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CREATION AND USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS: ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES, SOCIAL IMPACT

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Abstract. The article examines the process of creating and using social networks, highlights their advantages and disadvantages, and analyzes their social impact in the field of PR. It also presents the author's own observations and suggests directions for further research in this area.

Keywords. social networks, PR, advertising, influence, information security.

Introduction. Today, social networks have become an integral part of our daily lives and an important element of the information space. They have transformed not only the way people communicate personally but also approaches to business, marketing, advertising, and public relations. Thanks to social networks, information spreads instantly, and the influence on public opinion has become significantly broader and faster than in traditional media.

The relevance of this topic is due to the fact that social networks are now the main communication channel for young people and the active part of the population. Trends, public moods, and the reputations of brands and public figures are shaped through platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Telegram, and others. For the PR

field, social networks have become a key tool for building image, managing reputation, and establishing long-term relationships with audiences.

On a global scale, social networks have become one of the most influential factors in transforming communication processes. They have changed the traditional «source–message–audience» model into a dynamic, multi-directional dialogue. In this context, PR is no longer merely an informational tool but takes on the characteristics of social management, where trust, emotional connection, and value-based interaction are essential.

In the Ukrainian context, the significance of social networks in PR is further enhanced by additional factors: the high level of digitalization in society, active use of online platforms by youth, and the growing role of information security. Social networks are increasingly becoming platforms not only for commercial communication but also for public discussions, volunteer initiatives, and the formation of civic engagement.

Therefore, analyzing the impact of social networks in PR activities is particularly relevant. It is important not only to identify their functional capabilities but also to assess the social consequences of such influence, particularly in the context of trust formation, reputation, and the information culture of society.

At the same time, the active use of social networks is accompanied by a number of problems and challenges, such as information overload, the spread of fake news, manipulation of public opinion, risks to mental health, and threats to information security. This highlights the need for a deeper analysis of both the positive and negative aspects of social networks' influence in the context of PR activities.

Today, social networks have become an integral part of our daily lives. Almost everyone has a profile on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Telegram, or other platforms. These platforms help people communicate, share news, and exchange information. Beyond personal communication, social networks are increasingly used for creating and developing brands, disseminating information, and shaping people's attitudes toward certain events, companies, or ideas. For this reason, social networks have become an important tool in PR and advertising, influencing modern trends [1-7].

Research aim and objectives. The aim of the study is to identify the key advantages and disadvantages of social networks and assess their impact on PR. The objectives are to examine the capabilities of major social platforms, determine the positive and negative aspects of their use, analyze their social influence in PR, and share personal observations and practical recommendations.

Research results and discussion. In modern conditions, social networks serve as one of the key tools for shaping and maintaining the reputation of brands, organizations, and public figures. Unlike traditional media, social platforms provide direct contact with the audience, which significantly increases trust in messages, but at the same time makes reputation more vulnerable.

Reputation on social networks is built through regular communication, transparency, and alignment of declared values with actual actions. Any mistake,

inappropriate post, or delayed response to criticism can quickly escalate into a reputational crisis. Therefore, PR specialists must continuously monitor the information space and analyze audience sentiment. The tone of content, visual design, frequency of posts, and interaction with followers play an important role in creating a positive image. Social networks allow brands to create a “live presence” effect, fostering emotional engagement and increasing audience loyalty.

Research shows that social networks have become an effective tool for PR and brand promotion. They enable rapid feedback from the audience and the formation of brand communities. At the same time, scholars note risks such as addiction, information overload, and the spread of false information. From my personal observation, many users spend hours scrolling through news feeds, which affects productivity.

Modern scientific research confirms that social networks significantly enhance the effectiveness of communication strategies in PR. Researchers emphasize that interactivity, content personalization, and the possibility of instant feedback create new conditions for building audience loyalty. At the same time, scholars point out the risk of decreased trust in information due to excessive commercialization of content and the spread of inaccurate messages.

