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The dark side of technology, the power of social networks, and the glass of water in the ocean

The development of communication technology has brought about many opportunities for individuals and organizations to promote their image and brand. For example, Samsung promotes its smart watch products (Wearable Devices) with a sitcom entitled: "Monday doesn't hurt anyone". Samsung's communication strategy is a combination of the power of communication technology, specifically social networks such as Facebook, YouTube and celebrities, singers, actors, models in order to bring the Galaxy ecosystem to ordinary consumers in the context of low consumer awareness, even though its Gear products had been on the market for about two or three years.

The hashtag #MeToo and the California wildfire tragedy that wiped "Paradise" off the map were two of the biggest media stories of the year. Both events were actively supported by social media; the hashtag #MeToo, which originated in a call against sexual assault and harassment following a tweet by actor Alyssa Milano, which evolved into a one of the biggest movements called for on social networks. Within 24 hours, more than 5 million people from all over the world, including politicians and celebrities, including famous Vietnamese figures participated. According to Facebook statistics, the movement had a huge number of posts, comments and responses, amounting to nearly 13 million posts.

During the California wildfire event, information on social media was an extremely valuable and important source of information to help friends and relatives of fire victims to stay in touch. After the worst fire in California history broke out on November 8, 2018, killing 85 people and destroying 14,000 homes, millions of people shared their willingness to join the search, and rescue, and provided clothes, food, shelter and money to the victims in Paradise.

Applying communication technology to promotional activities not only brings benefits, but also comes with challenges for economic, cultural, social and even political organizations. The psychological effects are clearly visible on the audiences from the information on Facebook or Twitter, and the use of extensive interactive engagement algorithms by social networks causes the official information flows to be divided, distorted and difficult to access. It is easy for organizations and individuals to abuse this to post false information with a dense reporting frequency, making the spread of information extremely strong, with fake news gradually turning into influential news.

The most obvious example is the accusations against Russia for interference in the US presidential election in 2017. Specifically, the messages from fake accounts on Facebook caused tension and division in American society and politics. By using financial tricks to buy political ads on Facebook, competitors posted fake information, which had a significant impact on the final result.

A company based outside the US paid more than 100,000 US dollars to spread propaganda through destabilizing content on social networks from Europe to Africa and to Asia. In recent years, the stability and brand of Facebook has been shaken violently; Facebook boss and co-founder Mark Zuckerberg failed to maintain his public image and credibility with the White House. The CEO of Facebook is under a lot of pressure as his company was investigated by several governments around the world about information safety and security.

In particular, Facebook's involvement in the Cambridge Analytica incident and a series of subsequent incidents of user information disclosure are heating up international newspapers. Facebook's crisis is being pushed to a catastrophic level in the history of social networking. Although CEO Mark Zuckerberg and COO Sheryl Sandberg are trying their best to handle the crisis with communication methods, experts predict that the seeds of collapse may grow in the near future.

Not only Facebook and Mark Zuckerberg are in trouble, but Twitter and Google also have serious problems with Jihadist videos and other inappropriate YouTube content prioritized in search results. After that incident, a series of important company personnel were fired and the CEO of the company had to issue a formal apology in the press.

In the latest move, Google and Facebook have invested huge sum of money in fact-checking initiatives and tightened precautions against virtual accounts attempting to hack search algorithms and interfere with YouTube platform.

Although major social networks have tried to use technology to manage the content that users post, the effect has been modest. Extreme content about politics, parties, ethnic divisions; provocative content, and content about insensitive, deviant lifestyle... still appear regularly and continuously online. Purging information on social networks in particular and on the Internet in general seems to be an overwhelming task for any organization. "To authenticate information on the networks requires collecting additional data from external data sources, both of which consume a lot of time and money. It is difficult for third parties to access this data source." (1) Purging information online is like trying to purify a glass of water in the ocean. Each time we can only analyze one glass while ignoring the rest of the sea of water. Policy adjustment methods can also be applied to strengthen public confidence, which requires adjustment, even destruction of the basic foundation that is being maintained in some countries. Since mid-2018, the US Senate proposed a bill to regulate online

political advertising to manage political information targeted by organizations and individuals.

British Prime Minister Theresa May was accused of misleading Parliament (BBC, 2018) after the full content of legal advice to her government on the Brexit deal was published at 11:30 a.m. on December 5, 2018. This was a rather sensitive case because the British Parliament had previously opened an investigation into fake news shared on Facebook and Twitter that affected the results of the Brexit referendum. A series of European countries such as Sweden, France, the Netherlands, Spain and Asia - Pacific countries such as Singapore, Brunei, Malaysia, and Australia simultaneously considered the media market of Facebook and Google to reposition the role of the big players in the 4.0 technology revolution.

Germany fired the first shot with its action in 2017. The Law on High-tech

Application of Information Management on Networks was passed in October 2017, allowing the country to upgrade its technology infrastructure platform for the most advanced information management in the world. €50 million has been used to ensure the removal of inflammatory, detrimental messages and illegal materials within 24 hours.

