

# On the Eve of the Future: the Values Sign Change

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*The article is devoted to the problem of the influence of the information space evolution on the value system of the personality. The process of transformation of separate values is considered. Thus, the value of awareness is disproved by the assertion that in the 21st century a huge amount of easily accessible information, on the contrary, caused the creation of a more concerned humanity, rather than a more informative one. Similar statements are made with respect to other key human values, such as: the value of knowledge, the value of communication, the value of speed, the value of flexibility and mobility, as well as the generalizing value that is the value of freedom. Their traditional positive assessment varies even to the opposite. Such a sharp change is necessary in order to avoid a catastrophe in reality; it may be a protective response of society in the context of its adaptation to the future.*

*Keywords: sign change, information space, information technologies, value system, value and sense sphere, value of knowledge, value of communication, value of speed, value of flexibility and mobility, value of freedom, spirituality, culture, ideals*

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## Introduction

The rapid development of information technology transforms the natural environment of human existence significantly, as their influence extends to all aspects of human life — from production to metalanguage knowledge [Kalmykova & Novikova, 2018]. Information space comes forward as a general object of transformation. Its importance for humanity was

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realized only with the formation of information ideas, the study of information as a factor in the existence and evolution of society. Under the information space here is understood a set of available to the individual (or their group, some organization, society) operations with information (for example, the phenomenon of «listening» [Kharchenko, 2017], etc.). The information space has, though a metaphorical and objective characterization — volume. It is the volume of information space that grows with both the increase of information storage and the development of access and processing facilities. Taking into account the reckless rates of transformation of informative space, timely scientific reflection is an important thing that becomes a condition for maintaining the control of mankind over its own destiny, preserving its subjectivity with the “human face” in the future [Bazaluk et al., 2018].

A separate aspect of such reflection is the consideration of the process of the values sign change of a personality and society under the influence of the modern information environment. The system of values is the basis of the educational and cognitive activity of the individual, as well as his spiritual and cultural growth, high moral deeds. “Values represent the quintessence of human wisdom acquired over the centuries. And in a new developing system, they must embody the fundamental principles of sustainable achievements, whether they are individual or social” [Weizsäcker & Wijkman, 2018: 198]. Consequently, the study of values, both in their ontological and evolutionary aspects, is an urgent need for anticipation and creation of the future.

### **Conceptual foundations and peculiarities of the study of changes in the value and sense sphere**

The modern world is characterized by total globalization of the information space, the consequences of which have both positive and negative aspects. On the one hand, the “global processes of tehnospherization of society, strengthening of technological development of the world and the global processes of informatization, computerization, electronization of society and the biosphere nature create the information-and-technogenic epoch of the evolution of earthly life”, on the other hand — “the fate of man depends on the nature of information — whether a man will be a fully developed personality who approves humane values or informatization will accelerate negative transformations of the human spirit and body” [Voronkova & Kyvliuk, 2017]. It should be emphasized that the base of the relationship and interdependence of information and value-and-sense space is the value basis of such interaction. The process of critical attitude to any information and peculiar filtering of the information that has been heard, seen, read depends on the system of values accepted by the personality. This system has traditionally been formed in the system of education. However, modern information and technological civilization gradually devalues the spiritual and cultural value of education and training, replacing them with the acquisition of life experience taken from films that have questionable spiritual and moral, artistic and aesthetic values. This leads to the creation of a dangerous situation in the division of knowledge with the upbringing of a person. Modern technologies intensify the processes of alienation of knowledge. Mechanical technological procedures devalue the significance of a person’s place in education. All this factors exacerbates the problems of education of man, humanity, spirituality. The time has come for us to become the time of the Resurrection, Spirituality, Culture, Purity of the Soul [Shevchenko, 2017].

The modern information space, as a rule, is characterized by such features as [Antonenko, 2018:186-187]:

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- a) The combination of virtual and objective reality.
  - b) The inclusion in all spheres of human life activities.
  - c) The existence of social engineer orientation of the media as a way of social programming.
  - d) The vulnerability of a person to the informational content of destructive, immoral and character.
  - e) Appealing to a person's subconscious and exploiting his/her psychological resources.
  - f) The development of manipulation technologies, in particular, spin doctoring control technologies (news and media event management).
  - g) Enhancement of the reference status of the "stranger" in social networks and the establishment of the ersatz freedom as an exemption from social norms and values of behavior, the ability to "hide" behind an abstract nickname, an artificial biography, etc.
  - h) The illusion of inclusion in the social space, communication.
  - i) Simulacrum ("non-original copies", Jean Baudrillard) as the basis of media interaction, the creation of a virtualized self-concept, the organization of vital activity in the virtual world, which contributes to the lack of perception of reality.

