



ANALYTICAL REVIEW
OF RESEARCH RESULTS
IN CENTRAL ASIA

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А 64

The summary of the research: Risks assessment analysis of extremism and radicalization ideas dissemination in the mass media and social networks in Central Asia.

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A 64 The summary of the research: Risks assessment analysis of extremism and radicalization ideas dissemination in the mass media and social networks in central asia. / Editor-in-chief: M.A. Karybaeva - B. 2022. - 20 p.

Central Asia. Today in the world, the mass media play an important, if not a main role in the perception and dissemination in society of ideas of extremism and radicalism or related, far-fetched, really existing serious issues. From this point of view, journalists can unknowingly be a tool in the hands of propagandists, distribute biased information among the public. The purpose of the study is to develop practical recommendations for the building of media strategies and other measures to prevent radicalization of young people based on the study of the role of mass media and social networks in the dissemination of ideas of radicalism and extremism in the region. Brief summary Research: Analysis of the risks of spreading the ideas of radicalism and extremism in the media and social networks will serve as a basis for the creation of intersectoral and cross-country mechanisms to prevent extremism and the formation of new dialogue platforms among the youth of the region.

The analytical report was published within the framework of the project funded by the European Union "Cross-border multilateral Dialogue in the interests of tolerance and peace in Central Asia". The project is being implemented by a consortium led by the Foundation. Konrad Adenauer together with national partners: Environmental Movement "BIOM", Kyrgyz Republic Republic (KR), the Nationwide movement "Yuksalish" Republic of Uzbekistan (RUz), "Gender and Development" NGO, Republic of Tajikistan (RT).

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The content of the publication may not reflect the point of view of the European Union*

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BIOM



Проект финансируется
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INTRODUCTION

The “Risks Assessment Analysis of Radicalization and Extremism ideas dissemination in the mass media and social networks in Central Asia” research has been delivered within the framework of the European Union-funded project “Cross-border and cross-sector dialogue for tolerance and peace in Central Asia” (hereinafter referred to as the Project). The project is implementing by a Consortium led by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation together with national partners: Ecological Movement “BIOM”, Kyrgyz Republic (Kyrgyzstan); National Movement “Yuksalish” (“Improvement”), Republic of Uzbekistan (Uzbekistan); “Gender and Development” NGO, Republic of Tajikistan (Tajikistan).

Part of the Project is the development of strategies for the mass media to disseminate the message on religious tolerance and the prevention of radicalism and extremism in the region, as well as the capacity building of journalists (including training and networking) on non-violent reporting and conflict prevention.

The assessment analysis of media content was carried out in three countries that are engaged in the Project implementation, and it’s aimed at determining the level of tolerance, assessing the capacity of traditional media and social networks in prevention of radicalism and extremism.

Also, the research analyzed previous researches on the role of the mass media and social networks in the dissemination of radicalism and extremism.

The objective of the research is to develop practical recommendations based on the research of the role of the mass media and social networks in the dissemination of ideas of radicalism and extremism in the region for the formation of media strategies and other actions to prevent the radicalization of young people.

In particular, there is the objective of the research based on the content analysis of traditional media and social networks to identify followings:

- Media preferences of the population (channels through which they receive basic information), including youth;
- Main trends in coverage of issues of tolerance, prevention of radicalism and extremism;
- Examples of the use of hate speech; basic messages broadcasting religious, ethnic and other stereotypes;
- Channels of influence for destructive or extremist narratives;
- The role of positive (good-neighbourly, tolerant, secular) media narratives for youth in the context of violent extremism;
- Fundamentals for the development of “Media Strategies” in each country of the region;

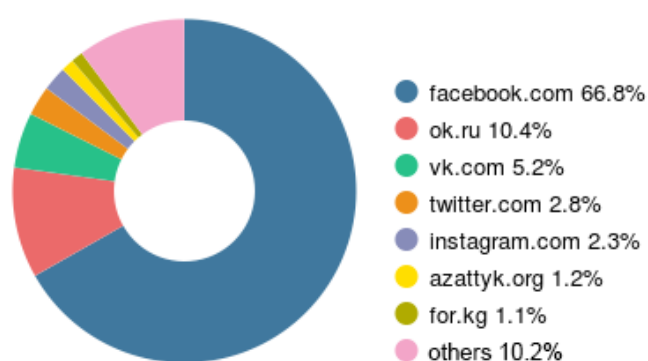
Analytical materials obtained during of the research will serve as the basis for the development of intersectoral and intercountry mechanisms to prevent extremism and the formation of new dialogue platforms in the youth environment of the region.

