# NETWORK COMMUNICATIONS AS A NEW CULTURE OF SOCIETY

# COMUNICAÇÕES EM REDE COMO UMA NOVA CULTURA DA SOCIEDADE

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**ABSTRACT**

**Objective:** The study aims to explore the development of a new culture in daily life through the social practices of network communications among different generations in Russian society. It focuses on how digital interactions shape cultural trends and social identity across various age groups.

**Methods:** The authors conducted a sociological analysis using data from the VTsIOM (Russian Public Opinion Research Center) for 2023-2024. The research included surveys covering different generational groups, analyzing the time spent online and activities such as communication, studying, working, and entertainment. Comparative data were also gathered regarding concerns about data privacy and the impact of online communications on social behavior.

**Results:** The study reveals generational differences in how online platforms are used, with younger generations, particularly millennials, spending more time on work, studies, and social networking compared to older generations. Women express greater

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concern about data privacy than men. The digital generation shows a higher level of addiction to network communications, while older generations exhibit lower levels of IT competence, raising concerns about intergenerational ties in a digital society.

**Conclusion:** The formation of a new culture of everyday life, driven by changes in communication paradigms, affects all social groups. However, generational differences in network usage, privacy concerns, and the development of social identity reflect the diverse sociocultural trends in Russian society's virtual environment.

**Keywords:** Culture of everyday life; Social group; Network communications; Sociocultural trends; Generational groups.

## RESUMO

**Objetivo:** O estudo visa explorar o desenvolvimento de uma nova cultura na vida cotidiana por meio das práticas sociais de comunicação em rede entre diferentes gerações da sociedade russa. Foca em como as interações digitais moldam as tendências culturais e a identidade social entre diversos grupos etários.

**Métodos:** Os autores realizaram uma análise sociológica utilizando dados do VTsIOM (Centro de Pesquisa de Opinião Pública da Rússia) para 2023-2024. A pesquisa incluiu questionários que cobrem diferentes grupos geracionais, analisando o tempo gasto on-line e atividades como comunicação, estudos, trabalho e entretenimento. Também foram coletados dados comparativos sobre preocupações com a privacidade de dados e o impacto das comunicações on-line no comportamento social.

**Resultados:** O estudo revela diferenças geracionais no uso das plataformas on-line, com as gerações mais jovens, especialmente os millennials, passando mais tempo em atividades como trabalho, estudos e redes sociais em comparação com as gerações mais velhas. As mulheres demonstram maior preocupação com a privacidade de dados do que os homens. A geração digital apresenta um nível mais alto de dependência das comunicações em rede, enquanto as gerações mais velhas exibem menor competência em TI, levantando preocupações sobre os laços intergeracionais em uma sociedade digital.

**Conclusão:** A formação de uma nova cultura de vida cotidiana, impulsionada pelas mudanças nos paradigmas de comunicação, afeta todos os grupos sociais. No entanto, as diferenças geracionais no uso da rede, preocupações com a privacidade e o desenvolvimento da identidade social refletem as diversas tendências socioculturais no ambiente virtual da sociedade russa.

**Palavras-chave:** Cultura da vida cotidiana; Grupo social; Comunicações em rede; Tendências socioculturais; Grupos geracionais.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Innovative communications technologies in a virtual environment produce an unprecedented impact on sociocultural processes and change the communication paradigm itself, reducing the time and distance between social actors, creating new forms of information expression and interaction, and opening up opportunities for

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information and ideas exchange (Nizomitdinova & Davlyatova, 2024, p. 292; Trofimov et al., 2023b, p. 30). Network communications create a new culture of everyday life, changing thinking and social practices (Marcinkovskaya & Khoroshilov, 2023; Pavlova, 2023). This sociocultural process is characterized by a rapid spread since society is attracted by the ease of presentation of material and the ability to exchange information using various forms (Kopylova & Taruntaeva, 2024; Trofimov et al., 2023a). Access to a broad audience makes network platforms attractive for promoting different services and changing the culture of consumption (Alekseev & Kopylova, 2020). Interdisciplinary studies devoted to modern sociocultural trends associated with information technologies examine factors related to the scientific and technological development strategy and the influence of youth protest movements, the psychedelic revolution, counterculture, etc. (Gir, 2004).