Many modern trends indicate that society is experiencing a breakthrough moment, the essence of which is the contradiction between man and the artificial world, which deepens the rapid progress of robotics. According to scientists, the future of this industry is based on the concept of singularity. "Singularity is a theoretical point where artificial intelligence will be equal or exceed human intellect. If singularity is achieved, then it is unclear how future relations between people and work will be formed ... The technological community is divided into two camps, which give a radically different answers to the question of what the singularity will be — good or evil" [Ross, 2017: 34-35]. Consequently, in a society there is a contradiction, i.e. a situation with maximum uncertainty. At the same time, the uncertainty manifests itself in the value and sense sphere.

The modern society is characterized by anomie, the state of the value-normative vacuum according to E. Durkheim, which is typical for transitional and crisis periods, when the old norms and values cease to operate, and the new ones have not yet been established. However, some observations and studies allow us to find the vectors of transformations of the value and sense sphere, which are important for the search for ways of preserving and sustainable development of mankind.

The starting point in this can be the opinion of scientists on the fluidity and change of the sign of values in different historical periods. The theoretical basis of this change can be found in the nonlinearity of social processes associated with their information aspect. The corresponding model is provided, in particular, in [Chursin, 2017], which states: "... there is the reason to believe that the relationship of people with the created by them their man-made world — the world of technology, information technology, artificial intelligence and robots correspond to the communicative model. It describes the informational interaction of a person with his own creation, an artificial world, as a mega-message, during which a person gradually passes on to this world his knowledge and intelligence. At the same time, technical devices, mediums of high-level information technology, increasingly penetrate into the biological body of a person, assuming previously "purely human" functions and significantly modifying the relations of people with the outside world. At the same time, "Internet of Things" is rapidly expanding with fantastic forecasts for the future. The part of "human

communications” in their total mass will in future only decrease. Mankind is really close to the “post-human state”. It should be expected that technology, and after it, informatization will cover not only the sphere of social production and also other, superstructure spheres of human life, up to the value and sense sphere. Most likely, we are already feeling the breath of this “great transition”. Its harsh logic is, after all, an objective cause of the transformation of the system of values and personality, and of humanity as a whole.

Analyzing this transformation, the attention should be paid to the ambiguity of the term “value”. Values are a life, a human being, a child, a family, a native land, motherland, reverent attitude to nature, spirituality, culture in all its manifestations, art, the truth, goodness, beauty, holiness, the beauty of the Spirit, education, profession. Values are classified as intellectual, moral, aesthetic, which have a sense of life, meaning of life. “Values are considered as the highest meanings of human life, which are characterized by significance, normativity, necessity, and expediency.” According to William Werkmeister, who considered a significant role in values in a harmonious existence, determined that the source of the birth of value experiences is the objects of culture. He imagined the future of mankind as a “manifestation of higher values” — in the combination of his aspirations, goals in the perspective of its movement toward personal self-justification [Antonenko, 2018: 49, 44].

We emphasize some peculiarities of values.

1. Valuable sphere embodies a complex heterogeneous, according to different criteria, and closely related to each other, separate components, which is an integral entity: it is difficult to distinguish one or another value for research so that it does not entail a number of others. Thus, the peculiarity of studying values is the inability to avoid taking into account the complexity of the factors that make up them.
2. Coexistence of values, their interaction in time or in the synchronous act, their observance in the life of people reveals their contradictions, complementarity, dialecticity (dialectics) that is, the ability to turn into another, up to the opposite.
3. The peculiarity of the study of values is the need to take into consideration the constant and powerful process of their generalization and the formation of peculiar “over” or “meta values”. Thus, the awareness of the value of individual industry knowledge once led to the formation of the value of knowledge as such. Francis Bacon proclaimed that “knowledge is a force itself”, and it remains faithful up to this day.

