of all, it concerns the broadcasting market, which has already been divided between large and some smaller media groups, and, to a lesser extent, the press market. These processes objectively narrow the «corridor of opportunities» of new media actors to enter the market and, consequently, the exercise of the constitutional right of citizens to freedom of speech and information. At the same time, relations of ownership of key domestic media remain opaque and insufficiently controlled by the state, and the legislative regulation of this sphere is not sufficiently effective.

3. The absence of a public service broadcasting sector, that is, a public counterbalance to private media, aimed at ensuring a balanced, dual nature of the national media system. Global experience shows that developed structures of public broadcasting are an integral part of modern democracy, a condition and an indicator of its successful development.

4. Insufficient professional level of Ukrainian journalism, with undeveloped corporate ethics. This situation ultimately negatively affects both the quality of the domestic media product and the adherence in the Ukrainian media to the principles of freedom of speech, objectivity, and commitment to the public interest.

5. An overabundance of politically engaged and negative messages in the information space of Ukraine. One of the reasons for these phenomena is the inadequate level of the public responsibility within the media; an incomplete awareness of their own social function. An important role is played the dependence of private media activity on market conditions, as well as on the interests of the owners, which gives rise to their political engagement.

6. Unevenness and unequal conditions of access to information of different regions, that is, the presence of zones of low informational saturation and «white spots» on the information map of Ukraine due to the lack of capacity and the number of transmitters of domestic audiovisual media.

7. Postponement and difficulties in switching to digital broadcasting due to: a) lack of a sufficiently effective and consolidated action plan; b) the inconsistency of activities and areas of competence of specialized agencies in this matter; c) the lack of coordination of mechanisms for providing all segments of the population with means of reception of digital broadcasting signals; d) insufficient awareness of citizens about its features and benefits.

8. Weak development of infrastructure, which reflects the level of development of the information society and defines the prospects for the development of e-democracy.

9. Fragmentation and segmentation of the national information space, which leads to a colossal backlog of most states from the level of development of developed democracies and, as a result, limited access to information resources.

### **Spin doctoring and gatekeeping as a threat to information security**

The development of information space and the implementation of information democracy involves such a phenomenon as the openness of power, which is the accessibility of information that is of public interest to citizens, and concerns the personal interests of individuals, systematic informing of citizens about decisions that are adopted or are expected to be adopted; and the control by citizens over the activities of state bodies, political organizations or officials. This given position of the state is defined by such a concept as information democracy. Nowadays, in our opinion, infodemocracy is limited by a large number of factors, which is manifested in the use of the help of such specialists as spin doctors, gatekeepers, and others (Rudneva 2007: 128–131).

As a rule, the spin doctor is often involved in the correction of various deformations of event image in the media after the information event has undergone unfavorable development. A specific feature of the spin doctor's work is that it operates both verbally and in nonverbal spheres. There were numerous examples of how the circles of monarchs, kings and presidents «prepared» the audience for various ceremonies (the triumph of the crowd at the coronation, the «Potemkin villages», «stormy, prolonged applause» at party congresses, etc.), which are known from the history. All of this is an illustration of the work of the spin docs – people who model the information situation (*Spin-Doctor* 2001).

The specifics of the activities of the spin doctor in the political sphere (the so-called «political spin») manifests itself in the fact that it: works with political structures and leaders, state bodies of executive and legislative power; consults on the issue of political conversations, speeches and their consequences; uses information flows for specific political purposes; applies opposition to power structures; is based on its personal authority, personal acquaintance in the media, knowledge of the information structure; uses informal contacts; organizes speeches in response to statements by opponents – for this purpose, the press services of governments and parliaments systematically meet journalists.



Ukrainian spin doctors primarily manage the media space in general, filling it with that informational product, which, in their view, is most adequate to the goals set. Ukraine looks weaker in crisis situations. Practically all recent examples – from the «cassette scandal» to the Ukrainian missile striking the Russian plane – show inadequate information behavior. The information space in Ukraine was formed and is now further developing through private initiatives, and politicians ignore this sphere. As a result, the democratic opportunities themselves and undemocratic tendencies in the structure of political communications in Ukraine lie at the heart of determining the current problems and perspectives of the dynamics of the entire political system of our state, in particular the nature of its political regime (Kovalevsky 2009: 143).

An important and promising direction of media support of the state (from top management to separate departments) and the means of avoiding negative spin doctoring is establishing a stable, systematic feedback from the authorities on the basis of the positions of the leaders on the opinions of social media. This should become a constant practice. There are some possible mechanisms and practices which are necessary to solve this problem. The meeting should be held between officials and main representatives of the Ukrainian blogosphere in an informal setting. Obviously, one will also have to invite extremely critical bloggers to such meetings, who, of course, will try to return to the negative-resonance hot topics. This will increase the risks of such a meeting and will require additional training by the press service of the authorities and local self-government. At the same time, providing exclusive information to bloggers will demonstrate, firstly, the openness of authorities to new forms of communication, and secondly – the willingness to provide «exclusive» stories to the leaders of public opinion on the Internet.

