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The digital communication - dialogue without borders or a means of strengthening companies` positions

La comunicazione digitale: un dialogo senza frontiere o un mezzo per rafforzare le posizioni delle aziende

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Summary: The online communication offers a number of services that greatly facilitate the daily life and lifestyle of the modern consumer. First of all, it allows people to communicate in a world or space without geographical, temporal or physical boundaries.

The digital communication, also known as data communication or data transmission, is the transfer of information or data using digital signals over a point-to-point channel. Communication in a digital process is done through a communication technique where thoughts, data or information are digitally encoded as discrete signals.

Key words: online communication, digital communication, data, information

Abstract: la comunicazione online offre una serie di servizi che facilitano notevolmente la vita quotidiana e lo stile di vita del consumatore moderno. Innanzitutto, permette alle persone di comunicare in un mondo o in uno spazio senza confini geografici, temporali o fisici.

La comunicazione digitale, nota anche come comunicazione di dati o trasmissione di dati, è il trasferimento di informazioni o dati utilizzando segnali digitali su un canale punto-punto. La comunicazione in un processo digitale avviene attraverso una tecnica di comunicazione in cui pensieri, dati o informazioni sono codificati digitalmente come segnali discreti.

Parole chiave: comunicazione online, comunicazione digitale, dati, informazioni

1. Introduction:

The communication is a major factor for the development not only of society as a whole, but also for the development and recognition of the company, because various types of organized activity are developed on the basis of communication. Without communication, there is no expansion of the company's activities. In the digital age, where social channels enable interaction at an unprecedented speed, corporate communication takes on a much greater importance¹.

With the boom of new technologies and the advent of the Internet, online communication has great importance in the society. The online communication is that which takes place through social media and the various platforms that exist on the Internet. This is due precisely to digital information, accessible and easy to use. About 4 billion people worldwide access the Internet or communicate digitally. According to World Bank data for 2019, more than half of the world's population regularly uses the Internet, or 56.7% of the population. Even in India, 41% of the population already

1 JOSÉ MANUEL CAMPOS REY, *La importancia de la comunicación en la empresa*, <<https://www.grupofemxa.es/la-importancia-de-la-comunicacion-en-la-empresa>> (accessed on 08 January 2020).

works with the Internet. According to the World Bank, compared to 2005, four times more people use the Internet².

2. The specifics of online or digital communication

The online communication, like any communication, is a two-way one, because there are needed at least two people or two parties to make it happen, with the difference that the persons do not communicate face to face. They use a microphone or through text messages. But this does not mean that the sender and the recipient cannot enter into a dialogue, discuss, express an opinion. The essential characteristic of online or digital communication is that it takes place in the internet space through social networks and platforms. It allows a discussion between two people and affects not only personal conversations, but is an easy means of contact between commercial establishments or companies and customers /users/. Users are facilitated when choosing to buy or sell, give an opinion, exchange information, expose data or are facilitated with the characteristics of a product.

Or we can say that online communication offers a number of services that greatly facilitate the daily life and lifestyle of the modern consumer. First of all, it allows people to communicate in a world or space without geographical, temporal or physical boundaries. This type of communication can be two-way, but at the same time it can cover many addressees, no matter where in the world they are, or we have multi-way communication, given the type of channels and exchange of messages.

Unlike the only means of communication once – the telephone for oral communication and letters and telegrams for written communication, which required time and means of implementation, online communication does not require high costs. Once upon a time, access to information of any kind - news, international events, political and economic situation, lifestyle, information about foreign cultures, etc. was extremely limited, whereas now it is instant, happening in the moment and one receives or sends information from and to any part of the world. In this case we are talking about digital communication and we need to clarify the concept of digital communication and its characteristics.

The digital communication, also known as data communication or data transmission, is the transfer of information or data using digital signals over a point-to-point channel. Communication in a digital process is done through a communication technique where thoughts, data or information are digitally encoded as discrete signals. These signals are transferred electronically to the recipients. Either we have data transfer via a digitized analog signal or via a digital bit stream over point-to-point or point-to-multipoint communication channels. These channels can be of many types. For example, there are storage media, optical fibers, computer buses, wireless communication channels, etc. The data or information is represented as an electromagnetic signal, such as microwaves, electrical voltage, infrared signal or radio waves. All modern people, companies, institutions and organizations depend on this system to communicate with each other. In this case, the source of information usually comes from the keyboard of a computer or mobile device and flows or is transferred in a digital format³.

