



## **SOCIAL NETWORKS: THEIR PLACE IN MODERN SOCIETY**

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**Annotation:** In recent years, information technologies have developed rapidly and have become an integral part of people's lives. In particular, social networks are emerging as one of the main means of communication in modern society. Through them, people express their opinions, get acquainted with the news, and keep in touch with friends and loved ones. This article analyzes the role of social networks in society, their positive and negative aspects, their impact on the younger generation, information security, personal data protection, and their future role.

**Key words:** Social networks, education and social networks, fake information and disinformation, digital culture

### History of Social Networking

The roots of social networking can be traced back to the late 1990s. One of the first social networking sites was Classmates.com. Later, in the early 2000s, MySpace, Orkut, and finally Facebook emerged, ushering in a new era of social communication around the world. Today, Instagram, Twitter (now X), TikTok, Telegram, and many other networks have gained popularity among people. Each platform has its own features and user audience.

### The role of social networks in social life

Today, social networks are not only a means of communication, but have also become an integral part of political, economic and cultural life. Through social networks, public opinion is formed, social movements are organized, various campaigns and charity events are organized. For example, the “Black Lives Matter” movement has spread throughout the world through social networks. At the same time, many people are also developing their businesses through social networks.

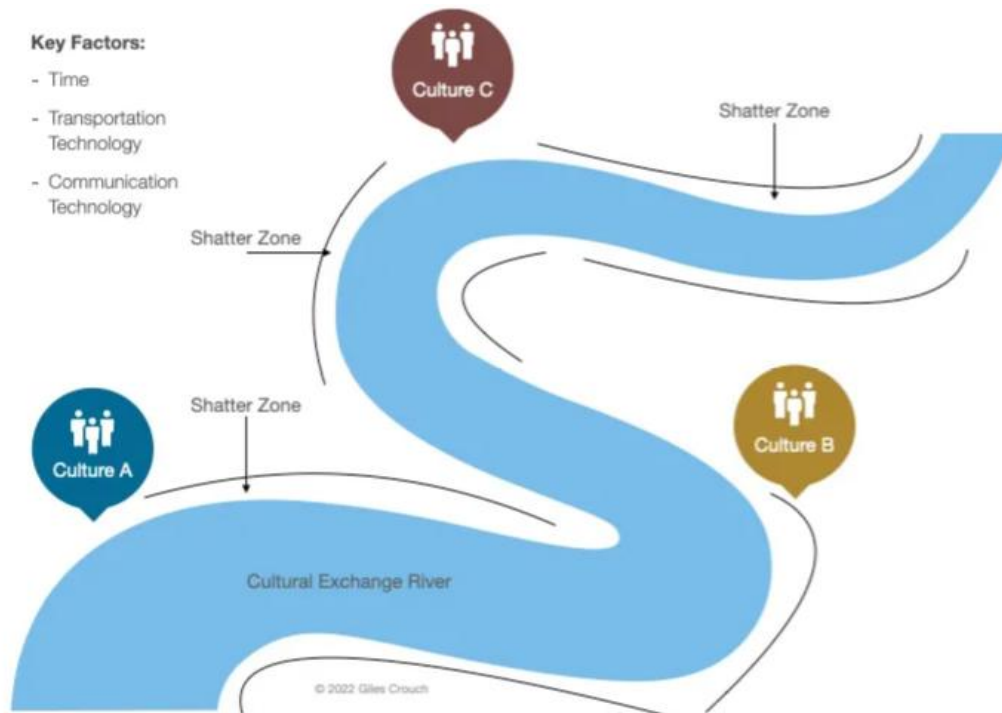
### Education and Social Media

In recent years, the role of social media in education has also been increasing. Pupils and students are sharing course materials through platforms such as Telegram, YouTube, and WhatsApp, and conducting online discussions through groups. This, in turn, speeds up the process of learning and increases interactivity. However, this area should also be approached with caution, as incorrect information or misleading content can negatively affect the quality of knowledge.



### Digital culture in social networks

Digital culture includes aspects such as how people behave in the online environment, how they perceive information and how they communicate with others. The development of digital culture in social networks is especially important among young people. Not only technological literacy, but also a moral and normative culture should be formed. This encourages users of social networks to be respectful, civilized and responsible.



### Fake news and disinformation

Fake news and disinformation have become widespread on social media in recent years. This situation has serious consequences, especially during elections, pandemics or important political

events. Users should accept any information with critical thinking and rely on official sources. In addition, platforms are also widely implementing artificial intelligence systems to identify and block false information.

The role of social networks in the future

In the future, the role of social networks will expand even further. They will not only be a means of communication, but will also play an important role in the digital economy, artificial intelligence, healthcare, and even political governance. Technologies such as Metaverse and VR (virtual reality) will take these networks to a new level. Therefore, it is necessary to form the skills of conscious and responsible use of social networks today.

The main directions in this role are highlighted below:

As a source of information exchange and news

Social media gives people instant access to information. In the future, this process will only grow stronger, overtaking journalism and traditional media in many cases. At the same time, the fight against fake news and disinformation will become a pressing issue.

2. In the education and training process

Social media, when integrated with online learning platforms, makes learning more convenient and interesting. For example:

Short lessons via YouTube, TikTok,

Discussions and advice via Facebook or Telegram groups,

Interactive training sessions in virtual environments such as Metaverse.

3. Personal brand and professional growth

In the future, everyone will be able to represent themselves as a brand through their social network, communicating directly with customers or employers. In particular:

Freelancers,

Artists,

4. Political and social activism

Social media makes it easier for people to participate in political processes - information about petitions, protests, elections spreads quickly. At the same time, governments and organizations also actively use these networks for propaganda.

5. The rise of artificial intelligence and algorithms

In the future, AI algorithms on social networks will deeply analyze user behavior and recommend appropriate content. This will:

Creates a personalized experience,

But at the same time, it can cause people to live in an “information bubble”.

Virtual Reality (VR) and Metaverse Integration

Through the Metaverse concept being developed by companies like Facebook (Meta), social networks:

offers virtual meetings,

online workplaces,

virtual stores, and more.

Psychological impact and health

The impact of social media on mental health will continue to be a pressing issue in the future. In this regard:

Digital health monitoring,

Limiting screen time,

Increasing safety measures for children and adolescents will be necessary.

Conclusion

In conclusion, social networks have a very broad and deep influence on today's society. They are used to develop many areas, such as information exchange, knowledge acquisition, entrepreneurship, political and cultural activism. However, along with these opportunities, there are also risks. A conscious approach, information literacy and ethical values of users serve to enhance the beneficial aspects of social networks.

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