

The Total Media Theory: the Experience of Justification

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Abstract. *The reference to the topic of studying the concept of "media" is not new, but its deeper theoretical elaboration and access to modern social practices show how relevant this task is nowadays when we are in the process of rethinking all epistemological knowledge in the context of the medial nature of existence. Understanding the information society as a society where information becomes one of the leading values, forces scientists to seek answers to questions about the functioning of this information in the media environment, about the ways of its transmission, existence and influence on processes and phenomena. It is for the first time that an article gives a conceptual view of a new interpretation media theory through the prism of their integrality. This view is revealed in the concept of "The Total Media theory" based on a broad interpretation of the media as any means and channels of communication, which represents a comprehensive media environment. The aim of the given research is to prove the global, total nature of the media. To achieve this goal, the author carried out a linguistic analysis of the use of the word "media" in different languages, analyzed variants of its filling and use in different epochs, on this basis a classification of media on different criteria was worked out. As a result, the author concludes that a broad interpretation of the media creates conditions for the functioning of a coherent theory - The Total Media theory, allowing to see new horizons for media research. Within the framework of this theory, it becomes possible to identify the essential characteristics of media, such as viativity (cross-cutting action), integrativity, media variability in a changing media environment, and the inevitable deforming impact of media on communication subjects.*

Keywords: media, media theory, The Total Media theory, media classification, informal media, viativity.

Introduction

The first two decades of the 21st century have somewhat advanced the humanity in the understanding of the media space surrounding us, and, on the other hand, have largely added uncertainties to the self-understanding as an integral part of the media environment. In the field of technology, digital content replaced physical media such as compact discs and vinyl records; the video game industry was formed as an independent industry with multimillion-dollar budgets; the mobile phone destroyed the idea of a settled life and continues to erase the boundaries of time and space; smart dwellings and smart cities surround us from all sides; intellectual systems begin to perform creative functions that were traditionally subject only to the man.

However, the sphere of information exchange and interaction between people, machines, any other entities remain a mystery, despite the fact that communication is the basis of all the phenomena of nature and of the idea of development. Nevertheless, the means by which this communication occurs have long been beyond the scientific interest of researchers.

At present, the relevance of research in this field is growing due to the multiple increase in the flow of information and the ways in which it is delivered. Moreover, new questions arise related to the deep processes of information exchange in various systems, environments, organisms. It becomes clear that the limited interpretation of media as a means of mass communication unjustifiably narrows the concept of the world and does not allow us to see a holistic picture of the functioning of all elements of modern media space.

The hypothesis and methodological bases of the research

Our linguistic analysis of the notion of "media" in various languages confirmed our hypothesis that this concept is applicable in various fields of activity, such as communication, medicine, chemistry, economics, business and many others. As a result of the structural analysis of the media sphere, we singled out a number of criteria on the basis of which it was possible to formulate a classification of media and describe their typological characteristics. As a result of the theoretical generalization of the accumulated knowledge, we have formed some theoretical foundations of The Total Media theory, formulated their conceptual features and defined the given theory.

Theoretical background of the research: Opening of theoretical researches in the field of means of communication is connected with the Toronto School of Communication. The developments in the field of the study of writing as a powerful resource and technology of domination, belong to Harold Adams Innis¹, a researcher of culture and the shaping role of the means of communication. In the 1940s, Innis engaged in research on the impact of communication media on the typology of social order and the survival of empires - from the primitive society to the middle of the twentieth century. As a result, he offered a historical and philosophical concept, explaining the role of freedom of communication in the formation, development and disappearance of the largest civilizations from the historical arena. Innis², and after him M. McLuhan, considered the change of means of communication to be the engine of social development: the divided territories are united in a single whole with the help of new roads, transport, money, which, according to McLuhan, is media³.

Further search for the driving forces of social development leads modern media researchers to a comprehensive analysis of natural, socio-economic, cultural processes. In particular, M. Castells emphasizes that "communication power is at the heart of the structure and dynamics of society ... Because it is through communication that the human consciousness interacts with its social and natural environment"⁴.

Separation of the sciences of communication in an independent direction is attributed to the 1950s of the last century. Historically, the first cybernetic communication model developed by N. Wiener⁵ is based on the mathematical theory of information, when information reduces the degree of uncertainty that in

¹ S.V. Arkhipov, *The role of communication in the early history of civilizations: a view from Moscow and Toronto*, URL: svarkhipov.narod.ru/pup/serg.htm, accessed 05. 03. 2017.