REVIEW OF RESEARCHES

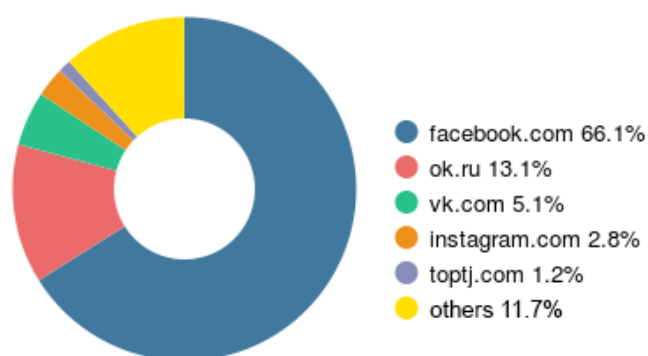
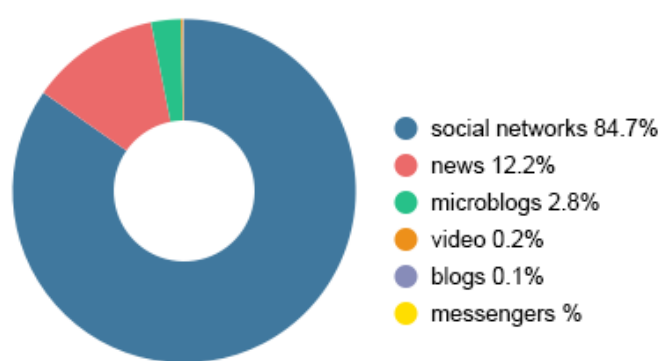
ON THE ROLE OF THE MASS MEDIA AND THE INTERNET IN YOUTH RADICALIZATION

In frames of the research a desk analysis is delivered from January 1, 2014 to April 1, 2021 on identified keywords available in online resources (about 30 publications) on the subject devoted to extremism and radicalism in the mass media and social networks in the countries of Central Asia. The special attention was paid to sections in these materials that contain issues of extremism and terrorism through traditional mass media and in the Internet space.

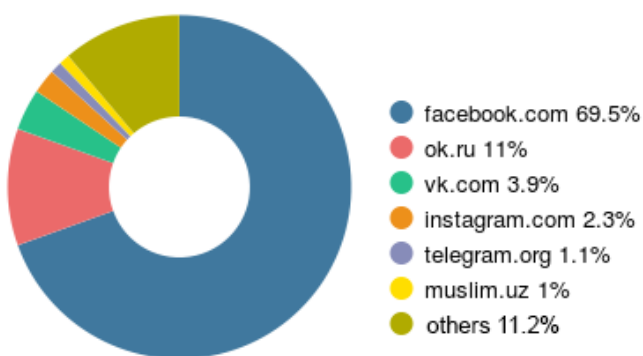
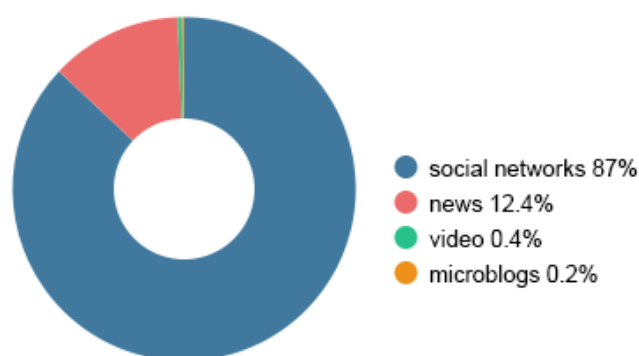
Analysis of keyword citations for violent extremism and radicalism in three countries