The studies devoted to creating a digital culture based on a historical approach examine the periodization of its development in the context of information revolutions (Elkina, 2018). The representatives of this approach focus on the role of digital technologies in changing the social structure of the information society (Elkina, 2018), the forms of sociolegal and political culture, and the virtualization of social communications and practices as a source of cultural transformations (Nejsbit, 2003). In the studies based on this approach, three main periods are identified: the 1960s-70s — the formation of information society infrastructure (personal computers and the Internet); the 1980s-90s — the development of digital technologies; and from the 2000s to the present — the anthropological revolution.

The historical and sociological approach distinguishes several generations in Russian society based on the integration into the new digital environment and political structure. This approach to network communication culture is more justified since political structure significantly impacts general cultural trends. The sociological surveys by the VTsIOM (Russian Public Opinion Research Center) in 2023-2024 analyzing the social trends in the digital environment, considering gender and age differences of respondents, and using the generational approach are of interest.

The study aims to examine the trends creating a new culture of everyday life through social practices of network communications for different generations of Russian society.

## 2 MATERIALS AND METHODS

We analyzed publications in the problem field in Russian and international databases with a search depth of 7 years. A sociological analysis of secondary data from the Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VTsIOM) (2024) open databases was conducted. A nationwide telephone survey was conducted based on a stratified random sample extracted from a complete list of mobile phone numbers in Russia. Each survey-extracted random sample included 1,600 respondents aged 18+. The effectiveness of the surveys is substantiated by the indicators calculated according to the corporate indicators' rate: cooperation rate (CR) * = 0.8044; minimum response rate (MRR)** = 0.0150; response rate (RR)*** = 0,0948.

CR: the number of complete interviews divided by the sum of a) complete interviews and b) non-interviews with eligible respondents. MRR: the number of complete interviews divided by the sum of a) complete interviews, b) interrupted interviews after the successful screening, and c) the respondents where it is unknown whether they meet the selected criteria.

The social groups of respondents were differentiated according to the following generational groups: the digital generation (born in 2001 and later), younger millennials (born from 1992 to 2000), older millennials (born from 1982 to 1991), the reform generation (born from 1968 to 1981), the stagnation generation (born from 1948 to 1967), and the thaw generation (born before 1947). Mathematical data processing was carried out using methods of variation statistics calculating parametric (Student's t-test) criteria of difference using the Excel for Windows Statistica 17.0 application software package.

## 3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of publications showed various means of network communications. Today, the main tools are social networks, blogs, cloud communities, Internet forums, text and video chats, instant messaging platforms (WhatsApp, Telegram, Skype), IP telephony, hybrid mobile apps, and integrated solutions (Castells, 2010, pp. 55-56). Blogs are of particular interest among young people. They act as a form of network communication and indicate the formation of new forms of social practice approaching

the type of professional occupation. Researchers claim that blogs are the most promising tools for communication and the formation of online communities, representing platforms for target audience network communications (Ivanko et al., 2017; Trofimov, 2024).