Particular attention is given to studies on the psychological impact of social networks. They demonstrate that excessive use of online platforms can lead to emotional exhaustion, reduced attention span, and the development of dependency. In the PR field, this creates additional responsibility for the quality and ethical standards of the content being disseminated. In today’s world, social networks have become one of the key communication tools in advertising and public relations. They have significantly changed approaches to interaction between brands, organizations, public figures, and audiences, making this interaction more transparent. Social networks allow not only the rapid dissemination of information but also the formation of an emotional connection with the target audience [6-7].

Social networks have become not just platforms for communication but a full-fledged environment for social influence. They are actively used to shape public opinion, mobilize audiences, and support social initiatives. In PR activities, this means a shift from one-way communication to a dialogue with the audience.

Social networks play a particularly important role in crisis situations, where the speed and openness of communication are critical. Brands and organizations can quickly respond to events, clarify their positions, and minimize reputational risks.

For young people, social networks are often the primary source of information, which strengthens their influence on the formation of values, opinions, and behavior patterns. Therefore, responsible use of social platforms in PR is an important factor for social stability. Social networks have become the primary source of news and information for young people, as well as influencing the formation of their beliefs and worldview. Through PR campaigns and advertising messages on social networks, public opinion is shaped, making these platforms a powerful tool of social influence.

Thus, in the modern world, social networks are an integral part of advertising and audience relations. They offer broad opportunities for communication and promotion, but at the same time require responsible use, a competent approach, and constant control over the quality of informational content.

Advantages of social networks, social networks provide significant opportunities for communication and interaction, they allow information to be exchanged quickly and without spatial or temporal limitations. Through social networks, people can instantly learn the news, communicate with friends, and find useful educational materials. For PR, social networks offer advantages such as wide audience reach, direct contact with the public, community building, and the potential for viral content.

In addition to the speed of information dissemination, social networks allow precise audience targeting. PR specialists can tailor messages to specific age, social, or professional groups, increasing the effectiveness of communication. Another advantage is the availability of analytical tools that allow evaluating audience reactions, engagement levels, and campaign effectiveness, this makes PR activities more transparent and manageable.

Disadvantages of social networks, the main problems include information overload, addiction to content viewing, impacts on mental health, privacy risks, and the possibility of spreading negative content or fake news. Despite the rapid dissemination of information, social networks also enable precise audience targeting. PR specialists can adapt messages for specific age, social, or professional groups, enhancing communication effectiveness, the availability of analytical tools allows for assessing audience reactions, engagement, and campaign performance, making PR activities more transparent and controllable.

Table 1. Advantages and disadvantages of social networks in PR [2, 5]

Advantages	Disadvantages	Advantages
Rapid dissemination of information about a company or brand	Possibility of spreading negative content or fake news	Rapid dissemination of information about a company or brand
Direct contact with the audience, opportunity to receive feedback	Risks of reputational crises due to careless posts or comments	Direct contact with the audience, opportunity to receive feedback
Building a community around the brand	Information overload for the audience	Building a community around the brand
Ability to use influencers to increase trust	Dependence on platform popularity and news feed algorithms	Ability to use influencers to increase trust
High potential for viral content	Risk of manipulating public opinion or audience expectations	High potential for viral content

Thus, social networks are a powerful tool in PR, combining significant communication opportunities with increased reputational risks. The main advantages

of social networks include the rapid dissemination of information about a company or brand, the possibility of direct interaction with the audience and obtaining prompt feedback, as well as the formation of loyal communities around the brand. The use of influencers and viral content allows for increasing trust and reaching the target audience with minimal financial costs compared to traditional communication channels.

At the same time, the active use of social networks in PR is accompanied by a number of significant disadvantages. These include the risks of spreading negative content and fake information, the possibility of reputational crises due to careless posts or comments, and information overload for the audience. Additional challenges are dependence on platform algorithms and the threat of manipulating public opinion, which can negatively affect trust in the brand.

Therefore, effective use of social networks in PR requires a strategic and responsible approach, which involves continuous monitoring of the information environment, adherence to ethical standards, and readiness to respond promptly to crisis situations. Only by balancing advantages and risks can social networks become an effective tool for building a positive image and long-term relationships with the audience.

