

MEDIA DIMENSIONS OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL DISCOURSE

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INFORMATION HYGIENE DURING THE ARMED AGGRESSION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AGAINST UKRAINE

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Abstract

The article reveals the concept and essence of information hygiene as a system of knowledge that studies the patterns of information influence on the formation, functioning, and state of mental, physical and social well-being of a person and society, which develops measures to improve the information environment. The main function of information hygiene at the state level is to protect the national information space from the interference and influence of the information policy of foreign countries, from imposing other, atypical behavior patterns (political, social, ideological) on citizens. The article analyzes the key tools and means of informational and psychological influence on the consciousness of Ukrainian citizens by the Russian Federation during the armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine. The Russian Federation uses all available communication channels against Ukraine and its population to destabilize the situation and spread disinformation: television, the Internet, radio, press, rumors, diplomacy, expert community, etc. The main object of defeat is a person, subjected to a covert influence through his/her nervous system and psyche, mostly at the subconscious level.

According to the rules of information hygiene, citizens of Ukraine should not trust anonymous sources in Telegram, they should read official sources and independent media. People in Ukraine need to give up reading breaking news and only headlines. Much of the information that pops up in every social media user's news feed comes from their environment. Everyone's infohygiene also depends on the hygiene of those around us. Information hygiene during the war is a filtration of the flow of received information, which helps not to clog the head with fakes, resist the enemy's IPSO and minimize the impact of information viruses on people.

Keywords: information hygiene, armed aggression, Russian-Ukrainian war, information-psychological special operation, fake, misinformation.

Introduction

In the new digital age, access to information has become much easier, but it also brings some challenges. The development of information and communication technology has provided people with various conveniences to connect without the barriers of distance or time. Modern society has become

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easier to communicate and quickly access all information from different regions and parts of the world. The Internet and social media are the result of the development of information and communication technologies, which have changed aspects of social life and media culture. But these processes also bring certain challenges. The information space is full of misinformation, fake news and manipulation. Information hygiene helps people distinguish between true and false information, develop critical thinking and avoid falling into the trap of manipulation. The issue of information hygiene is especially relevant in times of crisis, be it a pandemic or a war.

Information hygiene is the subject of study by many researchers, such as A. Boston, M. Caulfield, D. Grimes, D. Wilson. It is worth highlighting the work of the group of authors G. Loukas, S. Murugesan, S. J. Andriole, which revealed the essence of information hygiene. In particular, the importance of information hygiene in the conditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war is noted by H. Borovko, S. Chernetska and others. Scientist S. Albul reveals information hygiene in detail as a means of countering disinformation during martial law.

The purpose of our research is to highlight the peculiarities of the informational influence on the consciousness of people during the armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine and to reveal the rules of informational hygiene in these conditions in order to ensure the informational security of society and the state as a whole.

Research methods

The methodological basis of the research was the principles of scientific knowledge – objectivity, systematicity, multifactoriality and determinism. The methods of system and structural analysis were used in the systematization of scientific information according to the topic of the work and in the study of the essence of the main concepts of the study. The application of the system approach provided a theoretical generalization of the scientific views of scientists devoted to the study of information hygiene. In addition, general scientific methods of analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction were applied in this study.

The experimental study was conducted on the basis of the Petro Mohyla Black Sea National University (Mykolayiv, Ukraine), a total sample was 74 persons (full-time students of different specialties of the faculty of political sciences aged 18-24). The study was conducted in January 2024. Of course, the research is irrelevant. Because it does not include youth representatives from other regions of Ukraine.

The distant individual questionnaire was used. The questionnaire contained eight questions: age of the respondent; which channels of receiving the information he/she uses; which channel he/she prefers; whether he/she checks the information received through the preferred channel; whether he/she compares information messages read in various print media; whether he/she compares information messages presented on various Internet portals; whether he/she compares information messages presented by different television channels; whether the respondent considers himself/herself protected from the destructive influence of information.

The criterion for evaluation was the respondents' ranking by the level of frequency of use and verification by them one or another channel of obtaining information. The unit of analysis is the place of the information channel in the system of obtaining information. The research was conducted in order to identify the most popular channel for obtaining information among students and to determine the degree of readiness to check the information by the representatives of student youth.