The analysis of the data from the VTsIOM sociological survey conducted in March 2024 allowed us to identify the areas of network content according to the criterion of their relevance to modern Russian society (Figure 1).
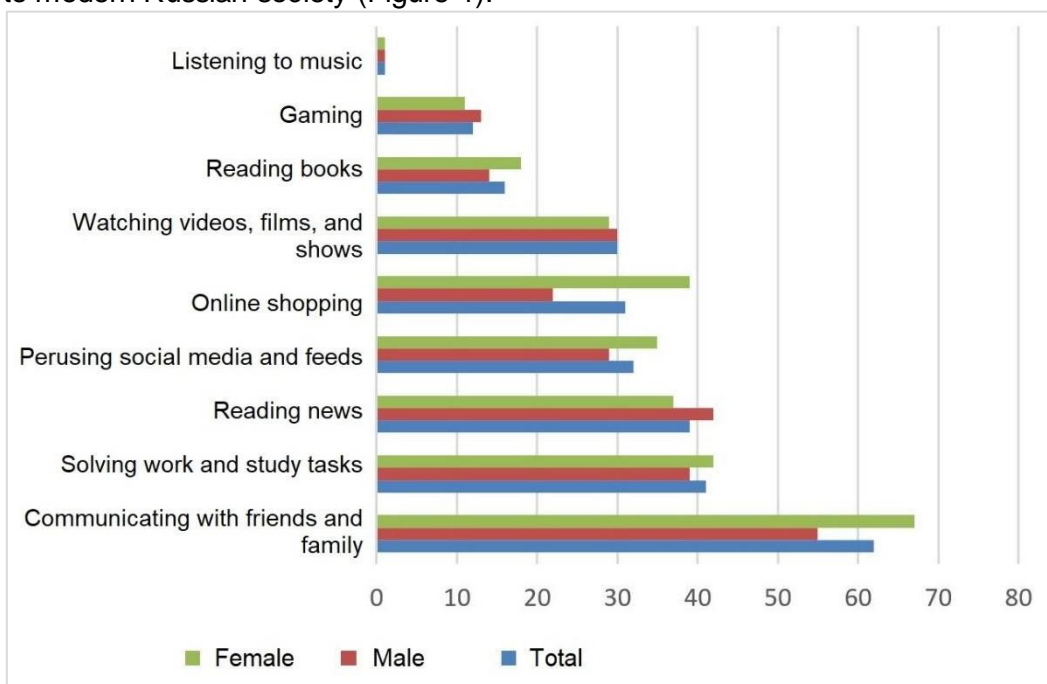


**Figure 1.** The structure of the use of network content by the time spent

Communicating with friends and family is the most popular activity among the network users (67% of female respondents and 57% of male respondents). Solving work and study tasks ranks second (42% of female and 39% of male respondents). Next, the respondents noted leisure and entertainment (30-35% of respondents in different categories). Every third respondent spends more network time shopping online, and women do it more often than men (39% vs. 22%, p > 0.5). In online leisure, reading books is in the last place (14%, which is 2 times less than watching films or viewing news feeds).

Despite the general trends, the analysis of network consumption by the generational groups allows us to identify the subcultural features of a new culture of everyday life (Figure 2).
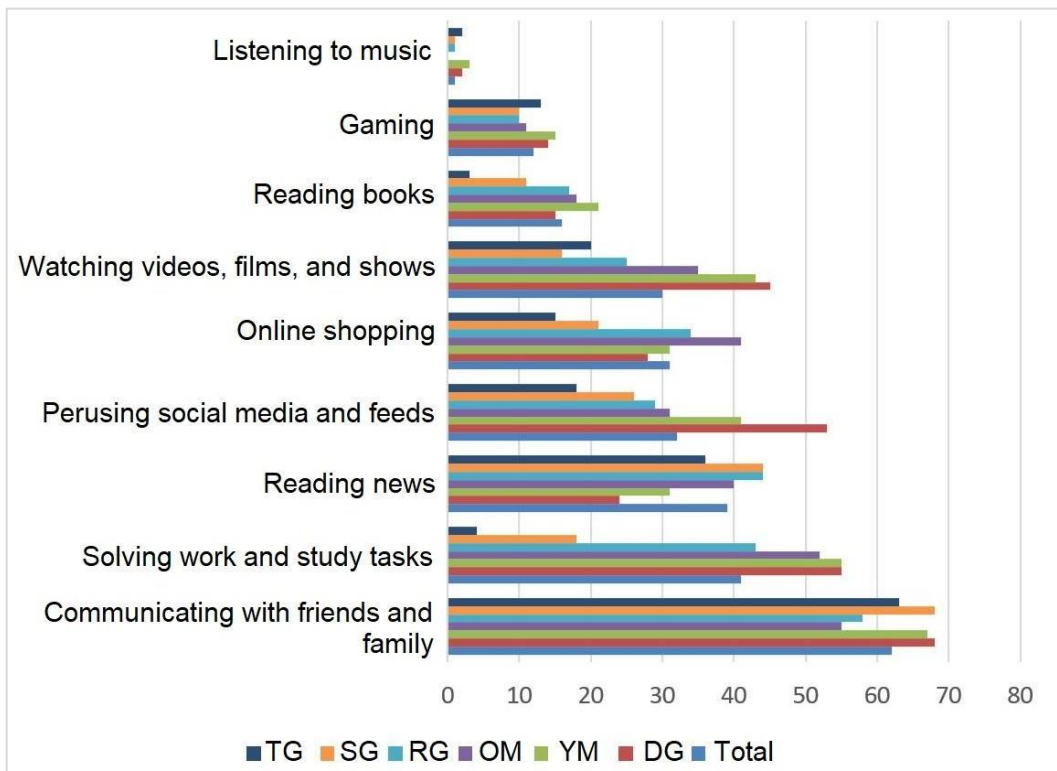
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**Figure 2.** Structure of network content by the criterion of time spent for different age groups of respondents DG — digital generation, YM — younger millennials, OM — older millennials, RG — reform generation, SG — stagnation generation, TG — thaw generation.