## **Transformation of values in the transformed world**

Information space in our time is undergoing profound transformations, and this can affect only the value-semantic sphere of life of humanity. Let us consider further how certain values are treated in the context of modern information space. In this case, we cannot overcome the fact that the information space at a certain time determined by the level of development of information technology. Technologies, in particular, information technologies, by themselves, can serve only as values, and their progress at a high level affects the value structure of personality and society. Automation of the information processes is a real reason for the formation of a new type of society: changes in the nature of production, changes in the content of activities and human needs, its consciousness, mental characteristics, the way of discovering the world, value-semantic sphere.

The development of information technology manifests itself as a meta-value since it is the one, which is able to serve the values of communication, speed, virtually, awareness, etc. The end conclusion would be the recognition that technology development should be perceived as an independent value (de facto, it is).

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The “closest” to the value of technology is the value of awareness, easier access to information (although it, in turn, combines the value of increasing available sources, the value of access speed, the value of the ease of presentation, etc.).

However, it turns out that the relationship between the value of awareness and the amount of received or simply available information is not direct: when there is excess, and not a lack of information, a degree of understanding, according to T.G. Eriksen, falls directly in proportion to the increase in the amount of information. It is clear that the decline of understanding does not add value to the information in such an increased number. Scientists note that a large proportion of texts, which are given in the information space, do not contain true semantic creativity, have no novelty and litter the information space, which adversely affects the intellectual level of personality and society. Eriksen noticed that the incredible volume of easily accessible information was eventually created not by more informative, and, on the contrary, more distasteful humanity. In addition, it leads to the destruction of the system of moral, intellectual, spiritual, aesthetic, universal cultural values, and the recipient becomes a “fateless”, omnivorous man with the loss of any ideals, increasingly with the domination of destructive emotions, which can be the leading motive of thought and behavior. The absence of critical thinking, the limited creativity, the lack of ability to a profound analysis of the fateful problems of life leads to “IN ANYWHERE”. Salas Sommer said about it quite accurately, “There is a “seizure” of people when in a person’s brain is invisibly introduced someone else’s information that captures his (her) neurons and becomes autonomous without obeying the personality. This information obtains the power over human behavior, and one is not able to avoid its influence”. The author especially emphasizes that in this way “our subconsciousness fills “information garbage”- unconscious subliminal information that has no meaning. It inflicts damage on the conscious itself, and disables it, disorienting man and provoking emotional and psychological conflicts” [Sommer, 2014: 19]. However, it is extremely important that every person realizes that life’s success and full happiness depend in a large extent on moral choice, from impeccable moral behavior, from the system of values that provides the awakening of “internal” power that will direct thoughts and feelings of action, deeds “in accordance with the highest ethics” [Sommer, 2014: 9]. In addition, as Yuval Noah Harari recommends by, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is necessary to draw attention to the ability of people to use information to determine the difference between the important and the unimportant, “and, first of all, to unite numerous bits of information into a broad picture of the world” [Harari, 2018: 320]. That is what forces us to have a different opinion on the value of being informed.

The next value that “inherits” the previous — the value of scientific knowledge — is associated with the formation of the ideal of science of modern times, formulated as the domination of scientific knowledge over other values: when scientific knowledge is seen as the main value, everything that can control the movement of the mind — conscience, will, religious faith — must be removed from the road. The acquisition of scientific knowledge is an extremely complex creative process, which is connected not only with laborious efforts and hard work, and with illumination, spiritually creation. A. Einstein drew attention to the fact that everyone who is seriously engaged in science comes to the conviction that the laws of nature manifest the Spirit, which far exceeds our human one. In the face of this higher Spirit, we, with our humble forces, must feel humble. Thus, science leads to a reverential feeling of a special kind, which is fundamentally different from naive religiosity [Shumeyko, 2015].

Therefore, the specificity of the value of scientific knowledge is in the fact that it is opposed to many other values that are inseparable from human beings.