Table 2. Functions of social networks in PR activities [3]

Function	Content	Significance for PR
Informational	Dissemination of news and messages	Promptness of communication
Communicative	Dialogue with the audience	Building trust
Image-building	Creating a positive image	Strengthening reputation
Analytical	Analysis of audience reactions	Strategy optimization
Crisis management	Responding to negative situations	Minimizing reputational losses

Social platforms not only perform an informational role, ensuring the rapid dissemination of news and messages, but also serve as a full-fledged environment for strategic communication between brands and their audiences. The communicative function of social networks allows for a two-way dialogue with target groups, significantly increasing trust and audience engagement. Direct interaction through comments, messages, live streams, and polls helps build long-term relationships and loyalty to the brand.

The image-building function of social networks is crucial for creating a positive image of a company or public figure. Systematic work with content, visual identity, and value-based messages enables consistent reputation strengthening and the maintenance of a desired brand perception in the information space. The analytical function provides PR specialists with tools to evaluate the effectiveness of communication strategies. Analyzing audience reactions, engagement levels, reach, and comment sentiment allows content to be adjusted promptly, enhancing the

efficiency of PR campaigns. The crisis management function is particularly important, as it allows for rapid response to negative information triggers. Prompt and transparent communication helps reduce reputational losses, clarify the organization's position, and prevent the escalation of crisis situations [2].

Thus, social networks in PR perform a set of interconnected functions, requiring a systematic and strategic approach to their use. Effective implementation of informational, communicative, image-building, analytical, and crisis management functions can strengthen brand resilience, enhance audience trust, and ensure successful positioning in the modern digital environment.

Ways to Mitigate the Negative Effects of Social Networks. On one hand, social networks provide broad opportunities for communication, brand promotion, and audience trust. On the other hand, they can have negative effects on users' mental and emotional well-being. To minimize these negative effects, it is important not only to be aware of the risks but also to implement practical strategies in daily social network use.

First and foremost, it is advisable to control the amount of time spent on social networks. For example, turning off notifications can significantly reduce visits to news feeds, games, or viewing new videos from favorite bloggers. Such measures help avoid constant content consumption, reducing emotional strain and lowering the risk of addictive behavior. Time management is also important, such as setting clear time limits or using timers for daily social network use. This helps maintain a balance between time spent online and other life responsibilities, promoting better mental well-being. In addition to time management, a thoughtful approach to content consumption is crucial. Unfollowing accounts that cause negative emotions and customizing the feed with useful content helps reduce information overload and avoid negative influence.

Finally, developing critical thinking is essential: the ability to distinguish reliable information from false content, manage emotional reactions to online content, and avoid taking information at face value without verification. This approach not only reduces the negative impact of social networks on mental health but also encourages audiences to engage more responsibly with online content [1].

Social Influence in PR, social networks now provide the opportunity to communicate directly with audiences in a more dynamic way, with live broadcasts becoming increasingly popular among users. Through social networks, messages can be tailored to different groups of people, information can be disseminated quickly, and attention can be drawn to important topics. Social influence in PR is not just a promotional tool but a means of communication with people. Social networks facilitate discussions about events and the emergence of new trends. For example, popular bloggers can influence the behavior of thousands of followers through their posts, which is why brands and businesses often purchase advertising from them to encourage audience interest in their products.

Practical tips and personal observations:

1. Use social networks consciously: plan your time.

2. Verify the accuracy of information.
3. Manage privacy settings.
4. Utilize analytical tools for PR.

Modern research also highlights the importance of information security and ethical use of social networks in PR. The high speed of content dissemination, combined with the algorithmic features of platforms, contributes not only to the popularization of useful information but also to the mass spread of fake news, manipulative messages, and disinformation.

