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# The role of mass media in the information security public management system

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#### **Abstract**

Information security is vital for national security, especially during martial law. The influential role of the media in the sociopolitical landscape of Ukraine underscores the need to study its impact on the system of public management of information security. This research aims to identify the extent and directions of such impact, using statistical analysis and comparative law methodology. The findings reveal information security challenges

related to social media in Ukraine, such as distorted information, manipulation, propaganda, imperfect regulation and subordination of media to the interests of their owners. International experiences suggest addressing these problems by promoting digital literacy, facilitating fair competition and fostering relations between the state, media and citizens. By way of conclusion, the significant influence of the media on public opinion and political processes is confirmed, with both positive (coverage of important information) and negative (misinformation, manipulation) aspects in the system of public management of information security.

**Keywords:** media; public management; information security; media literacy; disinformation.

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## El papel de los medios de comunicación en el sistema de gestión pública de la seguridad de la información

#### Resumen

La seguridad de la información es vital para la seguridad nacional, especialmente durante la lev marcial. El influvente papel de los medios de comunicación en el panorama socio-político de Ucrania subraya la necesidad de estudiar su impacto en el sistema de gestión pública de la seguridad de la información. Esta investigación tiene como objetivo identificar la extensión y las direcciones de dicho impacto, utilizando análisis estadístico y metodología de derecho comparado. Los hallazgos revelan desafíos en materia de seguridad de la información relacionados con los medios de comunicación social en Ucrania, como información distorsionada, manipulación, propaganda, regulación imperfecta y subordinación de los medios de comunicación a los intereses de sus propietarios. Las experiencias internacionales sugieren abordar estos problemas mediante la promoción de la alfabetización digital, la facilitación de una competencia justa y el fomento de las relaciones entre el Estado, los medios de comunicación y los ciudadanos. A modo de conclusión, se confirma la influencia significativa de los medios de comunicación en la opinión pública y los procesos políticos, con aspectos positivos (cobertura de información importante) y negativos (desinformación, manipulación) en el sistema de gestión pública de la seguridad de la información.

**Palabras clave:** medios de comunicación; gestión pública; seguridad de la información; alfabetización mediática; desinformación.

#### Introduction

Mass media provide citizens with access to information and play a leading role in shaping public opinion (McCombs and Valenzuela, 2020). This determines the high importance of mass media as an information security management tool for the state. In turn, information security has a direct impact on national security, because the storage of important information of the state, business entities and citizens depend on the effectiveness of the information security public management system (Pandey, 2021; Semenyshyn et al., 2020).

Mass media can contribute to combating the illegal use, disclosure or loss of such information, and the implementation of appropriate legal, organizational, and technological measures. The importance of media activity in the field of information security determines the need for appropriate state control (Gehlbach and Sonin, 2014).

The above-mentioned issues are particularly acute for Ukraine, because the Russian Federation (RF) waged the war on its sovereign territory, and national security, including information security, is one of the main targets for the aggressor under martial law (Sługocki and Walkowiak, 2020). Mass media play a special role in such conditions, because they provide society with critically important information and a true vision of the current situation (Pavlik, 2022; Prokopenko *et al.*, 2023). The main tasks of mass media in the field of information security include:

- ensuring freedom of speech and equal access to information an important function of mass media is the timely publication of reliable information about the activities of government bodies, government decisions, and their impact on public life. Freedom of speech must be balanced with certain restrictions related to national security, especially in wartime, which must be taken into account by the mass media (Guyvan, 2020; Datsenko, 2021);
- countering the spread of false information (misinformation) –
  professional and ethical standards oblige the mass media to properly
  respond to the spread of unreliable facts, refute fakes, and counter
  propaganda (Green et al., 2021; Panchenko, 2021);
- detection and prevention of crimes mass media can be involved in monitoring terrorist threats, prevent cybercrime and other crimes (Odnol'k, 2020; Sevruk, 2021);
- informational support for state national security measures for example, military operations, emergencies, in particular, pandemics, etc. (Anwar *et al.*, 2020; Hussain, 2020; Mheidly and Fares, 2020).
- The aim of this study is to determine the place and identify the directions of mass media influence in the information security public management system. The aim involved the fulfilment of the following objectives:
- analyse international experience of interaction between mass media and the state in information security matters;
- study Ukrainian legislation on mass media and information security, determine the place of mass media in the information security public management system;
- provide recommendations based on international experience.