Research results

Hygiene (from the Greek «hygieinos» – one that brings health) is a science that studies the patterns of the environment influence on the human body and the health of society in order to justify hygienic standards, sanitary rules and measures, the implementation of which provides optimal conditions for life, health promotion and disease prevention.

Information hygiene can be defined as a system of knowledge that studies the patterns of influence of information on the formation, functioning, state of mental, physical and social well-being of a person and society, which develops measures to improve the information environment (Khalamendyk, 2008, p. 87).

M. Caulfield defines informational hygiene as «metaphorical handwashing you engage in to prevent the spread of misinformation» (Caulfield, 2018).

This idea has gained prominence in recent years, and particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, as we have witnessed a massive outbreak of misinformation, disinformation, hoaxes, and conspiracies surrounding this coronavirus. The World Health Organization (WHO) and other experts have even

referred to the COVID-19 pandemic as an «infodemic» – an epidemic of information. In their February 2020 Novel Coronavirus Situation Report, the WHO noted that the COVID-19 outbreak and response «has been accompanied by a massive «infodemic» – an over-abundance of information – some accurate and some not – that makes it hard for people to find trustworthy sources and reliable guidance when they need it» (Wilson, 2024).

The purpose of information hygiene is:

- prevention of the negative impact of information on the mental, physical and social well-being of an individual, social groups, and the population as a whole;
- prevention of public diseases associated with information (Habovych, 1984, p. 6).

The tasks of information hygiene are the development of the foundations of hygienic information behavior, scientific substantiation of sanitary measures for the organization of information networks and processes, hygienically justified production, distribution, consumption, storage and reproduction of information, scientific substantiation of hygienic standards of information, information environment, information networks and processes (Bauman, 2016).

Information hygiene is filtering the flow of received information, which helps not to clutter a head with fakes, to resist fraud and not to make unnecessary mistakes in a moment of panic. The main function of information hygiene is to protect the national information space from the interference and influence of the information policy of foreign countries, from the imposition of other, atypical patterns of behavior (political, social, ideological) on citizens (Mazur & Kryzhanovskiy, 2022).

At the state level, information hygiene makes it possible to implement an effective and balanced information policy, increase the nation's spiritual culture, and preserve its health. It is about the principles of information and psychological security. In order to protect a person and society from negative informational and psychological influences, the information space must be protected from the penetration of information that promotes cruelty, violence, pornography, occultism, etc. The main function of information hygiene at this level is the protection of the national information space from interference and influences of the information policy of foreign countries, from the imposition on citizens of other, atypical behavior patterns (political, social, ideological) (Khalamendyk, 2008, p. 89).

On February 24, 2022, a full-scale armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine began. However, the hybrid war has been going on for a long time. This is a war where the aggressor intends to achieve political goals by using disinformation methods (overt, such as propaganda through state media and diplomats, and covert, such as through trolls, bots and fakes), and other active measures, such as cyber-attacks, agents of influence, blackmail, military deception, provocations and others in combination with traditional methods of war.

It should be noted that, in general, a large number of methods and means are used in hybrid wars, among which disinformation, which has become an integral part of our information space, takes a special place. Experts define disinformation as false, manipulative and/or misleading information that is purposefully disseminated to achieve a certain political goal (Albul, 2022). For Ukraine, disinformation was a serious threat during the stage of the hybrid war and remains so in the conditions of a full-scale invasion, because it is disinformation that is one of the main tools of the Russian Federation.

The Russian Federation uses all available communication channels against Ukraine and its population to destabilize the situation and spread disinformation: television, the Internet, radio, press, rumors, diplomacy, expert community, etc. The main object of defeat remains a person, a covert influence on whom is carried out through his/her nervous system and psyche, mostly at the subconscious level.

Russia creates and spreads narratives and fakes in order to influence the world community, the Ukrainian people and the domestic audience, applies IPSO.

A narrative (from the Latin «nararre», to explain) is an interpretation of events that is not based on facts or accurate data. The best example of a narrative is a myth or legend. As a rule, fakes are used to «confirm» narratives. Fake («forgery») is deliberately perverted or completely invented news (Albul, 2022).

Russia spreads fake news from the front for its own audience. These news stories present the «heroic exploits» of the Russian army in Ukraine, and provide false information about the victories and seizures (in the Russian interpretation they are called «liberation») of the Ukrainian territories. In the Russian Federation, a propaganda machine has been created for the generation and transmission of such fake news to the masses. For the domestic consumer, propagandists of the Russian Federation use the technique of recurrent repetition of false information, which is presented by so-called experts in the military, economic, and political spheres.