² N.A. Innis, *Empire and Communications*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1950.

³ M. McLuhan, *Understanding the Media: External Expansions of the Man*. Moscow, Kuchkovo Field, 2011. Nadezhda G. Osipova, Sergey O. Elishev, Gennadi B. Pronchev, "Mass Information Media and Propaganda Mouthpiece as a Tool for Manipulating and Social Inequality Factor among the Young People," in *Astra Salvensis*, VI (2018), Special Issue, p. 541-550.

⁴ M. Castells, *The power of communication*, Moscow, Publishing house of Higher School of Economics, 2016.

⁵ N. Wiener, *Cybernetics and Society*, Moscow, Foreign Literature, 1958.

the closed system irreversibly increases, which leads to loss of control over the functioning of the system.

A significant influence on the formation of the sciences of information and communication was the empirical-functional direction of mass media research that was developed in the United States during World War II and experienced a real flowering in the 1950s. This trend is traditionally associated with the names of P. Lazarsfeld⁶, who was the first to study the audience of radio and the press, and G. Lasswell⁷, who engaged in the theory of propaganda and the functioning of the mass media.

One of the fundamental directions, without which it is impossible to imagine the science of communication today, is the structural method and its linguistic and, more broadly, semiological theories. Among the authors who initiated the structural research of communication, it is necessary to name K. Levi-Strauss, M. Foucault, R. Barth and others. Methods of structural analysis are applied by them to artistic and professional texts, audio, video and film documents. They formed the basis for the development of modern methods of information processing and representation of knowledge.

Since the late 1960s, communication sciences have become a subject of interest of academic professional communities and have been enriched with new ideas. Among them, it should be noted the sociology of mass communication, the political economy of communication, the ethnography of communication.

At the present time in the complex of communication theory, the theory of media has emerged as a separate scientific direction. The works of many researchers are devoted to the study of this phenomenon⁸. However, nowadays, despite numerous developments, we still do not have a harmonious theory of media, which would fully disclose the essence of this concept, its functions, structure. And, as I. Minaeva rightly points out, "despite extensive factual material and multiple theoretical studies, there are often claims to the quality of these works: when we are steeped in multiple examples and special cases, the authors do not

⁶ P. Lazarsfeld, R. Merton, "Mass Communication, popular taste and organized social action", in L. Bryson (ed.) *The Communication of Ideas*, New-York, Harper and Brothers, 1948, p. 95-118.

⁷ H.D. Lasswell, "The structure and function of communication in society", in L. Bryson (ed.) *The Communication of Ideas*, New-York, Harper and Brothers, 1948, p. 37-51.

⁸ I.V. Kiriya, A.A. Novikova, *History and theory of media: coursebook for universities*, Moscow, Publishing House of Higher School of Economics, 2017; N. Sosna, K. Fedorova (eds.), *Media: between magic and technology*. Ekaterinburg-Moscow, The Office Scientist, 2014; Kateryna Miliutina, Andrii Trofimov, Svitlana Paschenko, Oleksandr Vakulenko, Iuliia Romanova, Nina Rohal, "The use of Projective Methods in working with Staff," in *Astra Salvensis*, VI (2018), no. 11, p. 498-503. A. Chernykh, *Rituals and myths of the media*, Moscow, Publishing "Center for Humanitarian Initiatives", 2015; A. Chernykh, *Media and Democracy* Moscow, St.-Peterburg, University Book, 2011; J. Keane, *Democracy and decadence of the media*, Moscow, High School of Economics, Series "Political Theory", 2015; D. Matisson, *Media Discourse. Analysis of media texts*, Kharkiv, Institute of Applied Psychology "Humanitarian Center", 2017; K. M. Entsberger, *The industry of consciousness. Elements of the theory of media*. Moscow, "Ad Marginem Press", 2016.

reach the level of reliability and scientificity either in description or in comprehension media phenomena"⁹.

An important conceptual problem of research in the field of media theory is that most of them are devoted exclusively to the phenomenon of mass media. And, despite the fact that, as a rule, scientists treat the very concept of "media" rather broadly, polyphonically, but methodologically and meaningfully they remain in the sphere of mass communications.