For PR activities, this creates significant challenges, as inaccurate or emotionally charged information can substantially influence public opinion. Therefore, one of the key responsibilities of PR specialists is to adhere to ethical standards, fact-check information, and handle content responsibly. In a digital society, media literacy of the audience becomes particularly important, developing critical thinking and information analysis skills helps reduce the negative impact of social networks and increases trust in communications.

Social networks are not only communication tools but also strategic platforms for PR campaigns. They allow organizations, brands, and public figures to maintain continuous interaction with their target audience, adapting messages to trends, cultural context, and social expectations. The interactive nature of these platforms facilitates engagement, where audiences can comment, share, or react in real time. This dynamic feedback loop enables PR specialists to adjust content strategies promptly, improving efficiency and relevance.

The rise of influencer marketing has further amplified the social impact of networks. Influencers act as intermediaries between brands and audiences, often increasing trust and encouraging behavioral responses, such as product adoption or participation in campaigns. For example, a collaboration with a popular TikTok creator can generate viral content within hours, significantly exceeding the reach achievable through traditional advertising channels. At the same time, reliance on influencers requires careful evaluation, as reputation risks can emerge if an influencer's behavior contradicts brand values.

Ethical Considerations and Information Security. The ethical use of social networks is crucial in PR. Rapid dissemination of information can lead to unintended consequences, including misinformation or the amplification of emotionally charged content. PR professionals must implement verification protocols, carefully curate content, and consider the potential impact on public perception. Algorithmic biases on platforms can also exacerbate the spread of sensational or misleading information, requiring proactive monitoring and engagement. Information security is another critical aspect. The management of private data, prevention of unauthorized access, and awareness of digital threats are essential to safeguard both the organization and the audience. A breach of trust or exposure of sensitive information can have lasting reputational damage.

Practical Recommendations for PR Professionals. Based on research findings and personal observations, the following strategies are recommended for effective and responsible use of social networks in PR:

1. **Time Management and Mindful Usage:** Limit social network interactions to planned periods, turn off unnecessary notifications, and avoid constant feed scrolling.
2. **Content Verification:** Always cross-check information before posting or sharing to ensure accuracy and reliability.
3. **Privacy and Data Control:** Regularly review privacy settings for both organizational and personal accounts to prevent unauthorized exposure.
4. **Analytical Tools:** Utilize platform analytics to track engagement, reach, audience sentiment, and the effectiveness of campaigns.
5. **Crisis Preparedness:** Develop protocols for rapid response to negative content or reputational threats, ensuring transparency and accountability.

Social Influence and Audience Engagement. The social influence of networks extends beyond marketing and PR. They shape public opinion, social norms, and behavioral patterns, particularly among youth. Through interactive content, live broadcasts, polls, and discussions, audiences become active participants rather than passive consumers of information. This transformation requires PR strategies that prioritize authenticity, engagement, and ethical communication.

Table 3. Strategies to enhance positive influence and mitigate risks in PR

Strategy	Implementation	Expected Outcome
Time-controlled social media usage	Set daily limits, disable push notifications, schedule posts	Reduces emotional strain and dependence on platforms
Content verification	Cross-check sources, fact-check posts, collaborate with credible partners	Enhances credibility and audience trust
Privacy management	Review account settings, limit public sharing, secure sensitive information	Minimizes risk of data breaches and privacy violations
Analytical monitoring	Track engagement, sentiment, and reach, adjust campaigns accordingly	Optimizes PR strategies and audience targeting
Crisis response planning	Develop rapid response protocols, prepare official statements, assign responsibilities	Reduces reputational damage and maintains credibility

Research and observations indicate that social networks are highly effective for shaping public perception and increasing brand visibility. For instance, brands leveraging Instagram Stories for product launches report higher engagement rates compared to static posts. Similarly, live streaming events on TikTok or Facebook have become essential tools for real-time audience interaction and feedback collection. However, challenges remain. Information overload can lead to decreased attention spans, and emotionally charged or misleading content can trigger public backlash.

Monitoring audience sentiment and maintaining transparency are crucial to sustaining trust and mitigating reputational risks.