The main narratives for the world community and the Ukrainian people are: Ukraine is a «Nazi» state; Ukraine is a «non-state» (failed state); distortion and non-recognition of the history of Ukraine; discrediting of the Ukrainian army; territorial disintegration of Ukraine; «territorial claims» of neighboring states; «legitimization» of the temporary occupation of certain territories of Ukraine; NATO troops are fighting in Ukraine; the West is tired of Ukraine; manipulation of international organizations and Ukraine's relations with the EU; the presence of laboratories for creating biological weapons in Ukraine, etc.

Today, fakes are one of the most common forms of media manipulation. Not all fakes are obviously absurd. Often manipulation is difficult to notice at first glance. Such fakes are created in order to gradually, step by step, achieve the desired effect – a change in attitude and the formation of a relationship to a certain phenomenon, social or ethnic group, etc. It is the accumulative effect which is characteristic of fakes. At the same time, in addition to textual fakes, visual fakes are also distinguished (photos, videos, including deepfakes created using artificial intelligence).

Fakes have certain characteristics:

- increased over-emotionality of the content and sensationalism of the headlines (for example, «Crucified Boy», «Shock!», «Sensation!»), which makes critical analysis impossible. It is not a journalist's job to give an emotional coloring to an event. They are unlikely to use such words. As a rule, an emotional headline does not correspond to the content of the article. The more emotional the headline is, the greater the probability that the reader will follow this link, that is, the number of views and earnings of the propagandist will increase.
- categorical judgments and presentation (for example, «everyone knows that...»).
- the drama of the «news».
- reference to a «pseudo-source» (for example, «as emphasized by experts», «according to the results of surveys», etc.).
- speed of distribution (as experts emphasize, fakes spread 70% faster than reliable information and verified news).
- the depth of distribution (a wide range of consumers).
- primitivism (a mass product is always created in a rather simplified form, without which it cannot be quickly distributed).
- fakes never have a continuation, they are designed for operational manipulation of public opinion only now, in the short term.
- errors in publications. Pay attention to misspelled words, inaccurate photos and videos (for example, check if such photos exist at all).
- publication date and time are invalid. Pay attention to whether the publication date is indicated, whether the news is reliable at the moment, or whether it is republished data.

The information-psychological special operation (IPSO) is a very old tool used by special services and intelligence agencies of countries of the world in order to influence the public mood of the enemy country, decision-making by the government of the enemy country. The enemy wants these decisions and moods to help win the war, because psychological operations or IPSO are one of the tools for conducting war not by military, but by informational means.

Today, the toolkit is much wider than even in the last century, because there is the Internet and social networks, where moderation is quite relative. Currently, social networks are very actively used, and there are still radio stations that are available both in the occupied territories and the frontline ones. Even far behind the front line, a radio station can be caught, where they talk about how well it is under occupation, how Ukrainian soldiers are leaving their positions and deserting.

Psychological war uses propaganda and various types of information to influence the thoughts, emotions, attitudes, and behavior of an opposition group. For example, in all its reports, the Russian Federation claims that Crimea was not occupied, it allegedly «was returned home».

Psychological war is based on the fact that people live by emotions and are influenced by each other in society. If we look at the information space, we can see that when your idea wins, people follow you – soldiers, civilians, observers or voters, who will share your vision of reality. If your ideas fail, you may lose the battle before it even begins.

The Russian Federation lost the war in Ukraine back in February. As the American political scientist Peter Singer writes, in terms of information operations, Russia was feared the most, because it waged an information war on democracy, interfered in the course of more than 30 national elections (from Hungary,

Poland and to Brexit or the US presidential election in 2016), supported conspiracy theories (from Q-Anon to the lies against coronavirus vaccine) and justified military action from Georgia to Syria.

Today, this term appears in the information space very often. Although this does not mean that there was no IPSO in Ukraine until February 24. Prior to the full-scale invasion, the term was not widely used, moreover, for 5 years its use was consistently limited.