Narrow interpretation of media immediately leads researchers and media professionals into the media industry, media measurements, mass production of information products, journalistic practice.

In this regard, N. Luhmann argued that "only the machine production of a product as a communication medium ... led to the isolation of the mass media system"¹⁰. It is the mediation of technology that is decisive for understanding the specifics of the sphere of mass communication, while the sphere of media in general is applied to all areas of human life.

A. V. Sharikov, in his article "On the Need for Reconceptualization of Media Education", provides in a convincing way the dissolution of the notions of "media" and "mass media". "In literature, unfortunately, even in the scientific literature," says the researcher, "there is a confusion of the terms "media", "means of mass communication", "mass media ". In fact, the synonyms here are only "mass media" and "means of mass communication". The concepts of "media" and "means of mass communication", "media" and "mass media" are correlated as a whole and a part. Every means of mass communication (mass media) is the essence of media, but not every media is the essence of "means of mass communication" (mass media), because there exist non-mass media forms"¹¹.

Nevertheless, in most dictionaries, the term "media" is treated as part of a word related to the media, English-language electronic translators translate "media" into Russian as " mass media". In this case, the English word "media" is an abbreviation of "media of communication (s)", which means "communication media" in Russian.

The notion of "media" (from Latin *media* - means, intermediaries, plural from *medium* which means "middle", average, intermediary) today has become very common, but it is interpreted differently by theorists and practitioners.

As the Russian researcher I.M. Dzyaloshinsky argues, in Russian there are verbal shells that sound like "media", but the meanings arising from their use are most likely inadequate to those deep meanings that are tied to this notion in Latin culture¹².

⁹ I. Minaeva, "Theory of Media. Along the bookshelf", in *Russian Journal*, 2014. URL: <http://www.russ.ru/Mirovaya-povestka/Teoriya-media>, accessed 12. 03. 2017.

¹⁰ N. Lumann, *The reality of the media*. URL: <http://gtmarket.ru/laboratory/basis/3001/3002>, accessed 12. 03. 2017.

¹¹ A.V. Sharikov, "On the need for reconceptualization of media education", in K.E. Razlogov, A.V. Fedorov (eds.) *The current state of media education in Russia in the context of global trends*, Moscow, Russian Institute of Cultural Studies, 2012, p. 232-247.

¹² I.M. Dzyaloshinsky, *Civil Communication and Civil Society*, Moscow, Higher School of Economics, 2009.

According to one of the most complete automatic online Runet dictionaries “Multitran”, which contains more than 5 million terms in more than 20 languages of the world, the word "media" has numerous semantic variations, preserving the original meaning of medianness, mediation. In particular, in English media in accordance with various fields of knowledge is used as a "discussion platform" (common); "the average shell of the blood vessel" (anatomical); "Mass media, advertising" (business); "interactive equipment" (education); "medium, filler" (chemistry); "medium-roasted meat" (culinary); "Audiovisual production" (cinema); "median consonant" (lingual); "means of communication" (scientific); "representative of the middle class" (colloquial.), etc.

Most often the word "media" is found in such spheres as advertising - 252, mass media - 250, telecommunications - 194, computer technology - 150, in military terminology - 126, programming - 105, in medicine - 79, Internet - 84, in politics - 56, business vocabulary - 55, energy field - 45 and so on.

In the Middle Ages, the word "medium" was associated with such concepts as magician, sorcerer, oracle, priest, wizard, shaman. In the 16th century, in English, it served to refer to people who were the link between the worlds.

In the XVII century, this notion joined philosophy language and was interpreted as environment, ether, sphere, for example, "To the Sight three things are required, the Object, the Organ, and the Medium" or "expressed by the Medium of Wordes"¹³.

Since the XVIII century, the notion of "media" is beginning to be used in the context of newspapers which appeared at that time, for example, "I wished to be one of those who would have the honour and happiness of announcing those Great events to the public through the Medium of a Newspaper"¹⁴. At the same time, thanks to the efforts of historians and philosophers of the Enlightenment, a new scientific discipline arose – medievalistics (*medieval* – Eng.), - as a section of the historical science of the European Middle Ages¹⁵. At one time, great success in studying medieval culture was achieved by Soviet medieval studies¹⁶.

A special flourishing of media is obtained in the era of technological revolution, during the invention of electric communication media. From the middle of the XIX century, media refers to the process of disseminating messages using technical means of communication (electric media - telegraph, radio, telephone).