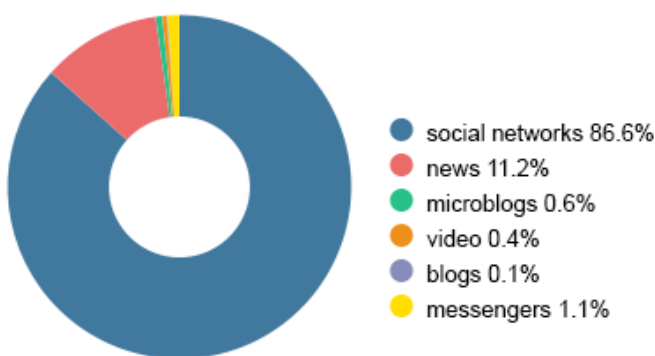
Kyrgyzstan



Tajikistan



Uzbekistan



GENERAL

FINDINGS/CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of a number of researches show, in distinction from the older generations, for whom the main sources of information are television and print media, for the youth of Central Asian countries, right now the social networks on the Internet are not only the main information resource, but also it's a tool of communication.

Young people from 25 to 34 years old are the most active part of users. The main content is generated by metropolitan residents (from 72% and above) in each of the three countries where the research was delivered. Males are more active users comparing with females. The leading platforms are Facebook, Odnoklassniki, V Kontakte and Instagram.

Social networks in the information space occupy a significant share of content on extremism (more than 80%). Right now, banned extremist and terrorist groups widely use social media to disseminate their ideology and attract new followers and recruit supporters. They have global media strategies to target their impact towards every user. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to the strengthening role of working online through social networks in the activities of extremists and terrorists that has been increased, their activity is growing.

The younger generation was particularly at risk of involvement in violent extremist activity due to the intensive use of social networks and the Internet, combined with different subjective and objective factors.

The media and social networks play an important role in coverage of issues with regard to religious freedom, religion and extremism. The media community in each of the countries of the region needs capacity building activities on religious issues, the sharing by experience in dissemination of the best practices to cover religious topics in order to avoid the dissemination of biased information, the use of stereotypical clichés and hate speech.

The assessment of popular information resources shows that it's necessary to provide information about religion in a simple and accessible language for the audience in order to prevent radicalization and extremism. Taking into account that the main users of such content are young people from the regions/provinces who live a traditional way of life and do not have a sufficient level of critical thinking, media content should provide the user with simple answers to their questions, without establishing an equal sign between Islam and radicalism.

Taking into account the fragmented language space and based on research data, it can be concluded that most extremist propaganda is disseminated, used and understood by the audience in Russian and Uzbek languages, and to a lesser extent in Kyrgyz and Tajik languages.

Based on the above-mentioned assessment analysis of materials and findings/conclusions, we offer the following recommendations for public authorities, the mass media, journalists, religious organizations and leaders, civil society organizations and international development partners.

FOR PUBLIC AUTHORITIES:

- To follow the neutrality principle of state policy and civil service, to avoid the politicization of religion, the functions of the propagandist of “traditional Islam” should be left to the relevant religious organizations.
- To develop Country Media Strategies and Action Plans to improve media literacy of the population, especially youth and young women, using innovative communication methods (blogs with positive narratives, storytelling, viral videos, quests, etc.) in order to teach them on critical thinking skills, cyber hygiene and the skills to analyze information in the online space.
- Under the formulation of media strategies to anticipate a preventive “calendar” approach, taking into account that a number of significant dates and public holidays steadily, annually, become a cause for separation of society and increased conflicts. At the same time, to respond in a timely and openly manner to news and sensitive topics that arise on different media platforms.
- To revise and update sections of special programs for the implementation of state policy to counter extremism and radicalism in the Internet space, especially in the social network segment.
- To formalize in legislation the right and Reglament of social networks monitoring (in platforms, channels, etc.) with regard to religious propaganda to law enforcement or analytical bodies of the government
- To develop strong professional links between the mass media and press services of public authorities who are authorized to carry out activities to counter radicalism and extremism as the main sources of information.
- To establish a system of education and training for law enforcement agencies and officials responsible for implementation of the state religious policy, both in the area of prevention of violent extremism and in counter-propaganda.
- To make significant changes in the content and methodological part of modern secondary and tertiary education, oriented on training of a specialist who can think critically, has a broad-based knowledge, and has knowledge in the natural and human sciences.
- Introduce extra-curricular activities (or elements in vocation-related subjects) in schools and universities on media and information, digital literacy and the development of critical thinking in information use.
- To monitor and neutralize radical and extremist websites, to detect the activities of recruitment networks operating in social networks.