Until the beginning of 2022, the term «IPSO» was found mainly on specialized resources (for example, *ArmiyaInform*). Already in February 2022, at the beginning of the war, professional Ukrainian circles started talking about IPSO against Ukraine (for example, CERT-UA, the Cyber Police Department of the National Police of Ukraine). At the same time, hostile Russian resources also began to accuse Ukraine of carrying out IPSO (for example, they wrote about the shelling of a kindergarten in the Luhansk region that it was allegedly IPSO from Ukraine).

Psychological war expert Paul Linebarger said that in fact, war always begins long before hostilities begin and continues for some time after they cease. Unlike traditional war, when an army fights only against an enemy's army, psychological war is waged against millions of civilians who cannot fight back (Borovko, 2022).

Russia has been waging a psychological war against Ukraine for many years, trying to remain unrecognizable.

The IPSO methods today should also include simulated missile launches or aviation activity without shelling. In Ukraine, because of regular air raids, plans are failed, tasks of the Ukrainians are canceled. All these things greatly affect the psychological state. And this is done deliberately to shake us from the inside.

Russia wants to play the long game and invests huge resources in things that may not bear fruit for years. Eventually, the accumulation of these operations over a long period of time will give the desired result. But this approach is effective when there are doubts about who is evil. Now there are none, so hidden tools come into play. For example, discussing the «news» that Putin has cancer. Such news causes positive emotions among the Ukrainians. However, if that were true, he should have already died several times. The first information that the dictator was terminally ill appeared back in 2003. Afterwards, each worsening of relations with the Russian Federation causes a new illness to appear.

There are two peaks of media diagnosis of oncology in the dictator – 2014 and 2022. In both cases, there was a theory that the tyrant started the war against Ukraine in order to «have time to go down in history». In October 2014, the *New York Post* published an article that Putin had pancreatic cancer. The publication reported that he was allegedly being treated by a doctor whom Putin met while he was serving in Dresden. The material emphasized that Putin had three years left to live.

In the spring of 2022, several sources at once published information about another cancer. The anonymous resource *General SVR* actively spoke about this. It was reported that Putin would soon have an operation, and the reason for it was an unspecified form of cancer. In April, the publication *New Lines* received an audio recording of an oligarch close to the Kremlin, in which he claims that Putin had blood cancer.

Firstly, Putin may be ill, and this information is being hidden. A healthy tyrant is one of the pillars on which the Russian dictatorship rests. Besides, Putin's image is built precisely on masculinity. How to interrupt information about diseases? To discredit regularly. This is how endless system «stuffings» appear. And they believe less in each subsequent one.

Secondly, this is a magical way to solve all problems. If Putin dies, the war will end. Relaxing and drinking lavender latte instead of helping the army.

Thirdly, it is hype: Putin's illnesses always attract attention (Moroz, 2022).

Most citizens encounter psychological operations in various public and chat rooms. Among the topics most often manipulated by the enemy are blackouts and mobilization.

During the war, Ukrainian citizens spend a lot of time on reading news on the Telegram channel, not always understanding who is the author of this channel, and draw information from social networks, in particular, from Facebook.

Telegram, an instant messaging application, has become one of the key platforms where the Ukrainians search for news after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The war dramatically increased people's demand for quick news and simple solutions. It was on this wave that Telegram became extremely popular. It is through this resource that 66% of the Ukrainians currently receive information.

However, the Russians use this messenger to misinform the population. After February 24, 2022, the Russians significantly increased their hostile informational influence precisely through Telegram, as much as possible passing off Russian channels as Ukrainian ones, which pretend to be pro-Ukrainian, but nevertheless spread conspiracies aimed at undermining Ukrainians' trust in the authorities, belief in victory and the moral spirit of the Ukrainians in general. The very first indicator which reveals the Russian Telegram channel is a specific language. On such channels, they constantly share gossip, information that the country's leadership or the media will allegedly not tell the Ukrainians. The Russians often use such rather strange and unusual words as «hearing», «inside» build their entire work on the outpouring of allegedly secret information, and also try to assure readers that they have sources from Washington, the White House, and to Beijing (Chernetska, 2022).

Telegram has spawned many «scavengers» and news aggregators which do not check the accuracy of their publications. A person who lacks information hygiene skills can become a distributor of fakes, which, by the way, spread 6 times faster than their refutation.