Developing a digital management model and being less dependent on social networks

The advertising market share in the world tends to rapidly change from old communication models to digital advertising platforms, which will promote the development of digital management model (Figure 1). Vietnam is also in that development trend when statistics in 2018 shows that the audiences now access products first through the Internet with 43%. Advertising on TV and in stores is also quite effective in Vietnam with 24% and 12% respectively reaching the audiences.

Spending on digital advertising has increased steadily over the years. Between 2015 and 2017, digital advertising spending doubled and it was predicted that by 2020, digital advertising spending would explode at a record level of nearly \$400 million.

In general, the interest in advertising on major social networks is still high, and on a 5-point scale, YouTube (3.34), Google (3.44) and Twitter (3.23) are all holding steady positions. Snapchat is behind (2.82) and Facebook dropped from 3.30 to 2.57 at the end of 2018. The decline of Facebook's reputation was partly due to the company's information leakage incidents that were published in a series of major media outlets around the world.

Google's open web strategy in this period became more effective than Facebook's when Facebook only aimed to maximize time spent, interaction and application development. The general trend from 2019 is that Facebook will reduce news in the feed, authenticate information and manage information effectively, especially sensitive information related to politics.

Media and press organizations will gradually withdraw from the platforms of Facebook or Apple and Snapchat to build a more lasting brand based on a direct audience.

Developing digital management force and censorship policy

With the current strong development, the field of Internet and technology platforms management requires extremely large technical human resources. YouTube alone employed more than 11,000 people in 2018 to handle content issues. With events like the passage of German Regulation or the removal of British Regulation, it is unlikely that in the near future artificial intelligence will be able to replace humans in this work.

New censorship policies and rules for advertising and political content will be in place in the future to protect users and the platforms themselves. However, it takes a long time to reach agreement and uniformity among users, countries and organizations. The imposition of taxes for network development organizations will also ensure fair and healthy competition.

Trust and the era of fake news

Fake news is a product of the Internet and social networks, and it was even included in the digital dictionary in 2017. Currently, the term fake news represents misinformation and potential risk. In the future, fake news will reach and affect the audiences more strongly. A huge amount of fake news will constantly reach the audiences with dense frequency, forming biased media, poor and fabricated information destabilizing politics, and disrupting the balance of online journalism. These issues are not new, but it is clear that social media and digital technology have fundamentally changed the rules of the game. The truth is no longer in the hands of an organization or a group, but now, many layers of connected information make the brand of the traditional press blurred and affected when the Internet has shown audiences a wide range of new perspectives. The overlapping information is confusing the audiences, and the solution to this problem is to verify and authenticate information, to rebuild trust in the media. Information transparency will always be a factor associated with the press agency's brand.

Verification of information and supporting tools for verification

With the current strong development trend of communication technology, governments will increase investment in resources for official information verification, including the use of independent organizations. Technical solutions are always prioritized with open-source development and search engines, more effectively impacting with the place and time information distributed. The purpose is to better manage fake information from virtual accounts and establish a series of effective

verification tools.

The era of branding

Building a prominent and reputed brand in the fragmented world of the Internet is vital. The focus is on moving from finding information to identifying trustworthy brands or people quickly. This is at the core of a healthy information ecosystem. Research by Reuters shows that nearly 50% of users often recognize a brand when accessing news on Facebook, Twitter or Google. Even Google has launched a project to integrate algorithms to evaluate ethics and information standards to deliver high-quality, trustworthy content on the web. Among them, the requirements of tagging and content description at source are important factors. The project has provided ethical indicators, and at the same time, the platforms will increase the logo display space so that users can choose from familiar brands.

Conclusion

There is no sign that the technological revolution is slowing down and we are certainly entering a new era of technology. The age of artificial intelligence has brought about many opportunities for creativity and efficiency, but also introduced more misinformation. In the future, information will not only be presented by humans, but also by robots and other intelligent agents.

The era of communication technology requires organizations to develop programming systems and algorithms to keep pace with the future of convergence of the real world and the digital world. This intersection begins to form and grow so quickly that we will hardly be able to distinguish. More and more services are developed on digital platforms and in physical spaces. Examples include Amazon, Alibaba, Apple, etc. Smart banking and online payment services are integrated into electronic handheld devices. The virtual wars of North Korea, Russia, the United States and Iran targeting infrastructures cause massive damage in a very short time, the complexity of which

confuses any politician, administrator, manager or any expert. The power of the Internet, the technology platform will be of most interest for the success of countries and the entire world. Media organizations need to catch up with and promote their role in the new world, especially in changing technology and development culture, and adopting appropriate strategies. The application of artificial intelligence, AR/VR, digital messages is an irreversible trend, but when to apply them and what form of application is still a matter of careful consideration. However, the new era of technology is associated with choices that are extremely necessary and important for any organization at a particular time.

Tài liệu tham khảo

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