

# JOURNALISM AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

**Marin Constantin**

PhD, professor

Doctoral School of Social Sciences

State University of Moldova, Republic of Moldova

**Simion Ciocchină Spiridon**

PhD student

Doctoral School of Social Sciences

State University of Moldova, Republic of Moldova

## CONCEPTUAL APPROACHES TO THE WEB 2.0 INFORMATION WAR

***Abstract.** The aim of the article is to elucidate the main manipulation techniques and disinformation channels in the virtual space, the themes and basic elements of propaganda, as well as its impact. Web 2.0 information warfare is a new term in the literature. It defines misinformation, techniques for manipulating and intoxicating the public in the virtual environment, uncontrolled space and rapidly rising. Freedom of expression online, anonymity and lack of control allow the development of much more subtle and persuasive misinformation techniques than the classic and more dangerous ones, respectively, of major impact.*

***Keywords:** Information warfare, web 2.0, manipulation, propaganda, media, misinformation*

### **Introduction**

Political competition in and between states for power and domination has always generated devastating conflicts and wars. One of the most effective weapons of war, along with the traditional ones, were the psychological weapons of influence, which over time were developed and applied on a large social scale. With the advent of the press and the diversification of mass media tools, the battlefield becomes the public space.

An unprecedented scale of information warfare with specific techniques of manipulation through the media was reached in the twentieth century by the Nazi

and Soviet regimes. This was followed by the Cold War between the Washington and the Kremlin, which, with the fall of the Iron Curtain and the collapse of the Soviet empire, but also the development of new information technologies, evolved into a so-called information war - web 2.0.

The methods and techniques of waging a web 2.0 information war are to the detriment of the media and society, generating hatred, misunderstanding and cognitive dissonance. The methods of manipulation are different, but the goal is only one - to maintain power and influence over the masses at any cost. Thus, it is important to establish what are the premises of the information war, what are its effects, what are the components of web 2.0 war, who and how manipulates the masses through the media, what are the main techniques of manipulation, which is the external and internal factor of misinformation in the Republic of Moldova, but also how the media war can be stopped.

### **Conceptual approaches to the web 2.0 information war**

The notion of information warfare first appeared during the Cold War, when the media were involved in promoting the ideas of US and USSR political leaders, which aimed to both consolidate political power and create stereotypes among society. However, if during the Cold War, manipulation through the media was not camouflaged and went straight, then with the development of new information technologies it moved to a new level, called in the academic environment "Web 2.0 Manipulation". This new era of misinformation is subtle and persuasive, with techniques through which politicians manipulate, creating false news or distracting citizens from the problems and mistakes they make.

The phenomenon of the impact of information in the social and humanities, as well as the dangers of misinformation, has been and is an object of study for many researchers. It should be noted that the notion of "information war", as well as the derivatives of this term ("psychological warfare", "confrontation of information", "impact of information", "information and psychological functioning", etc.) is relatively new. The term "information war" first appeared in the 70s of the century. twentieth century, and the theoretical conceptualization of this theme is usually associated with the name of Thomas P. Rona [1], a former adviser to the Ministry

of Defense in Washington. In his work he defined "information" as the weakest link in the armed and defense forces, but he also spoke about the importance of information flows for enemy actions and the analysis of internal and external information. Rona refers for the first time to all those aspects that today underlie the information war: increasing the volume and diversification of the information flow, the difficulty of accessing truthful information, the increasing appearance of seemingly correct and authentic information, but which in reality are false .

Also among the first researchers to describe the phenomenon of information warfare are George J. Stein and Renée Shafransky [2]. In his 1995 article, "Information Warfare", J. Stein [3] argues that the phenomenon of information warfare is the result of securing national objectives through information. He also emphasizes that the information war is an ideological and epistemological one, because it focuses on the way people think and make decisions. But, as we see, the research that was done almost 20 years ago, the sphere of decision-making was clearly defined as a sphere of military and defense interests. Therefore, the definition of the targets of an information war becomes easy to understand: reason and the human being, but also in particular is focused on the fight between the actors who make key decisions.

In his theories, J. Stein also discusses the problems of the revolution in military affairs and argues that many new technologies have already accidentally become military applications. "The Internet was the result of the need for communication security. Then it spread to universities, then all over the world. Nobody controls the internet today ", the researcher claims. Stein's concepts refer to a new stage of information warfare, which was catalyzed by the development of new communication technologies in virtual space. Also in it we find the first ideas that the virtual war will not be a war with weapons, but one that is expanding at a rapid pace, with procedures for manipulating human consciousness.

For his part, R. Shafransky describes in his work "Neocortical warfare? The acme of skill "[2], the importance of the rational dimension and of the changes of values, that the new communicative era can bring. He considers that the object of the information war consists in forcing the opponent, ie the receiver / citizen, by

subjecting him to listen to our will. In his paper, he concludes: “Knowing the values of the enemy (of the average citizen) and using a representative system, such as the media, allows values to be changed, through direct communication with the enemy's brain, using verbal and nonverbal language. to the enemy himself”.