Russia uses foreign journalists, analysts, retired military personnel, and politicians for conducting IPSO and creating rail news. Thus, the driving force for the Russian manipulation of the «colossal» losses of the Ukrainians was the Trumpist and Colonel Douglas McGregor, who, on the air of the YouTube channel Judging Freedom announced the information that had been discussed during the meeting between Lloyd Austin and Valery Zaluzhny. The Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine allegedly informed his American colleague that the losses of the Armed Forces amounted to 257 thousand people, and only 18 million people remained in Ukraine.

Douglas McGregor is a «colonel» who in 2014 openly supported the occupation of Crimea by the Russian Federation. He stated this on the air of the Russian RT. At the beginning of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, he stated that the Armed Forces of Ukraine were defeated, and the victory of the Russian Federation was understandable. In addition, on the air of the program of the well-known liar and manipulator Tucker Carlson in September, McGregor said that the Armed Forces were once again defeated, etc. Thus, the Kremlin involved its «six» 100% for manipulation, which failed the attack at its very beginning.

In addition to Douglas McGregor, a message published by the Turkish mass media Hurseda appeared in the information field, which, in turn, refers to a leak from Israeli intelligence agency that the Ukrainian troops allegedly have about 157 thousand dead and 234 thousand wounded. There are also thousands of dead foreigners, including those from the USA, Poland, Lithuania, etc. But the same publication notes with reference to Israeli «intelligence agency» that the Russian troops lost only 18,480 people. It is not entirely clear then why the Russians fled so actively from the Chernihiv, Kyiv, Sumy, Kharkiv, Mykolaiv and part of the Kherson regions and even announced mobilization in their country, planning to recruit at least 300,000 more people into the army.

Thus, within a day, two very unverified and unreliable sources in the form of a Turkish publication and propagandist McGregor issued radically different information about the huge losses of the Ukrainians, which was instantly picked up by propagandists in the Kremlin. It can be concluded that, probably, law enforcement agencies simultaneously received the task of spreading a fake on this topic, but they did not agree on it with each other, so they failed. However, this is not the funniest either. This information attack should have been a response to the posts of Western publications that the Russians had already lost from 180,000 to 200,000 soldiers in the war. It is quite possible to assume that Russian propaganda not only dishonored itself with such a failed IPSO, but also exposed the true information about its own losses (Kovalenko, 2023).

Therefore, according to the rules of information hygiene, citizens of Ukraine should not trust anonymous sources in Telegram, they should read official sources and independent media. Telegram actually has many official channels of representatives of local or national authorities. In Ukraine, it is necessary to pay more attention to the problem of information hygiene in social networks and messengers. Perhaps the development of The EUNOMIA project should be taken into account.

The EUNOMIA project, funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program, has developed information hygiene guidelines for social media users. Social media users must adopt what we call «information hygiene procedure» to protect themselves and their network from the rapidly spreading «infodemic» of misinformation. The EUNOMIA project defines the information hygiene procedure as the practice of evaluating information on the Internet in order to minimize the risk of consumption and spread of misinformation in its network. This practice differs significantly from fact-checking and fake news detection, focusing on the active detection and identification of "pathogens" rather than the daily routine of avoiding «contagion» (Troullinou, 2020).

Information hygiene rules such as «verify the source», «verify the account is a bot» and «flag false information for the benefit of others» are routinely recommended by fact-checkers, journalists, and media literacy experts to help limit the spread of misinformation. Undoubtedly, such recommendations are very important, but they are often too time-consuming or too complex and difficult for users to adopt as part of their daily routine. The EUNOMIA project will develop a decentralised, intermediary-free and open-source platform to evaluate the credibility of social media posts. EUNOMIA users can see how a piece of information might have changed when shared or re-shared by different users and/or in different periods of time. So, the user can see all the different versions of the same piece of information and the «journey» of potential modification conducted (Troullinou, 2020).

Such an automated platform is useful in the conditions of war in Ukraine to ensure the informational hygiene of people in Ukraine. Utilizing tools that help filter out false information, such as fact-checking services and browser extensions designed to detect fake news, can be highly effective.

People in Ukraine need to give up reading breaking news and only headlines. Much of the information that pops up in every social media user's news feed comes from their environment. Everyone's infohygiene also depends on the hygiene of those around us. To protect yourself and your loved ones, you should clean up your information field – unsubscribe from news aggregators and suspicious resources, ask yourself the questions «Why do I see this?», «What are the consequences of my likes?», «Does my post or repost harm the person next to me?».

Reading news in high-quality media 1–2 times a day and minimizing time spent on social networks should also be mentioned among useful habits.