The whole 20th century is under the sign of “mass media”, “means of mass communication” and the notion of "media" is closely associated with mass audience and mass communication, all the way to the fact that the differences between the media and the mass media become almost indistinguishable.

¹³ F. Bacon, *Of the Proficiency and Advancement of Learning, Divine and Human*, The Online Library Of Liberty, 1605.

¹⁴ Ph. Freneau, *To James Madison from Philip Freneau, 20 May 1795*. The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). URL: <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Madison/01-16-02-0010>, accessed 12. 03. 2017.

¹⁵ W. Raymond, *Keywords: a vocabulary of culture and society*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1985.

¹⁶ A.A. Prokhorov, “Medieval Studies as a Historical Science”, in V.A. Fedosik, I.O. Evtukhov (eds.), *History of the Middle Ages. In 3 volumes Part 1*. Minsk, BSU, 2008, p. 46-61.

The term "media" is widely spread during the digital age, with mediation of all spheres of life: politics, economics, culture, and private life. Today we confidently use this concept in urban planning, describing the urban media environment, in education, when we talk about media literacy. At present, media are studied in such areas of science as philology, philosophy, linguistics, psychology, ecology, etc.

Thus, we believe that *media is an integral, infinitely self-developing environment consisting of numerous means and channels of communication that serve to exchange information between subjects of this communication; while by means and channels of communication we mean any media of content, including natural and artificial information translators in verbal and non-verbal forms*. This approach can be fixed as a fundamental one in the Total Media theory.

The concept of "The Total Media theory" (The Total Media theory) is introduced by us in order to emphasize the total nature of this theory and in order to distinguish it from the existing developments of the theory of media as a theory of mass communication. *The Total Media theory, from our point of view, is a dynamically developing system of generalized knowledge about media and their functioning in the information space as the widest, most comprehensive and integral phenomenon of reality*.

Conceptually, the Total Media theory is based on the research of Russian and foreign scholars who deal with issues of philosophy, culture, ecology of the media sphere. In particular, the American mediologist D. Rashkoff states that "the infosphere has become our new environment ... The infosphere began to behave like a living organism - a system no less complex, large-scale and self-sufficient than nature itself. Like any biological object, it aspired to grow. Consuming dollars from those who still thought that they were building a closed consumer culture, the media expanded into that amazing world wide web that we are enjoying today"¹⁷.

In recent years, Russian researchers have started talking about "the mediaization of society." For example, N.B. Kirillova notes that all the semantic richness of "media", as the most important category of the modern lifestyle, can not be squeezed into a narrow scheme of banal mediation, because "... the media is not just a medium for transmitting information, it is the whole environment in which it is produced, aesthetized and broadcast cultural codes"¹⁸.

A.A. Kalmykov's general notion of "media" refers to what constitutes "the integral of our personal comprehension of current events and interpretations offered by multiple information and communication practices"¹⁹.

F. Stalder notes that "media create an integrated environment (environment), which is based on information flows. Increasingly, this environment becomes the main one in human activity"²⁰. It is about the inclusion of media in everyday life, social processes and institutions that can not be considered without

¹⁷ D. Raskoff, *Mediavirus. How pop culture secretly affects your consciousness*. URL: http://www.gumer.info/bibliotek_Buks/Gurn/Rashk/02.php, accessed 12. 03. 2017.

¹⁸ N.B. Kirillova, *Media culture: from the modern to the postmodern*, Moscow, Academic project, 2006.

¹⁹ A.A. Kalmykov, *NOO Images. The matrix of key messages*, Moscow, Media Industry, 2013.

²⁰ F. Stalder, *Ecology of Information: A Systems Approach to the Media*. URL: <http://media-ecology.blogspot.com/2011/04/blog-post.html>, accessed 12. 03. 2017.

medial components. Figuratively speaking, it is a circulatory system that supports a living organism in its vital activity.

According to the interpretation of V.V. Savchuk, "everything that" is "given" to us in perception, communication and cognition is given in the media." The media philosophers of the St. Petersburg scientific school formulate the modern concept of media reality as "everything is media" or "mediaergosum"²¹. Russian researcher in the field of territorial development strategies S.E. Zuyev, emphasizes that "it is impossible to imagine a modern world without gravity, likewise it is impossible to imagine a modern world without the piercing lines of power created by information flows. ... and if we do not reduce media to the mass media, then we talk about communication platforms and communication technologies"²².