Another researcher who laid the foundations of the theory and evolution of information warfare is J. Arquilla. He was the one who developed the American concepts about the information war, and through his research he started the creation of the US information strategy. For Arquilla, the term "information war" is too broad in an attempt to cover all theoretical aspects, so he narrows down the concepts and refers in his works to technical issues and security vulnerabilities in virtual space. Thus, Arquilla characterizes the evolution of modern conflict, as one located between two poles: Cyberwar (cyber warfare) and network warfare [4]. He defines Cyberwar as a conflict of medium and high intensity, and network warfare as a conflict and operations of low intensity and different from the notion of war. In the latter case, no hierarchical forms of organization and communication strategies apply, and network warfare completely changes the essence of the threats, roles and purposes of information warfare.

Another aspect that was the theoretical and conceptual basis of the information society and the emergence of a new type of communication war, as a fundamental new stage of social and civilizing development, in which knowledge and possession of information will play a key role in building social structure are described in the works of such authors as M. Castells, G. Bechmann, M. McLuhan, F. Machlup, L. Niklas, F. Webster. The studies of these researchers are socio-philosophical in nature and are devoted to the formation of the scientific and theoretical paradigm of the post-industrial knowledge society (network society).

The next stage of scientific and theoretical understanding is the attempt to theoretically and methodologically conceptualize the term information war, as a way of influencing public opinion. A theoretical name of this phenomenon, usually, of "psychological warfare", where the main objective of the aggressor (the initiator of psychological warfare) is the repression of acts of will (demoralization) and the destruction of values. A descriptive analysis of the forms and methods of conducting

a psychological war was reflected in the works of P. Liebnger [7], Gh. Poceptov or G. Karaiani.

The role of the media in the information war, in the context of political and geo-political confrontations, has been studied by scientists such as P. Bourdieu, G. Schiller, M. Fassler [8]. These authors portray aspects of the manipulative influence on mass consciousness through the information policy pursued by the media.

Web 2.0 is not just a new version of the Web. Don Tapscott preferred to rename it by replacing the term Web 2.0 with wikinomics, considering it useful to highlight the primary role of the simple tools of the given application, which contribute to the increase of online collaboration. For other researchers, the notion of collective intelligence has served to translate the particularities of the current Web. In essence, this product has as its basic functional principle the activities in the digital space of a large number of Internet users, focused on using its dimension of interactive collaboration. Approached as a dynamic platform, the Web is the environment for searching, publishing and editing information at any time. On his blog, Tom O'Reilly, the organizer of the first Web 2.0 concept popularization conference (October 5-7, 2004, San Francisco), mentioned that definitions are linguistic constructions that serve to explain objects. Web 2.0 cannot be considered or interpreted as an object, because it is an important moment of transition to a new era, with new actors and new rules.

Currently, we can talk about an accelerated growth in the number of sites. According to estimates from June 2015, about 863 million web pages could be accessed in the global network. Despite the great diversity, the sites were classified according to several criteria. One of them is the way of creation, through which we distinguish the two categories of sites: static (created on the principles of Web 1.0, we can only find information) and dynamic (created on the principles of Web 2.0, they are participatory). Content-sharing sites, recently launched (YouTube - in 2005, Flickr - in 2004), are part of the category of dynamic sites and express the trend of exploiting the best qualities of the Web 2.0 application. The platform structure

allows the active involvement of Internet users in the communication process, participation in content modification by posting information in various formats (photos, music, video images).

### **Conclusions**

The information war has penetrated all areas, such as politics, economics or the military. The use of new tools has long exceeded the limits, and the difference between truth and falsehood is increasingly difficult to grasp.

Certainly, the situation of the media in the Republic of Moldova remains quite complicated, and the interventions of foreign manipulation through New media are increasingly aggressive. Some of the challenges come on the foreign chain, propaganda through the Russian press. The study of these manipulation strategies becomes even more important, because the information war that Chisinau is facing is difficult to stop and directly influences the mentality and values of its citizens. A small state, such as our country, does not yet have the possibility to retaliate against this unarmed war, but which can lead to total control over the country, and the ignorance of the Moldovan political class can lead to the loss of this fight.

Currently, the Republic of Moldova does not have a defense strategy against new type of manipulation, and the target of media attacks often exceeds the limits. At the same time, the rapid evolutions of the new information technologies have not been extensively and thoroughly studied in our country. The future doctoral thesis and the case study of the Republic of Moldova will contribute to an awareness of the dangers of Web 2.0 manipulation, and the results of this paper can be used to develop several strategies to combat propaganda.

### **References:**

1. THOMAS P. RONA. Weapon Systems and Information War. Seattle. Boeing Aerospace Co. 1976.
2. SZAFRANSKI R. Neocortical warfare? The acme of skill // In Athena's camp. Santa Monica. 1997.
3. STEIN G. J. Information Warfare. Washington. Airpower Journal. 1995.
4. ARQUILLA J., RONFELDT D. The advent of netwar. Santa Monica. 2003.

5. ФИХТЕЛИУС Э. Новости. Сложное искусство работы с информацией. Москва. МедиаМир. 2008. С. 35
6. BELL D. The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties. England. Harvard University Press. 1965.
7. LINEBARGER PAUL M. A. Psychological Warfare. Coachwhip Publications. 2010.
8. FABLER M. Alle möglichen Welten: virtuelle Realität – Wahrnehmung – Ethik der Kommunikation. Brill | Fink. München. 1999.