A. Boston, analyzing the opinions of leading experts in the field of information hygiene M. Caulfield, E. Austin, P. Borah notes that people who reflect or think about the information they see are less likely to be susceptible to misinformation. It takes courage to say, «That's not true», but it is really helpful for us to take that step and stop the spread. We don't need to look down on someone who is spreading misinformation without realizing it, just give them a gentle reminder that everything they see might not be true (Boston, 2020).

Nothing minimizes the impact of information viruses on people like a correctly formed and regularly used information template. To create it, you need to select three to five media from the «White List» of the Institute of Mass Information. First of all, a person should read news and analytics in them. Only after understanding the objective reality, you may switch to other information channels where there are no standards and information filtration.

It is worth noting that today the level of critical evaluation of information messages received by Ukrainian citizens has increased significantly compared to the period before the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation into Ukraine. Especially young people. In 2019, a survey of student youth of the Black Sea National University named after Petro Mohyla was conducted regarding the channels of obtaining information by them and checking this information (results of the study are presented in Table 1).

Table 1

**Channels of receiving information and their checking
(based on survey of respondents, 2019)**

Channel of obtaining information that is preferred	Number of respondents (in %)	
	Do not scrutinize information messages	Constantly check the information received
Internet resources (53% of all respondents)	86%	14%
TV (41% of all respondents)	82%	18%
Printed media (6% of all respondents)	96%	4%

In 2024, we repeated such a survey and saw that the percentage of students checking information obtained from different sources increased. The results of the study are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

**Channels of receiving information and their checking
(based on survey of respondents, 2024)**

Channel of obtaining information that is preferred	Number of respondents (in %)	
	Do not scrutinize information messages	Constantly check the information received
Internet resources (53% of all respondents)	74%	26%
TV (41% of all respondents)	79%	21%
Printed media (6% of all respondents)	92%	8%

For young people, especially students, it is important to implement educational programs that teach information literacy. This includes integrating information hygiene into curricula and offering media literacy workshops to the general public.

Now Russia monitors the information field – finds all the pain points of the Ukrainians and creates cracks in society based on them. Pain points are discussion topics that are important to us now. By supporting such content and discussing these topics in social networks, in fact, everyone is working to split the state, supporting another information operation of the enemy. To prevent this from happening or to reduce the harm when it has already happened, it is worth:

- complaining about such videos and posts on social networks («You see material that touches you. About language, rudeness, other controversial topic...»);
- thinking about the possible harm that such a post or video can bring to the people and the state and refusing to publish it;
- if a malicious post or video was published, the author can delete it. If the author notices quarrels in the comments and the unusual involvement of the audience, this is a reason to answer the question once again «Is this not harming the country now?».

In the conditions of war, it is possible to recognize a fake by paying attention to the emotion caused by the information. If a person sees information that he/she wants to hear, or that all citizens of Ukraine are afraid to hear, a person should be alert and carefully check it.

Media literacy is critical for navigating misinformation during throughout our lives. There's so much information out there from so many different sources, and we have to figure out shortcuts to sift through it. A lot of these messages are trying to manipulate emotions of people. If it's making you feel a certain way, then you should stop and think about it (Boston, 2020).

Conclusions

The danger of informational and psychological influence on the consciousness of the citizens of the country, especially in conditions of crisis (war), is that such influence changes the normal behavior of a person, her/his reactions to the surrounding world, makes the person's psyche vulnerable and encourages the individual to destructive actions against society. This is a danger not only for the psychological state of an individual member of society, but also for the whole country.

Information hygiene during the war is a filtration of the flow of received information, which helps not to clog the head with fakes, resist the enemy's IPSO and minimize the impact of information viruses on people. Information hygiene is closely related to information literacy and is also a key element of critical thinking and active citizenship. While information literacy means knowing how to deal with information, information hygiene also means understanding when and how to take care of yourself in the digital environment, including taking a necessary break from it, even in times of war.

It should be noted that active research into the term "information hygiene" surged during the COVID-19 outbreak. In Ukraine, this term began to be actively explored with the onset of the full-scale Russian invasion on February 24, 2022. However, scientific publications from 2023 and 2024 addressing the essence

and significance of information hygiene in contemporary society during crises (such as war) have become increasingly scarce. This leaves ample room for further scientific investigations into this issue.

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