- To support initiatives on delivery of joint educational, cultural, sports and other programs with a special focus on youth and women.
 - Considering the risks of radicalization of the population, the growth of traditional and religious stereotypes on the role of women in development, it's necessary to pay special attention to the implementation of special programs aimed at expanding the economic and political empowerment for women and girls.
 - Based on the Constitutions of each of the countries engaged in the implementation of the Project, containing a ban on the formation of political parties on a religious basis, the pursuit of political aims by religious associations, law enforcement agencies should take timely measures against persons calling for a change in the foundations of the constitutional system.
-

FOR THE MASS MEDIA

- Actively assist in the implementation of awareness-raising campaigns on state policy in the religious area and the prevention of extremism and terrorism.
- To expand the range and improve the quality of training programs for media and journalists in Central Asia to cover sensitive topics, especially in terms of religion subjects, radicalism, extremism and terrorism.
- More widely engage IT specialists in programs to combat radicalism and extremism in the mass media, the Internet and social networks.
- Taking into account the lack of analytical materials, to form a pool of professional media experts who provide the society with reports, journalistic investigations and analytical articles on this subject.
- Under development of TV and radio broadcasts, it's necessary to invite not only representatives of the spiritual community, but also secular specialists - Islamic scholars, religious scholars, experts. It's necessary to look the ways to consolidate, converge the positions of religious and non-religious audiences for a joint discussion of sensitive topics and value orientations.
- To develop joint programs on this subject within the region, including in a form adapted for each country - on TV of each country.
- To ensure religious information based on the interests and needs of the target audience, because extremists are very well aware on the current processes of society: shortcomings, vulnerability, lack of social justice and the mood of citizens; based on this, it's necessary to develop a content that significantly affects the worldview of the population.
- To develop special programs to increase the gender sensitivity of media representatives, religious organizations and religious leaders, to disseminate social videos in social networks on gender equality, combating violence and discrimination.
- To develop national and regional cultural and educational platforms to disseminate the values of traditional Islam, production of audiovisual products for various groups of the population.
- To develop and implement information projects and products within the framework of social policy modeling, as well as strengthening of secular capital in society.
- To organize condemnation and coverage in the mass media, Internet, social networks of acute social issues such as discrimination, social inequality, unfair treatment by law enforcement agencies, in a language that provides a voice to the most vulnerable groups and encourages the government to undertake actions.

FOR RELIGIOUS LEADERS AND SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY

- To improve the competences and qualifications of the moderate clergy, which is a factor of primary importance in the fight against the radical movements of Islam, as well as improve the system of religious education.
- To develop and widely use the opportunities of mobile applications on daily religious issues and the formation of an anti-extremist worldview of young people, the popularization of secular values.
- To use discussion platforms in social media and in your own information resources to discuss hot and sensitive social issues in a friendly and awareness tone.
- To raise more issues on religious extremism and radicalism, to cover and use case studies based on the real examples and events, as well as on the basis of clarifying the true meaning of suras and verses of the Koran, hadith, fiqh, individual terms and historical storybooks.
- To activate and improve the content of the Internet sites of the Spiritual Board of Muslims in the region, Ulema Councils as an important resource covering religious topics and meeting the existing needs of the population.
- To develop the cultural and educational resources for different groups of citizens, so that they would apply more to representatives of the official spiritual community to resolve their needs and get answer on their questions.
- To develop and form mechanisms for cooperation between the Spiritual Board of Muslims and other religious structures in the region, as well as a joint system to counter religious extremism and terrorism.
- To deliver regular based regional conferences with the engagement of religious leaders to discuss similar problems and challenges, to offer a discussion of the views of theologians regarding various forms of violent extremism, radicalism.
- To pay more attention to the low level of participation of women in public life, to carry out more educational activities and take active measures on capacity building of women and to reduce the dissemination of gender stereotypes and prejudice in society.
- To include lectures on Gender Equality and the Fight Against Violence and Discrimination in your online presentations, to speak more positively about equal rights and opportunities for women and men, to include speeches of women-sermonists in the content of educational portals and blogs.