2 Naselenietoposvetaizpolzvainternet.news.bg, <<https://news.bg/world/54-ot-naselenieto-po-sveta-izpolzva-internet.htm>> (accessed on 05 November 2019).

3 *Comunicación digital: ¿Qué es? Concepto y características*, <<https://www.epitech-it.es/comunicacion-digital/>> (accessed on 16 September 2021).

The specific thing about this system is that only one person is needed for the robot with it. For this reason, this form of communication reduces labor, it is the cheapest possible form of communication at the moment and a means of awareness in various industries at the moment.

The digital communication is one that uses certain methods and tools to convey a message in a digital environment. It means the exchange of information between senders and receivers through the use of new technologies and virtual media⁴.

The main characteristic of digital communication is that the individual or entrepreneur chooses when and with whom he wants to communicate. No matter where in the world the other person is, the message is transmitted instantly.

The online information creates extremely easy and accessible conditions for training and information on various topics in various spheres of science and life.

Of greatest importance, however, is online communication for commercial exchange. It allows quick and timely entry into the relationship of companies with customers, as well as between the various units in trade and also advertising. Or it allows easy interaction between them. The manufacturer creates and produces, the advertising agent helps the product to be visible in space, and the customer to choose, buy and consume. The advantage of digital communication is that it allows instant communication with each customer. In this way, companies can get to know their potential audience much better and know how they should act to gain their trust.

According to GWI data, 6 out of 10 Internet users aged 16 to 64 shop online every week. With the development of mobile technologies, new mobile devices allow faster purchasing through them than through desktop and laptop computers.

According to Statista, the average shopper spends more than \$1,000 a year on online purchases of consumer goods.

The Pandemic negatively impacted online vacation purchases and bookings and curbed the online travel spending, with annual revenue falling by more than 50 percent between 2019 and 2020. In 2021, online travel booking spending increased by 45% and online flight booking revenue rose almost 7% compared to 2020⁵.

The following facts prove the effectiveness of companies' online communication:

- *Helps to adapt to new market changes*
- *To achieve the set goals*
- *Increases employee motivation*
- *Encourages greater engagement in the performance of assigned tasks*
- *Creates a better working environment*
- *Improves the competitiveness of the organization*

This entire process can be implemented in real time or delayed through the various social networks, media, platforms without which online communication would not be possible.

The important role of the Internet as a convenient and fast way of communication without restrictions in the life of the society and the instant reach to any part of the world are discovered precisely by the companies using its potential through the various platforms. In addition to platforms, information exchange is realized through digital media.

The presence of the Internet almost everywhere and the fact that it is accessible through almost any device makes communication easier and faster than ever. In other

4 *Comunicación digital: ¿Qué es? Concepto y características*, <<https://www.epitech-it.es/comunicacion-digital/>> (accessed on 16 September 2021).

5 *Essential global ecommerce stats*, <<https://datareportal.com/global-digital-overview>> (accessed on 16 September 2021).

words, digital communication ignores the physical distance between businesses and customers and enables their 24/7 interaction⁶.

Video conferencing, e-mail message or real-time conversation /chat/ are only some of the means of online communication. Companies also make it possible to communicate with their customers on their pages. This by implementing forms, emails or implementing strategies such as email marketing. All this in order to effectively improve online communication⁷.

3. The Internet users around the world

In their daily communication, people use facebook, twitter, pinterest, skype, telegram, whatsapp, viber most often. These are the so-called social networks that allow us to maintain contact both with professionals in our environment and with family and friend circles. This advantage of theirs makes them essential tools for marketing strategies.

A total of 5.03 billion people around the world use the internet today - equivalent to 63.1 percent of the world's total population⁸. The percentage of Internet users is higher in developed countries, although the trends are also in the poorest countries to invest in the Internet to prepare their citizens for the digital future. There are now fewer than 3 billion people who remain "unconnected" to the internet, with the majority of these people located in Southern and Eastern Asia, and in Africa⁹.

It is obvious that thanks to the development of new technologies, the population of Europe has the necessary skills and means of communication and has become an information society. (See Table 1). There is no country in Europe where the population does not use the online commerce, which greatly facilitates the way of life.