Thus, a broad comprehensive interpretation of the media gives us a fundamental basis for developing the Total Media theory, which can make adjustments to our traditional ideas about media space.

Results and Discussion

Any theories have a number of functions, among them - providing researchers with understanding of conceptual structures, terminology, a system of elements; the theory also allows us to explain the various manifestations of the object of the theory in life, in real and ideal conditions, and also to predict the processes of the development of phenomena. The structural and functional analysis of the media system made it possible to justify the need for the maximum possible and logical classification of the means of communication on the basis of our Total Media theory.

In the field of media, which today is interpreted as a separate field of scientific knowledge, the typology method, which is one of the important methods of cognition, can serve as a very effective way of analyzing this multi-valued concept. At present, sufficient empirical material has already been accumulated in the field of media communication, on the basis of which it is possible to form a modern media typology. And, if only a few years ago, media were seen as an indefinite collection of means of communication, today researchers more and more clearly distinguish the special properties of various media that allow to unite them in definite groups.

However, with respect to the Total Media theory, it should be noted that in the process of analyzing and discovering regularities in the field of media, it is not always possible to fix clear boundaries between groups and classes of phenomena, therefore the role of classification should not be overestimated. Moreover, rigid dividing lines in complex multifunctional systems are hardly compatible with the theory of development. In the field of media, which is an integral environment with vague outlines of concepts, classification is particularly difficult, since numerous

²¹ V.V. Savchuk, *Mediophilosophy. Attack of reality*, St.-Peterburg, Publishing House of the Russian Academy of Civil Service, 2013.

²² S.E. Zuev, *How new media have changed the world*. URL: postnauka.ru/video/30224#!, accessed 12.03.2017.

kinds and subkinds in different communicative, technological, social, cultural spheres can manifest themselves in different ways, intersect, reincarnate, mimicry.

The currently emergin Total Media theory is based on the fact that media include an unlimited range of means and channels of communication for the transmission of various kinds of information. These are works of art in the form of books, sculptures, paintings, films, and advertisements in all their forms, and a television or radio program, a newspaper or magazine article; it is a public speech, an official document, a postcard, an encrypted message, an SMS message, multimedia text in network media. In short, these are any means of delivering content from the producer to the consumer.

They are everywhere - where there is a subject capable of communicating with other subjects, even if these subjects are machines or seem to be inanimate objects. Interaction with the outside world is always performed through a variety of means, which are called "media", it's all that connects us to everything and everyone. And, if some of them, for example, neural media, have not been sufficiently studied yet, or others are not at all discovered yet, this does not mean that they do not exist. The Total Media theory allows us to assert that communication media exist in the surrounding world because without them communication, and, consequently, life itself, is impossible.

Klaus Brühne Jensen, a professor at the University of Copenhagen, who understands the media as "a kit of tools that people use throughout history to communicate with each other about their common reality"²³, distinguishes three levels of media:

the first level - those media that directly depend on the presence of a person (a verbal language, a speech, a song, a dance, a painting, etc.);

the second level – the media generated by technology, these are extended forms of representation and interaction that support communication through space and time, regardless of the presence and number of participants (traditional media and other analog media systems);

the third level - the digital forms of representation and interaction, when digital technology provides the opportunity for reproduction and recombination of all second-level media on a single platform: computers can thus be understood as meta-media.

We consider this approach to be legitimate, it corresponds to the Total Media theory in its historical and psychological-physiological aspects. Indeed, the premedia, which existed in the prehistoric times, as natural means of communication, accompany a person today also. They are his sense organs, which, through the direct action of various objects on receptors, for example, auditory or visual, transmit the received signals to the brain - the organ that processes the information. The Russian scientist I.P. Pavlov named this type of signaling (communication) the first signal system. It, including speech and other natural

²³ K. B. Jensen, "Media", in *The International Encyclopedia of communication*, Malden-Oford-Carlton, Blackwell Publishing, 2008, p. 2811-2817.

modes of communication, corresponds to the first level of communication as a kind of *natural* or *organic (natural)* media.

The second level of media fully reflects the concept of McLooen about the external expansion of the man, where cultural objects act as communication tools. This is money, a road, a wheel, a watch, and clothes, and much more. This is a complex of artificial (technical) media, created by the man.