Communicating with friends and family takes most of the time spent online in all generational groups, without reliable statistical differences in the number of respondents. The maximum (statistically reliable) intergenerational differences are obtained for online time spent on work and study. In the thaw generation group, 4% note it, and in the younger millennials group — 55%, $p < 0.05$. Older millennials spend more time shopping online (41% vs. 15% of the thaw generation, $p < 0.05$). Younger millennials spend less network time viewing news feeds than others (24% vs. 44% of respondents of the reform and stagnation generations, $p < 0.5$). As for watching films online, the opposite situation is observed: 45% of younger millennials vs. 26% of respondents of the stagnation generation, $p < 0.5$. The digital generation is more immersed in social networks than others (53% vs. 18% of the thaw generation, $p < 0.5$). Social media communication is preferred as virtual leisure by every second respondent of the digital generation and every second or third younger millennial vs. every third respondent of other generational groups, except the thaw generation, which reflects the unconditional social trend of modern everyday culture.

The responses to the question "Would you be able to completely abandon the use of your smartphone, replacing it with a regular push-button phone?" allowed us to highlight the trends of network-addicted users in the generational groups (Figure 3).
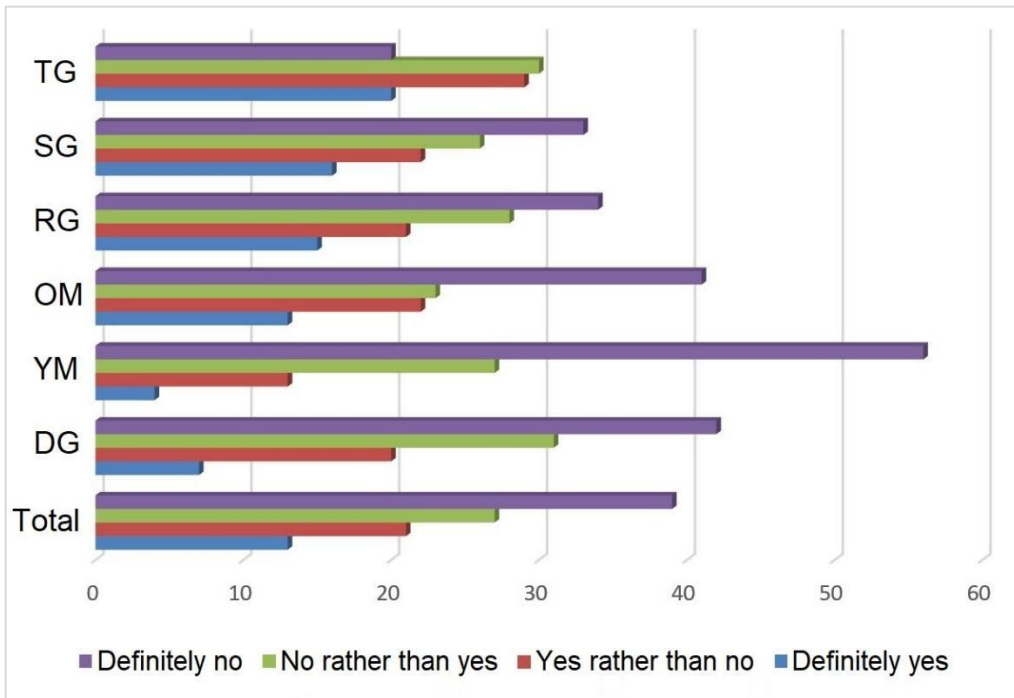
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**Figure 3.** Distribution of respondents based on the criterion of dependence on network content