Officials should mention more often in their speeches the results of investigations and legal actions of similar self-organized associations (either press secretaries of senior officials or individual press officers may be responsible for monitoring the reports), which would demonstrate, on the one hand, that these individuals personally use the resources of the network, and on the other hand, that such messages do not remain unnoticed by the state leadership.

It is necessary to provide a real opportunity for constant bilateral contacts with representatives of state bodies, officials, etc. to «Leaders of opinion» and participants of social networks. Such communication is also desirable on the basis of official state online resources and thus it is

possible to avoid distortion of information and to reduce the level of gatekeeping to a minimum.

The crises such as revolutions, wars, armed attacks, military invasions require the greatest use of spin. Given the situation in the country as a result of aggressive actions by representatives of foreign states in early 2014, it is expedient to consider the experience of leading countries in the use of so-called «digital dispatches», that is, participants of social networks (bloggers) that would react promptly to any destructive actions for interests of state and society in network activity, timely turning off the appropriate threats. However, as for a significant number of countries it is important to position the state policy on foreign (overseas) information platforms, then for Ukraine, work in the internal media space is paramount, in particular, given the acute need to increase public confidence in state politicians (at least – through their explanation) and ensuring their loyalty to the current authorities. Therefore, although in most countries such structures have been created under the Ministries of Defense or the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, in Ukraine such activity, at the initial stage, is appropriate to be attributed to the responsibilities of communicative units of state authorities.

To resolve conflicts and stabilize relations between different groups of civil society, organizations and institutions, the state should appoint a Commissioner for Information who will consider the information as the active force of changes and not simply as a factor in efficiency. Frankness and transparency do not simply mean easier access to information. It is not enough to convince an agency to place all the data online. It is necessary to work to facilitate comparison and data analysis. This includes everything: from data retrieval to the way in which these data are presented, how easy is to compare the data of different organizations and at different periods of time. Data should also be easily processed so that third parties, whether commercial information services or journalists, can visualize them.

## Findings

Having analyzed the external and internal aspects of the information security issue and the protection of the information space we can conclude that more and more in recent decades the democracy ideas are actualizing as the result of the world community struggle with totalitarian and authoritarian forms of government. The successful socio-economic, political and cultural development of democracies with the

construction of an information society leads to focusing researchers on norms and values that are based on ensuring citizens' right to information and legal regulation of the openness principle as well as accessibility of institutions and state authorities. Moreover, guaranteeing the right to information imposes constitutional obligations on administrative bodies to disclose information of public interest. In Ukraine, during the period of independence, certain legal principles of the establishment of information society have been formed, and the right to information as the basis of information democracy is a fundamental right of a person and is guaranteed by the Constitution of Ukraine, as well as the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

It is worth bearing in mind that the information and communication opportunities gained by the political system as a result of information security encourage it to control the information space, Internet traffic of citizens, adjust the information space with the help of spin doctoring. In the world there is a fairly widespread practice of applying measures to control information flows in the media environment and in the Internet in particular. The use of manipulative technologies leads to the solution of such an important problem as the need for information security and the protection of the information space from the interference of foreign powers in the information space and distortion of information. The use of spin doctoring indicates that the event in the symbolic world differs from the real world event. The spin doctor is the specialist in the world of news, precisely in its symbolic aspect. The conscious distortion of information is a real threat to the development of the theory of information democracy.

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## Problemy ochrony przestrzeni informacyjnej i krajowego bezpieczeństwa informacyjnego w warunkach demokracji informacyjnej

### Streszczenie

W artykule dokonano analizy przestrzeni prawnej Ukrainy w zakresie prawodawczych i innych normatywno-prawnych aktów regulujących obronę i rozwój ojczystego obszaru informacyjnego. Jednocześnie zaznaczono, że ważnym problemem jest pewna chaotyczność ukraińskiej polityki prawnej w informacyjnym polu, w szczególności ze względu na to, że częściowo prawodawcze akty uchwalane są dla rozwiązania taktycznych zadań, bez uwzględnienia strategicznych orientacyjnych punktów i obiektywnych ukraińskich warunków. Przeanalizowano informacyjną suwerenność i bezpieczeństwo Ukrainy, jak i wewnątrzrajowy aspekt rozwoju kraju. Zbadano, w jaki sposób użycie manipulacyjnych technologii, takich jak spindoktoring, zagraża informacyjnemu bezpieczeństwu i pobudza do obrony informacyjnego obszaru przed ingerencją obcych państw i aberracji informacji. Nazwano i scharakteryzowano czynniki, które przeszkadzają rozwojowi informacyjnego obszaru, i wskazano rekomendacje dla udoskonalenia informacyjnego społeczeństwa pod warunkiem kształtowania się informacyjnej demokracji.

**Słowa kluczowe:** informacja, państwo, informacyjne bezpieczeństwo, informacyjny obszar, ustawodawstwo, spindoktoring, niebezpieczeństwo