Table 1 - Internet Usage in the European Union - EU27

Internet Users in the European Union – 2022				
EUROPEAN UNION	Population (2022 Est.)	Internet Users, 31-Dec-2021	Penetration (% Population)	Users % Table
Austria	9,006,398	7,920,226	87.9 %	2.0 %
Belgium	11,589,623	10,857,126	93.7 %	2.7 %
Bulgaria	6,948,445	4,663,065	67.1 %	1.2 %
Croatia	4,105,267	3,787,838	92.3 %	1.0 %
Cyprus	1,207,359	1,011,831	83.8 %	0.3 %
Czech Republic	10,708,981	9,323,428	87.1 %	2.3 %
Denmark	5,792,202	5,666,399	97.8 %	1.4 %
Estonia	1,326,535	1,276,521	96.2 %	0.3 %
Finland	5,540,720	5,225,678	94.3 %	1.3 %

6.1.2. Urok2, *10 Pros and Cons of Online Communication for Business*, 2018, Module Digitalna Komunikatsia, Deep, <https://project-deep.eu/private/pdf/COU_5_BG.pdf> (accessed on 16 September 2021).

7 *Online komunikatsia*, <<https://bg.economy-pedia.com/11041101-online-communication>> (accessed on 16 September 2021).

8 *Digital around the world*, <<https://datareportal.com/global-digital-overview>> (accessed on July 2022).

9 *Digital around the world*, <<https://datareportal.com/global-digital-overview>> (accessed on July 2022).

France	65,273,511	60,421,689	92.6 %	15.2 %
Germany	83,783,942	79,127,551	94.4 %	19.9 %
Greece	10,423,054	8,115,397	77.9 %	2.0 %
Hungary	9,660,351	8,588,776	88.9 %	2.2 %
Ireland	4,937,786	4,453,436	90.2 %	1.1 %
Italy	60,461,826	54,798,299	90.6 %	13.8 %
Latvia	1,886,198	1,663,739	88.2 %	0.4 %
Lithuania	2,722,289	2,603,900	95.7 %	0.7 %
Luxembourg	625,978	602,848	96.3 %	0.2 %
Malta	441,543	389,500	88.2 %	0.1 %
Netherlands	17,134,872	16,383,879	95.6 %	4.1 %
Poland	37,846,611	29,757,099	78.6 %	7.5 %
Portugal	10,196,709	8,015,519	78.6 %	2.0 %
Romania	19,237,691	14,387,477	74.8 %	3.6 %
Slovakia	5,459,642	4,629,641	84.8 %	1.2 %
Slovenia	2,078,938	1,663,795	80.0 %	0.4 %
Spain	46,754,778	42,961,230	91.9 %	10.8 %
Sweden	10,099,265	9,692,227	96.0 %	2.4 %
Total European Union	445,250,514	397,988,114	89.4 %	100.0 %

Source: Internet Usage in the European Union-EU27
<https://www.internetworldstats.com/stats>

Unfortunately, this is not the case with underdeveloped countries in continents such as Asia and Africa. In these countries, for various reasons, political and economic, although governments enforce the use of the Internet in education and in administration, the trends regarding the introduction and development of Internet technologies are still weak and their populations are not yet prepared for the digital future era. As of January 2022, Nigeria had more than 109 million internet users – the highest number reported all over Africa. Meanwhile, Egypt ranked second with over 75 million users. The majority of web traffic in leading digital markets in Africa originated from mobile devices – in Nigeria, one of the countries with the largest number of internet users worldwide, 82 percent of web traffic was generated via smartphones and roughly 16 percent via PC devices. This is due in part to the fact that mobile connections are much cheaper and do not require the infrastructure that is needed for traditional desktop PCs with fixed-line internet connections¹⁰. As it is evident from the table below (See Table 2), the lowest percent of population using Internet is in Uganda, which has a population of 42 729 036, according to the statistics of 2018, which means that one third of the population uses Internet or 8 times approximately than the number of users in Nigeria.

Table 2 - Leaders among the African countries, using the Internet

Characteristic	Number of internet users in millions
Nigeria	109.2

¹⁰ LARS KAMER, *Africa: number of internet users in selected countries 2022*, <<https://www.statista.com/statistics/505883/>> (accessed on 21 July 2022).

Egypt	75,66
South Africa	41,19
Morocco	31,59
Uganda	13,92

Source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics>

It sounds interesting the fact that the African state with the fastest Internet is Madagaskar, while Africa's most affordable mobile internet is in Algeria¹¹.

The level of uptake of mobile broadband services across Asia tends to be roughly correlated with the coverage achieved by 4G LTE (and more recently 5G) networks, which have the speed and capacity to support the data rates necessary for consumers to enjoy a positive broadband experience¹².