The digital generation group is the most network-addicted: 73% of respondents cannot abandon the gadgets that grant them access to the Internet; the least network-addicted is the thaw generation (52%). Addiction to gadgets granting network access in all other generational groups (62-70%) reflects the social trend for network communications as an established culture of everyday life.

The intensity of psychological gadget addiction is maximum in younger millennials. 40% of respondents chose the answer option "I feel uncomfortable staying without my smartphone for a long time, it seems I can miss something". In the digital generation and older millennials, such responses amount to 30% (Figure 4).
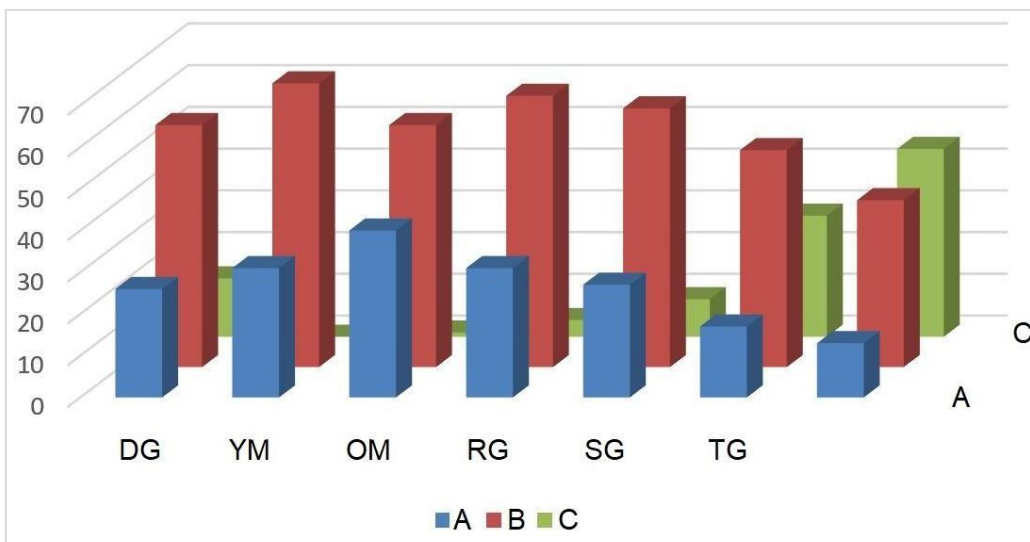
**Figure 4.** Distribution of respondents by the severity of network addiction
A) I feel uncomfortable staying without my smartphone for a long time, it seems that I can miss something; B) I can easily spend time without my smartphone, without thinking about missed messages; C) I do not have a smartphone.

In older generations, there are two times fewer such network-addicted people ($p<0.05$ between the number of respondents in the younger millennial and thaw generations, 40 and 13%, respectively). In older generations (stagnation and thaw), every second or third respondent does not have a gadget to access the Internet at all, which likely demonstrates a different polarity in the current context and indirectly indicates a low level of IT competence among the population aged 57+. In the thaw generation (over 77), there is almost half of such persons (45%). This is a risk factor for breaking intergenerational ties. Considering the demographic aging effect, when the population of older ages is increasing, negative social trends may arise with the stigmatization of the older generation in a digital context. The cultural features of the older generation of Russians are characterized by collectivist signs of the Soviet era (formalized discussions, collective meetings of different levels of vertical and horizontal industrial relationships, mandatory expression of collective opinion, the priority of public over personal, dependence on collective opinion, fear of collective condemnation, etc.). In many ways, they are the opposite of the modern online trends: showing off one's life, shocking photos on the Internet, etc. Perhaps the rejection of the network subculture is a psychological factor in denying network interaction. In the context of anti-epidemic isolation (2020-2021), according to the Federal Statistics Service of Russia, there was a breakthrough in IT skills among the population aged 65+. Considering the large-scale digital transformation of all spheres of life, the older generations will increasingly integrate into the online environment, regardless of their desire, which determines the ethical and social risks for the effectiveness of the digitalization of social spheres.