FOR THE EXPERT COMMUNITY

- To carry out a special field research in the three countries where this Project is implementing to identify media preferences, channels to obtain an information, identify opinions of leaders relevant to the youth environment at the local, national and regional levels.
- To cover more problematic and critical subjects related to extremism and radicalism, to form groups of analysts, experts from the three countries who are able to develop and publish high-quality content on a permanent basis.
- To deliver conferences, seminars/workshops and round tables, debate clubs based on the existing Tolerance Centers under universities and other venues dedicated to the topics of extremism, radicalism, tolerance, hate speech and gender sensitivity for the youth of Central Asia.

LINKS TO THE FULL TEXT OF THE RESEARCH:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1rlujh_bwZ-OJTYXT26dyaFICk-OqjH39Y/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=105765249107775783094&rtpof=true&sd=true



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THE SCALE OF INTERNET USE BY THE YOUTH OF KYRGYZSTAN



72,3%

chatting with friends,
relatives



37,3%

watching videos,
listening to music



34,5%

to read the news and for
getting information



33,2%

to study,
to acquire new knowledge

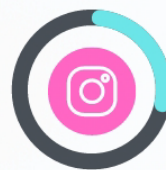


30,6%

searching for various
information



2,70 hours
per day



29,6% of young people use the Internet for social networking



This project is funded by
the European Union



The study can be accessed by clicking here:

The study is published as part of a project funded by the European Union, "Cross-Border Multilateral Dialogue for Tolerance and Peace in Central Asia."

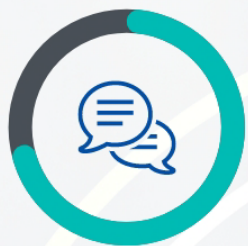
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THE SCALE OF INTERNET USE BY THE YOUTH OF TAJIKISTAN



55,3%

chatting with friends,
relatives



33,0%

watching videos,
listening to music



37,8%

To read the news and for
getting information



33,2%

to study,
to acquire new knowledge

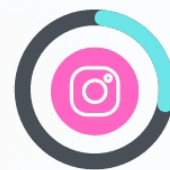


36,6%

searching for various
information



2,32 hours
per day



45,6% of young people use the Internet for social networking



This project is funded by
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THE SCALE OF INTERNET USE BY THE YOUTH OF UZBEKISTAN



75,9%

chatting with friends,
relatives



18,3%

watching videos,
listening to music



38,1%

to read the news and
for getting information



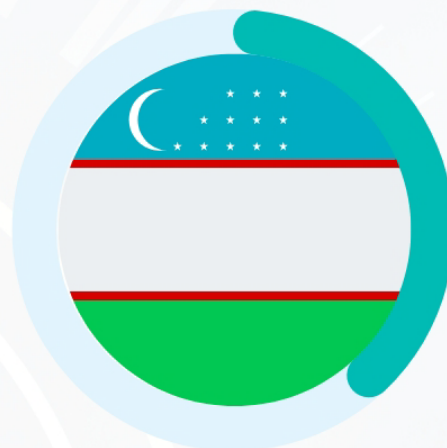
18,1%

to study,
to acquire new knowledge

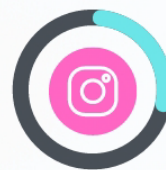


22,9%

searching for various
information



2,43 hours
per day



8%

of young people use the Internet for social networking



This project is funded by
the European Union



The study can be accessed by clicking here:

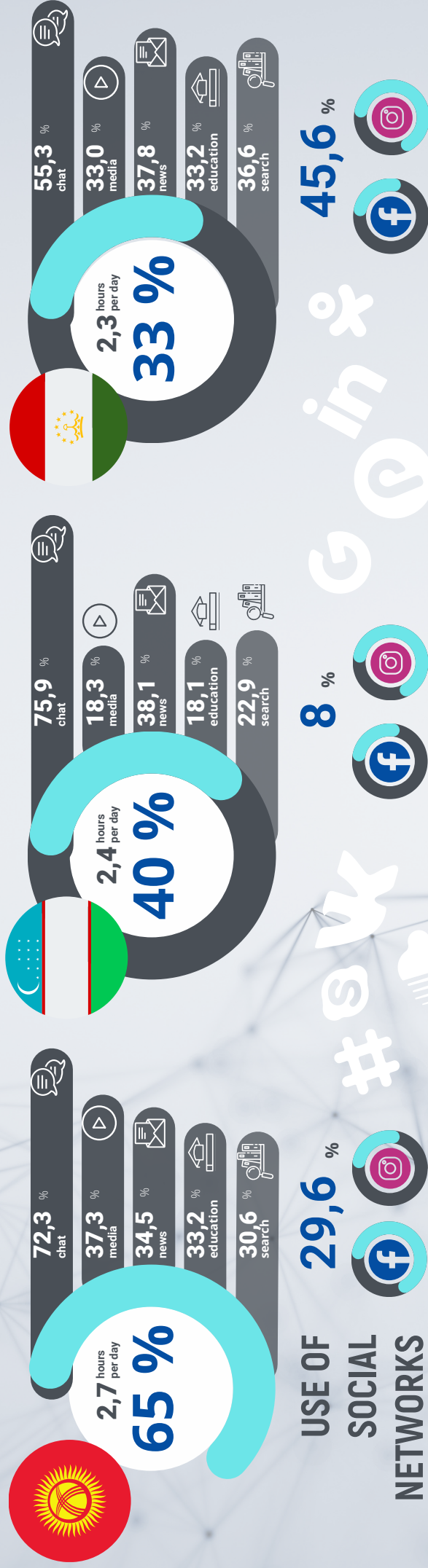
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INTERNET USE BY YOUTH IN CENTRAL ASIA



SOCIAL NETWORKS LEAD AS A SOURCE OF NEWS MATERIALS

PRIVATE COMMUNICATION IN MESSENGERS

Communication and sharing news becomes increasingly private.

Messengers continue to develop their functionality and algorithms year after year.

The main messengers for exchanging news are whatsapp, viber, and telegram.

THE RELEVANCE OF USING THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE

There is a noticeable need for receiving local news in local languages.

The trend of obtaining news through social media and messengers in rural areas is on the rise.

A significant portion of the population lives in rural areas and do not have sufficient proficiency in the Russian language.

RANDOM SELECTION OF NEWS

Most people use a random method to select news materials.

Short news notes are the most popular genre.

In the context of the dominance of social networks, journalists need to create their own audience on social networks.

GENDER IMBALANCE

There is a gender gap in access to the Internet, which is not in favor of women.

According to various estimates, women's access to the Internet is lower than men's, ranging from 25% to 50%. There is a low level of awareness of conflict and gender sensitivity among the population.

Read the full research package by clicking here:

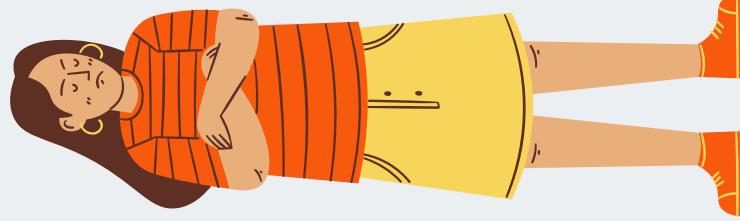
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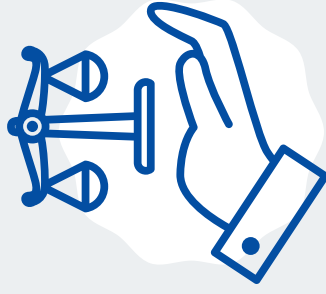




HOW TO AVOID HATE SPEECH WHEN COVERING RELIGIOUS ISSUES



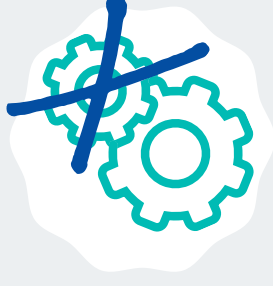
THERE IS A DIFFERENCE
between freedom of expression
and illegal hate speech