The third level of media implies the convergence of all the previous ones in the digital format.

In general, the whole pool of media can be divided into several complexes, which are grouped according to various criteria:

- by time of occurrence;
- by type of communication;
- by way the information is perceived;
- by the subject and format of content;
- by audience volume;
- by degree of formalization;
- by activity of the audience during the perception of information.

It should be noted that other criteria for classifying media are possible, but at this stage of development of the theory of media these categories are exhaustive. Let's contemplate some of them.

One of the most important criteria for the classification of media is the historical one- by time of occurrence, according to which all types of communication media are divided into:

- premedia
- written media
- printed media
- electronic media
- software (digital) media
- convergent media

By the type of communication, media can be **verbal** (from Latin *verbalis* - verbal) and **non-verbal** depending on the use or non-use of language facilities. The word, the language, the speech are universal means of communication, with the help of which information is encoded and decoded.

In order to achieve the fullest possible mutual understanding with other individuals, a person chooses from the many media options precisely those that most effectively solve the problem of interaction with the society. The success of communication between people depends on the correct choice in respect of the tasks, place and time.

According to the way the information is perceived, the media are divided into:

- visual (text, graphic, image),
- auditory (voice, music, spontaneous),
- tactile,
- taste,

- olfactory,
- neural.

The visual media can be created on the basis of only one kind of information, and also can be mixed, convergent, for example, audiovisual - a television program in digital format, a theatrical staging, a mobile application, etc.

The ext, the graphic and the visual media are distinguished in the structure of visual media.

The text media are those based on a text. The numbers also belong to this group of media.

The graphic media can be represented by graphs, diagrams, tables and other infographics.

The image media include all the variety of artistic means of communication – a drawing, a picture, a photograph, a poster, a collage, other ways of communicating information using visual means of the image.

Audial media exist in the form of *voice signals, musical pieces or spontaneous sounds*.

On the subject of content, media can be divided into political, social, scientific, educational ones, etc. According to *the content format* – the text media (articles, plans, instructions and other documents, online and offlinebooks); images media (photographs, infographics, drawings, diagrams, slides, screenshots); audio media (podcasts, music, audiolectures, Skype and phone entries); video media (videos, slideshows, video presentations, video lessons, video tours, movies, video clips, concerts, etc.) and convergent or multimedia, where several media formats merge.

Classification of media by volume of the audience is of a particular importance.

It's about **mass** and **non-mass media**. The mass media group includes all traditional media and communication, such as a newspaper, a magazine, a TV program, a radio broadcast and more modern online publications. Mass media also include films, any spectacular events, advertising brochures, leaflets, music albums and so on.

Non-mass media are divided into:

- individual,
- interpersonal,
- group.

The individual media are personal diaries, notes on the margins, working notes, as well as creative works not intended for display or replication, but solely for your own satisfaction. *The interpersonal media* are represented by SMS-messages, traditional letters and e-mail, it is a telephone conversation, a greeting card, another private message in a visual or auditive form. *The group media* are distributed in social networks, they are information products that are created in groups, on the moderated sites, in various thematic communities, as well as corporate publications of political parties, universities and schools, commercial enterprises, civil society organizations, etc. The group media include family newspapers and videos, house

bulletin boards, home shows and films, club exhibitions of photographs and drawings, etc.

From the point of view of formalization, all types of media can be divided into formal and informal ones.

The formal media include those that are part of the mass communication group and are registered as media in accordance with the law. However, at present there is a new huge class of media, which we call informal²⁴.

One of the main features of the modern mass communication industry is the active involvement of the reader / viewer / listener in the production and consumption of mass media products. In parallel with the traditional media, which have all the formal signs of the media, an entirely new media environment is emerging, which has a distinct informal character.

Today, everyone can create and publish their own articles, interviews, reports, shoot audio and video pieces, act as a photo reporter. This phenomenon is called informal journalism (from the Latin word “informalis” - informal), and the channels for the broadcast of amateur content are called informal media. Thus, informal journalism is the amateur creativity of non-professional authors in creating an information product that is informal, noneconomic. It should be noted that education, social groups, music and painting can be informal. In general, individual historical periods of any state can be informal, when official, formal institutions of power, ethical, artistic, moral values, social norms and rules are breaking down.