Case studies effective use of social networks in PR. Several international and Ukrainian brands demonstrate the effectiveness of social networks in PR campaigns:

1. Nike, leveraging Instagram and TikTok, Nike creates interactive campaigns, encouraging user-generated content through challenges and hashtags. This strategy not only increases engagement but also fosters brand loyalty by giving audiences a sense of participation.

2. UNICEF Ukraine, during humanitarian campaigns, UNICEF uses Facebook and Telegram to provide real-time updates, mobilize volunteers, and gather donations. The immediacy and reach of social networks allow rapid dissemination of critical information.

3. Local SMEs, small and medium enterprises in Ukraine often utilize Facebook and Instagram Stories to directly communicate promotions, events, and brand values. The direct interaction with followers allows businesses to adjust strategies based on audience reactions.

These examples show that social networks are not merely promotional tools but platforms for relationship-building, audience mobilization, and interactive communication, however, as observed, poorly planned campaigns can result in backlash or misunderstandings if audience sentiment is not carefully monitored.

Recommendations for youth and emerging audiences. Social networks are especially influential among younger audiences. To ensure responsible engagement, the following recommendations are advised:

1. Digital Literacy develop critical thinking to evaluate content credibility. Youth should be aware of fake news, manipulative advertising, and algorithm-driven content delivery.

2. Balanced Usage, limit social media time, prioritize educational and informative content, and avoid continuous scrolling.

3. Participation in PR Campaigns, encourage youth to participate in campaigns responsibly, such as volunteering for social initiatives or sharing verified information.

4. Emotional Awareness, recognize the psychological impact of content, including potential stress from controversial or highly emotive posts.

By following these practices, young users can maximize the benefits of social networks while minimizing negative effects on mental health and social behavior.

Crisis management and social media, the role of social networks in crisis communication cannot be overstated. Brands and public organizations rely on instant updates, transparency, and rapid engagement to manage crises, key strategies include:

immediate response address negative events promptly to prevent misinformation spread.

transparency provide clear, verified information to maintain audience trust.

consistent messaging ensure that all communication across platforms aligns with the organization's values and official statements.

monitoring and analytics track public sentiment to adjust messages in real time.

Effective crisis management on social networks can prevent reputational damage, increase public confidence, and reinforce brand credibility.

Future research directions, as social networks continue to evolve, research should focus on:

1. Impact of Emerging digital formats, studying how short-form videos, live streams, and interactive content influence PR outcomes.

2. Artificial intelligence in PR, evaluating AI-driven content creation, chatbots, and automated analytics in shaping audience perception.

3. Long-Term SOCIAL EFFECTS, analyzing how prolonged exposure to social networks affects behavior, social norms, and civic engagement.

4. Ethical standards and guidelines, developing frameworks to ensure responsible communication and content dissemination.

These areas are essential for adapting PR strategies to the changing digital landscape and maintaining the credibility and effectiveness of communications.

Table 4. Guidelines for responsible social media use in PR

Guideline	Description	Benefit for PR
Content Accuracy	Verify sources and fact-check before posting	Maintains credibility and trust
Audience Engagement	Respond to comments and participate in discussions	Strengthens audience relationships
Ethical Standards	Avoid manipulative or misleading content	Reduces reputational risk
Balanced Posting Frequency	Avoid excessive posting or repetitive messages	Prevents audience fatigue
Crisis Preparedness	Prepare official responses and guidelines for emergencies	Minimizes impact of negative events

Social networks have become a powerful and indispensable tool in modern PR and communication, they offer significant advantages, including rapid information dissemination, direct interaction with audiences, the potential for viral content, and the ability to build loyal communities around brands, the interactive nature of social platforms allows PR specialists to engage audiences in real time, gather feedback, and adapt messages to different target groups, enhancing the overall effectiveness of campaigns.