Let us turn now to perhaps even more fundamental value of mankind — the values of intelligence. For some time, the amount of information in the external repository has become significantly more than the one that was placed in the heads of the population of the planet. Moreover, until sometime it remained passive. And “after the computers “has been acquired the force, that are now integrated into the global network, the external memory, together with the information processing potential preserved in it, repeatedly exceeds the capabilities of people inhabiting the planet. And people were faced with the need for another reconsideration of the essence of their life: not only to remember, and also to process information, the man-made world has become much better, at least in the production sphere, and in a number of other areas of activity. As a result, a person is noticeably ousted not only from production, and even from education and medicine, where much of the operations are based on the capabilities of information technology. Now, people do not enrich their intellect, understanding their tasks in the growing artificial world, and this world itself seems to be self-sufficient in its further development, only from time to time taking from people “intellectual injections”. And people, it seems, with pleasure refuse from mental operations, and are ready to give important decisions to the computers in various fields of life. The sign of the feedback between human intelligence and the volume of the external information repository, obviously, has changed to the opposite one” [Chursin, 2017]. V. Vitkovsky even resorted to characterizing the future of society as a post-intellectual.

The another key value of the present is the value of communication, which is one of the basic for humanity and that it seems to be taking consistent “care” in the modern information space. Communication has natural, technical and, of course, value aspects. We can say that communication has a number of values, among which speed, accessibility, quality, degree of reach, etc. The supporters of the communicative approach are interpreted “communicative rationality” not only as an important theoretical-cognitive and methodological innovation (in which knowledge is placed in the communicative context), and as a certain value orientation which is capable to serve as an effective factor in the development of social consciousness and the necessary social changes.

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The modern informational space has unexpectedly increased the communicative capabilities of a man. It seems that this fact should be regarded as definitely positive, because of the value of communication, which is perhaps the most appropriate to human nature. However, as scientists point out, our reality is increasingly colored in the colors of communicative reality and has an ambivalent expression. The growth of communicative interactions does not necessarily bring us the perfect communicative community. The sign carries not only the connection with the signified, and also freedom from it. This “binary opposition” as the fundamental property of the sign, also determines such a direction of development of communication in society, which directs its vital activity to the sign space



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as an independent and even separate entity, announces the “power of the simulacrum”. According to Baudrillard, there is the same “generation of simulacres”: the reciprocal substitutions of the beautiful and ugly fashion, the left and right in politics, the truth and lies in all media reports, useful and useless in everyday things, nature and culture on all levels of meaning. At the same time, as he notes, in our system of images and signs all the basic humanistic criteria of values that define the age-old culture of moral, aesthetic, and practical judgments disappear.

Similar compilations should influence only on the assessment of communication value, at least, as one which depends directly from information space.

Another crucial value of modern society is speed. Often it refers even not to speed itself, and to acceleration, which can be considered as one of the main peculiarities of the present time. A. Toffler pointed out that hyper-speed of current changes meant that data and “facts” became outdated faster. In addition, knowledge based on those data has been becoming less reliable. New technological and organizational tools aimed at overcoming this “trance scientific factor” have been designed. It has intensified scientific research and development as well as an educational process. Thus, knowledge metabolism happens faster. It would not be an exaggeration to point out that our contemporaries “compete in speed.” In the view of Zygmunt Bauman, speed takes the first place in the list of values, which are connected with surviving. Present time is about speed indeed. Nowadays it becomes and, in some cases, can be felt as excessive one. It has been defined by Umberto Eco as a special term — “hypermodernity”. Speed is a great advantage if it does not go away out of control.

Assessment of human behavior influences on a speed value sign. As it is well-known, types of behavior are divided into two main groups: rules-based and situational ones. The first group is defined by a set of standards and rules, while the second one — by actual reality, conditions, an environmental state. It is clear that rapid change in information space relates to situational behavior, which gradually acquires norm indicators. In this context, Fedor Girenok underlined that in the world of high speed such qualities, as sincerity, spontaneity and warmth cannot exist. Also, there are not created conditions for existing such categories as truth and faith. Therefore, technological and humanitarian aspects are characterized as controversial ones regarding value of speed.

Something similar happens with such values as flexibility and mobility. Flexibility can be a liberating force. However, it also can be considered as a repressive trend if those, who change rules, have power. Manuel Castells emphasizes that in this situation it is important to keep distance between assessment of new social forms and processes, which are induced by new technologies, and extrapolation of consequences of those events for the society and people. That logic cannot be linear or simple. Mobility in physical space as well as mobility in social environment are developing as so complex processes that there is a need to provide closer observation and identification of their subtle distinctions aimed at giving an appropriate description. We can observe negative trends in our everyday life — when mobility becomes its opposite and in the age of mobility, we often do not need to move. Furthermore, upward mobility / career promotion not only increases chances to realize mobility possibilities, and makes us to do that. Moreover, as information space nowadays has got global significance, it more than ever encourages mobilization in different aspects. Between those aspects, there is one which poses a threat in the context of globalization. It is about invisible transformation of external speed to internal fossilizing. That important distinction as well as previous observations changes connotation of a mobility sign.