Another kind of media – the tactical media, which nowadays has become a serious competitor of the existing official media - is connected with the notion of "informal media". The tactical media are one of the forms of collective existence of the political activity of artists²⁵. They grew up on the basis of alternative cultural trends in the mid-1990s, when the fashion for socially directed and active art arose. The term was introduced in 1996 to denote a special form of media activism, reflecting the art practice of interference into the media sphere.

During the Soviet period, *self-published media* that were uncontrolled by the regime, which were literary works, religious and journalistic texts produced unofficially, without any censorship, were widespread among dissidents and liberally minded citizens in Russia. Copies of the texts were made by the author or readers without the knowledge and permission of official authorities, usually typewritten, photographic or handwritten. This was not a massive, but a very popular type of media.

The group of informal media is also joined by *the amateur media*, created by children, adolescents, youth and adults for specific purposes. This non-mass segment of media is especially common in schools and universities.

In addition to these categories of media classification, other groups are also possible, allotted for other reasons. For example, by the type and nature of the

²⁴ I.V. Zhilavskaya, *The Informal Media*. URL: <http://www.relga.ru/Environ/WebObjects/tgu-www.woa/wa/Main?level1=main&level2=articles&textid=2257>, accessed 12. 01. 2017.

²⁵ G.S. Melnik, B.Ya. Misonzhnikov, “Tactical media: social priorities and pragmatics of the text”, in *Humanitarian vector*, XL (2014), no. 4, p. 104-109.

activity with which the consumer uses the media: reading, gaming, visual, as well as business, office, household and entertainment, professional and amateur, state and civil, etc.

The classification of the media at this stage of the development of the Total Media theory is an open system that allows some adjustments. However, the fundamental principles of integrativity, variability and transformation of the media, laid in its basis, allow us to assert that this approach has a scientific basis and can be used for further thorough study.

Conclusion

Let us formulate some conclusions, which we came to as a result of the analysis of media as an object of the research.

1. A wide palette of different ideas about media allows us to formulate their basic system properties, which are fundamental in the Total Media theory. These are dynamic properties, such as variability in time and space. In this case, it is the flexibility of the media, their ability to easily move from one group to another, for example, from the group of non-mass media to the mass group, when the blog, which emerged as a personal diary, after a while becomes a mass communication medium.

2. If we accept the Total Media theory, then we allow for various media transformations, their variability in the changing media environment, depending on the conditions - audience activity, software, the formulation of media usage goals, etc. In this case, it is the communicator that determines the choice of the means of communication to solve the task.

3. Media is not something static, once and for all given, not an object, not a carrier, but the essence that arises as a result of communication and disappears under condition of its destruction. There is communication - there is media, there is no communication - there is no media. No carrier of information can be treated as a media if it does not interact with the subject of communication.

4. Media have another special property: the ability to distort the information itself, the meanings that are broadcast with their help. The means of communication invariably deforms the content depending on various circumstances - the customer's terms, the technical parameters of the communication channel, the subjective factors of the translator, etc.

5. Media have integrative properties, combining all the existing elements of the "communication universe", linking them in a meaningfully functioning whole. The integrity of the media system can give us answers to questions about the interdependence of parts, its structure and, accordingly, its manageability.

6. The concept of the Total Media theory also implies the existence of super-systemic properties of media, in particular, such properties as *viativity* - a via (through) action, (via lat - road, path, channel in the body, means, a method, in English - through, with the help). Media are of a creative nature, piercing all the elements of the surrounding world - from the internal physiological processes of an individual to cosmic super-systems of a global scale. Viativity is such a property of media that promotes the diffusion of the content in the media space.

Of course, all the indicated properties of the media require a special study and their research can become the basis for further scientific directions in the field of the Total Media theory. D. Rashkoff confirms that "the only environment in which our civilization can still expand, our only real frontier is the air, in other words - the media ... The ever expanding media have become a real habitat - a space as real and, apparently, unclosed as the globe used to be five hundred years ago"²⁶.

It is obvious that the humanity need a deeper study of the notion of "media", as a complex of a special kind of scientific, philosophical, social and technological phenomena that ensure the effectiveness of information relations in society. And the Total Media theory in this regard is one of the most modern and promising tools.

²⁶ D. Raskoff, *Mediavirus. How pop culture secretly affects your consciousness*. URL: http://www.gumer.info/bibliotek_Buks/Gurn/Rashk/02.php, accessed 12. 03. 2017.

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