At the same time, the use of social networks carries inherent risks. These include information overload, potential reputational crises due to careless posts or comments, privacy concerns, psychological dependence among users, and the spread of misinformation or manipulative content. The influence of algorithms and platform popularity also introduces additional challenges for effective audience targeting and consistent messaging. Effective PR in social networks requires a strategic, responsible, and ethical approach. Continuous monitoring of audience sentiment, adherence to verified information standards, and readiness to respond to crisis situations are essential components of successful communication. Developing critical thinking and digital

literacy among users further strengthens trust in PR efforts and minimizes negative impacts.

Future research should focus on emerging digital formats, the role of artificial intelligence in PR campaigns, long-term social effects of social networks, and the development of ethical guidelines for responsible communication. By balancing advantages and risks, social networks can serve as a highly effective instrument for building positive brand images, fostering engagement, and maintaining sustainable relationships with audiences.

Practical recommendations for PR specialists:

1. **Strategic Planning** PR campaigns in social networks should be planned with a clear understanding of audience segmentation, platform features, and communication goals. Each message must align with the overall brand strategy and values.

2. **Ethical Content Management** All published content must be verified, accurate, and ethically responsible. Avoid spreading unverified information, sensationalism, or manipulative messages that may damage the brand's credibility.

3. **Monitoring and Analytics** Use analytical tools to track audience engagement, sentiment, and campaign effectiveness. Metrics such as likes, shares, comments, and click-through rates help adjust strategies and content in real time.

4. **Audience Engagement** Encourage dialogue through polls, Q&A sessions, live broadcasts, and interactive posts. This fosters loyalty, builds trust, and strengthens the emotional connection between the brand and its audience.

5. **Crisis Preparedness** Develop crisis communication protocols to respond quickly to negative comments, misinformation, or reputational threats. Rapid, transparent, and empathetic responses help minimize potential damage.

6. **Time and Mental Health Management** Encourage balanced use of social networks to prevent user fatigue and information overload. Implement content schedules, breaks, and well-being measures for both PR teams and audiences.

7. **Media Literacy Promotion** Educate audiences on critical thinking, fact-checking, and responsible interaction with content. This reduces the impact of misinformation and strengthens public trust in communication efforts.

Future research directions:

1. **AI in Social Media PR**, Investigating the use of artificial intelligence for automated content creation, audience targeting, and sentiment analysis.

2. **Long-Term Social Impact**, Studying how prolonged exposure to social media affects public perception, behavior, and trust in brands.

3. **Platform-Specific Strategies**, Exploring differences in user engagement and effectiveness across platforms like Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and Telegram.

4. **Ethical Guidelines**, Developing comprehensive ethical standards for PR communication in digital environments to ensure transparency and reliability.

Conclusions. Social networks are a powerful tool for modern communication and PR. they offer significant advantages, including fast communication, direct contact with the audience, and the potential for viral content, at the same time, there are risks,

such as psychological dependency, information overload, and privacy concerns, further research could focus on the impact of different types of content on audience behavior and the effectiveness of PR strategies. Personal observations indicate that users' critical thinking skills are key for the safe use of social networks. Thus, social networks are a powerful instrument in contemporary communication and PR, combining significant opportunities with serious risks. They enable rapid dissemination of information, direct audience interaction, and the building of loyalty, while also creating threats related to information overload, reputational crises, and psychological influence.

Effective use of social networks in PR requires a conscious, responsible, and strategic approach. Key success factors include the development of critical thinking, ethical content creation, control over information flows, and maintaining a balance between online activity and real-life engagements. Future research prospects are associated with analyzing the impact of new digital formats, the role of artificial intelligence in PR communications, and evaluating the long-term effects of social networks on audience behavior. Summarizing the results of the study, it can be concluded that social networks play a key role in the modern PR communication system. They not only change the forms of interaction between brands and audiences but also shape new social and informational practices.

The main advantage of social networks lies in their interactivity and ability to quickly adapt communication messages to the needs of different audiences. At the same time, these platforms require a high level of responsibility, strategic planning, and ethical conduct from PR specialists. Future research directions include studying the influence of new digital formats, the role of artificial intelligence in PR campaigns, and analyzing the long-term social impact of social networks on the formation of values and behavioral patterns among youth.

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