KNOW THE LAW
to avoid getting into trouble
in the field of hate speech



TERMINOLOGY:
create your own glossary
of terms on sensitive topics



REMOVE DETAILS
from your materials regarding
the identification of different groups



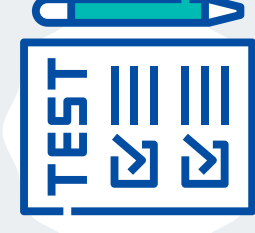
FOCUS
on who your material is intended for
and who will consume this information



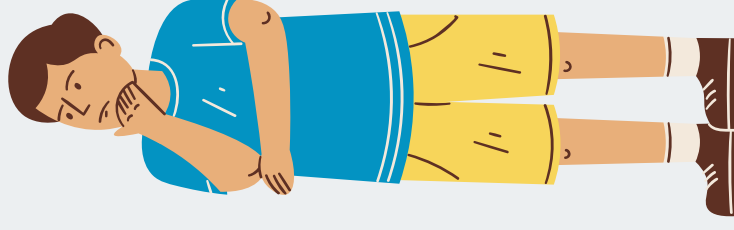
BE CAREFUL
when using humorous lexical
forms on sensitive topics



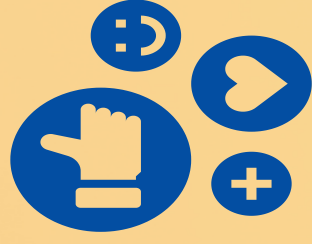
TRUST
your intuition: if a quote is filled
with hostility, that's how it is



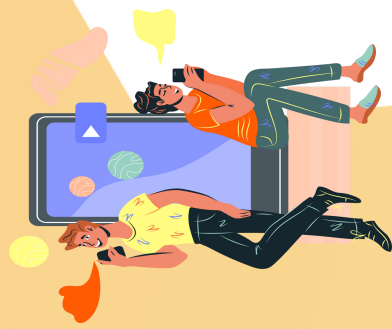
SELF-TEST
your materials
before publication



SOCIAL NETWORKS ARE LEADING



AS THE SOURCE OF INFORMATION



THE PRIVATE COMMUNICATION IN MESSENGERS

Communication and news exchange is becoming more and more private.

Messengers continue to increase their functionality and algorithms from year to year.

The main messengers for news exchange are WhatsApp, Viber and Telegram.

THE RELEVANCE OF THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE



It is noticeable that there is a need to get local news in local languages.

The reception of news through social networks and messengers in rural areas tends to increase.

A large part of the population lives in rural areas and do not speak Russian at the proper level.

THE RANDOM SELECTION OF NEWS



Most people use the random method of selecting news articles.

Short news stories are the most popular genre.

With social media leading the way, journalists need to build their own audiences on social media.



THE GENDER IMBALANCE IN CA COUNTRIES

The gender gap in Internet access is not in favor of women.

According to various assessments, women's access to the Internet in the world is lower than that of men – from 25 to 50%

Low awareness of conflict and gender sensitivity in the population.

You can read the study by clicking here:

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CROSS-BORDER AND
CROSS-SECTOR DIALOGUE
FOR TOLERANCE AND PEACE
IN CENTRAL ASIA



RECOMMENDATIONS for the MEDIA

ТРАНСГРАНИЧНЫЙ
МНОГОСТОРОННИЙ ДИАЛОГ
В ИНТЕРЕСАХ ТОЛЕРАНТНОСТИ И МИРА
В ЦЕНТРАЛЬНОЙ АЗИИ

- Increasing coverage of social media users
- Studying the nuances of the presented topic



- Ability to appeal to norms and arguments accessible to vulnerable youth groups
- Studying social media trends and their application

MEDIA

Orientation to analytical material when creating publications



Consider motives and trends

Use youth genres

Use various social networks

SMM



Take into account the interests of different categories of users



Content creation by residents of the capital city



Content creation by users from small towns and cities



Active involvement of female authors



Read the full research package by clicking here:

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CROSS-BORDER AND CROSS-SECTOR DIALOGUE FOR TOLERANCE AND PEACE IN CENTRAL ASIA



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