Strong economic growth, affluence, and the need for information suggest that the Internet should grow explosively in Asia. According to Ang and Loh, the Asian users have a more purposeful attitude toward the Internet than their Western counterparts¹³. The Internet giant in Asia, this Japan where Two-thirds of the more than 150,000 Internet hosts in Asia are in Japan. There is a peculiarity which appears to be a barrier for the internet consumers in Japan, as, in difference of most of the African countries the official language is English, while in Japan the internet communication is in Japan.

More difficult was the situation in China where the first internet was launched in 1995 and except from that the language is still a barrier, as the Internet communication is in Chinese and reading English is not comfortable for many users¹⁴.

Despite the language difficulties for the population of two of the largest countries on the Asian continent, it is striking that both have progressed in the last 20 years. (See Table 3). Against the background of Japan's population, in the year 2000, nearly a third of the population used the Internet, compared to the first half of 2022, when the country's Internet users have nearly tripled, or over 76% of the population. In the country with the largest population in the world, in the year 2000, only 2% used the Internet, and in 2022 it gives the impression that the share of consumers has increased nearly 50 times. Or 34% of internet users on the Asian continent are in China.

The position of India is similar, where the Internet users have increased 16 times since the beginning of the new millennium, and their share is 28.4% of the Asian continent. Indonesia also makes a big leap, increasing the share of the Internet users two hundred times.

This is not the case with one of the medium-sized countries in Asia - North Korea, where in the year 2000 there was not a single Internet user, and today, at the beginning of the 30s of the new century, only 20,000 people use the Internet. (See Table 3).

11 Which country has cheapest internet in Africa? - Quartz, <<https://qz.com/africas-most-affordable-mobile-internet-is-in-algeria-1849586465>> (accessed on 27 September 2022).

12 STEPHEN MARSHALL, *Asia's mobile broadband adoption powers ahead but network operators struggle to see adequate returns*, <<https://www.budde.com.au/Research/Asia-Mobile-Infrastructure-and-Mobile-Broadband>> (accessed on 10 August 2022).

13 PENG HWA ANG, CHEE MENG LOH, *School of Communication Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, Internet Development in Asia*, <<https://web.archive.org/web/20160103054146/http://www.isoc.org/>> (accessed on 27 September 2022).

14 YU AND HUANG, YU CHIH-HO AND NING HUANG, *China 1996, access to the Internet Growing*, Newsbytes, <XN960108.10U@clari.net> (accessed on 27 September 2022).

Many Asian countries are promoting the Internet by establishing schemes to encourage educational institutions and businesses to connect. The Asian Internet growth rate will therefore be very high, especially compared with the industrialized world¹⁵.

Table 3 - ASIA Internet Use, Statistics Data Mid-Year 2022

State	Population	Internet users - year 2000	Internet users-31.07. 2022
Japan	127,202,192	47,080,000	118,626,672
China	1,448,314,408	22,500,000	1,010,740,000
India	1,402,228,175	5,000,000	833,710,000
Indonesia	278,268,685	2,000,000	212,354,070
Bangladesh	167,377,329	100,000	129,180,000
North Korea	25,961,763	-	20,000

Source: Internet 2022 Usage in Asia, <https://www.internetworldstats.com/stats3.htm>

4. Conclusion

Never before has the world been more deeply connected through trade, communication and travel. This is possible thanks to the digital communication. Communicating online is primarily about awareness, but there must also be selectivity. More careful attention is needed when selecting information in the online space, because it is flooded with fake news and a person can be easily lied to, misled, manipulated. However, the digital communication has its advantages in the present and society can no longer do without it. The globalization continues to change the way people live and companies work. The trade in the past used to mean buying and selling of material goods to a limited extent and only from the countries with the most developed economies. Today, massive data flows and digital platforms enable more countries and smaller companies to participate. The digital platforms reduce the cost of cross-border communications and transactions, allowing businesses to connect with customers and suppliers in any country. The online platforms also allow small businesses and entrepreneurs around the world to participate in global commerce. This has led to the emergence of new types of competitors everywhere in the world.

On the other hand, through the digital platforms, every single individual participates directly in globalization in order to study, search for work, display certain skills, as well as to create personal networks.

The digitization has led to the emergence of new professions. As with the technological changes that occurred at the end of the 20th century as a result of the introduction of robots and other autonomous systems, new jobs with interesting profiles arose, so computerization has forced and continues to force changes in professional orientation. The human interaction with Internet technology will certainly affect motivation and creativity in the long run.

15 PENG HWA ANG, CHEE MENG LOH, *School of Communication Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, Internet Development in Asia*, <<https://web.archive.org/web/20160103054146/http://www.isoc.org/>> (accessed on 27 September 2022).