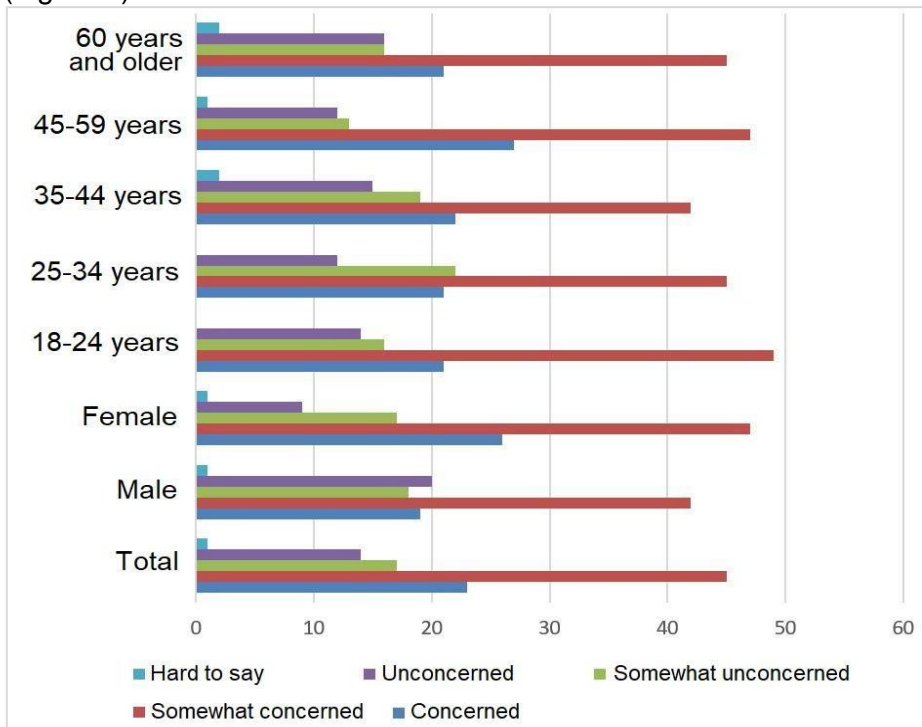Despite the online trends, the respondents are worried about the safety of their personal data (Figure 5).



**Figure 5.** Attitudes of respondents to the threat of personal information leaks

About 70% of all respondents express concerns about the safety of their personal data. Female respondents are more concerned about the safety of their personal data (bank account details, passwords, etc.) than male respondents (73% vs. 59%). The answer "Unconcerned" was chosen by 20% of men and 9% of women, p <0.5. Attention is drawn to the lack of differences between age groups, possibly due to the fact that only Internet users participated in the survey.

## 4 CONCLUSIONS

We conclude that the formation of a new culture of everyday life influenced by changes in communication paradigms affects all social groups. The intergenerational analysis shows the presence of various generational sociocultural identities in the virtual environment of Russian society. The low level of IT competence in the generational is a risk factor for breaking intergenerational ties. Special attention is drawn to the social group of young people, whose maximum immersion in network communications with the development of psychological dependence on virtual content allows us to predict the social risks of deviation from the culture of everyday life. There are also gender trends in the culture of online immersion: women spend more time

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purchasing online on marketplaces, and men – viewing news feeds. All Internet users are united by a concern about the safety of their personal data posted on the Internet (an average of 70% of all respondents). Social media communication is preferred as virtual leisure by every second respondent of the digital generation, every second or third younger millennial, and every third respondent of other generational groups, which reflects the unconditional social trend of modern everyday culture.

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