Finally, a lot of values (particularly, those, represented above) tend towards a generalizing one — a value of freedom. Freedom is “systemically important” and universal value for the mankind. Moreover, again, it can be observed as considerable expansion of human freedom in transformed information space.

Particularly, it is worth considering metamorphosis of freedom as a value phenomenon, which has its specific components. For example, widespread use of the Internet has led to rapid expansion of space of individual freedom. That process (as it was mentioned above) has given a sense that the main function of the Internet is to transform human identity despite the importance of its informative, business and other functions. Due to the Internet, the modern staffs increases his autonomy level in the context of taking decisions in different aspects of his life. It even touches his own sexual identification. In modern information space freedom of access is complemented by freedom of information choice. However, that same peculiarity — principle of provision of information upon request — does not allow considering the Internet as the same phenomenon as other information sources.

In the web, a man has got freedom to choose his own way of information usage. He also has got freedom to ask questions. However, such aspect of freedom as values (as experience has shown) has got its back side. The essence is in existing possibility to a person to move towards that part of information space, which cannot be controlled in the context of values categories. Therefore, a person risks becoming an object of manipulation. Moreover, in that context the world of “freedom for...” can become the world of “freedom from.” In modern information space, it can happen quietly and easy.

Is not it a stunning change of a sign of values?

## **Conclusion**

Dynamic picture of change in values assessment (which were considered as absolute, obvious and constant ones to date) is represented in the article. That change has been influenced by transformation of information space, which took place during recent decades and is still increasing nowadays. Therefore, it can be considered as a time trend as well as an evolution vector in individual and social spheres of values and connotations. That is the context where change of a sign of values represents a particular fact of social life and requires proper research.

Awareness of character and content of transformation in spheres of values and connotations in the context of dynamic information space is considered as an important part and necessary condition of forming social ability to manage own pace of development. As respected researches, who are members of the Club of Rome underline, it necessary to follow one way — leave path of unsustainable development in all spheres. As it is not honest in respect to future generations. It seems inevitable that it needs immediate development of new types of human targets and (if it is possible) new social enlightenment [Weizsäcker & Wijkman, 2018: 205]. It is clear that new social enlightenment is not aimed at moving people off technical and scientific progress. In addition, its task is to find the balance between human, nature and man-made environment (where information space is a key component). That task, actually, explains great attention given by leading Ukrainian and international researches to the issue of values.

It should be stressed that future of mankind is connected with forming a man of a new type — planet- and space-oriented. It means that today we should follow “strategic and values concepts” where culture, value experiences and life values play an important role. As a leading Canadian culturologist Paul Shaffer mentioned, great attention is given to



exploring particular values, systems of values and main principles of general structure in a cosmological concept. Worldview is in the core of the cosmological concept [Shaffer, 2017: 29]. As respected members of the Club of Rome stress, the world is in danger. Its saving is based on holistic worldview, which will facilitate creation of a planetary civilization.

Studying the problem of change of a sign for a certain list of values, which are connected with a superpower modern factor — transformation of information space is an important issue in the context of forming a picture of desirable future. As Yuri Shreyder mentioned, to avoid disaster in reality we often just need to be aware of that reality and to change our system of its assessment.

The problem of today is that the mankind will be able to provide desirable sustainable development only due to cultivating universal (and, therefore, sustainable) values — humanistic ideals, good and beauty in the context of the represented changes of values and connotations aspects, where inner spiritual world of a person will become the main value. It is important to remember about Thomas Aquinas, who connected a state of human freedom with an ability to differ good and evil. A man is free when he is capable and vice versa. It is easy to see that the represented definition of freedom cannot be affected by time and conditions as well as it cannot change its sign.

Thus, the represented ideas concerning existing trends of change of a sign in values and connotations aspects within information society demonstrate that future of the mankind is not so much dependent from technological development. Much more important factor is deep understanding of the essence of being a Man.

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