#### 1. Literature review

Panchenko (2020) reveals the features, advantages and disadvantages of different types of information presentation by mass media. The researcher considered such types of information presentation as printed publications (press), radio, television. Special attention was paid in the study to the ability of the mass media to manipulate public opinion and to the degree of mass media's influence on the political process. Besides, the researcher identified the main threats in the field of international information security, and outlined the directions for countering such threats.

Zakharenko (2019) examines aspects of media responsibility in the information security system. The researcher describes six interaction models between the state and mass media, namely: independent press model, social responsibility model, democratic representation model, the Soviet model, the authoritarian model, and the development model.

Gonina *et al.* (2020) recognize the important role of the media in the fight against terrorism and ensuring security in general, while identifying a number of threats generated by the media themselves. The researchers identified espionage, propaganda, regulatory issues, cultural imperialism, manipulation and threats generated in the Internet as the main threats. Agubor *et al.* (2015) classify threats to telecommunication networks (terrorist, technological, criminal, and general types of attacks), and offer a number of recommendations to improve information security.

Studies on improving the population's media literacy as one of the most effective information security measures are worth noting. The state in cooperation with mass media may conduct special campaigns to improve media literacy.

Guess *et al.* (2020) examine how media literacy improvement affect citizens' recognition of inaccurate information. Jones-Jang *et al.* (2021) identify several types of literacy in the studied area — media, information, news and digital literacy — and determine the most effective types for recognizing fake news. Hameleers (2022) and Clayton *et al.* (2019) found how a combination of media literacy and fact-checking helps correct communicative misrepresentation.

In the context of this research, it is also important to study the international experience in the system of interaction between the state and mass media in the field of information security. A number of studies identify the features of such systems in particular countries. Mkhitaryan (2020) studies the legal framework for the information society model in Japan. Bagmet and Harkusha (2020) examine the experience of the EU countries in the field of public information policy.

#### 2. Methods and materials

#### Research design

In this study, it is proposed to consider the role of mass media in the information security public management system in three aspects: the study of international experience, the study of the existing legal framework of Ukraine, the analysis of the results of television news monitoring and outlining of the main directions for improving the interaction of the mass media and the state in information security matters. This determines the division of the research process into three stages.

The first stage of the study provided for the description of the international experience of building effective interaction between the mass media and the state in order to ensure information security. The study examines the experience of the USA, the EU, and Japan as the most successful countries in terms of building an effective information society model, and the relationship between the state and the mass media.

At the second stage, the place of mass media in the information security public management system of Ukraine was determined by analysing the legal framework. At this stage, a list of the main laws and other regulatory acts related to mass media, information security, access to information and other related areas was made, and some aspects of individual legislative acts were outlined. The results of news monitoring carried out by the online publication Detector-media for the following leading Ukrainian television channels: Channel 5, 112/Pershyi Nezalezhnyi, 1+1, Inter, Ukraina, UA:Pershyi, STB, ICTV were also analysed at this stage. The study provides statistics on the number of custom-made materials.

The third stage of the study involved the provision of basic recommendations for improving the interaction between the state and mass media in the field of information security in Ukraine. Such recommendations are based on the analysis of the experience of countries with the most effective information society models and information security protection systems, as well as on the objective needs determined as a result of the analysis of the Ukrainian legislative framework and practices. Special attention is paid to the analysis of the Japanese model of the information society, because this model contains separate solutions for the problems existing in Ukraine.

### Information background of the research

The information background of the study is the academic periodicals of Ukraine and other countries, the legislative framework of Ukraine in the field of mass media, information security, access to information, etc., the 2013 Cybersecurity Strategy of the European Union, the Basic Act on the Formation of an Advanced Information and Telecommunication Network Society of Japan, data from the online publication Detector-media and information that is publicly available on the official websites of the Federal Communications Commission and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

#### Research methods used

The research involved well-known scientific methods, as well as statistical analysis to evaluate the results of television news monitoring, and the comparative law to analyse the Ukrainian legislative framework and the experience of other countries.

#### 3. Results

# 3.1. International experience of building effective interaction between mass media and the state for ensuring information security

The experience of foreign countries shows that mass media are as one of the most influential tools for ensuring the information security of the state. This explains special attention paid by the governments to the development of balanced strategies and policies for ensuring national security, taking into account the role of mass media in countering informational threats.

In the USA, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulates the mass media, controls the circulation of information, helps combat cybercrimes, etc. The FCC regulates interstate and international radio, television, wireline, satellite, and cable communications in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and US territories.

The FCC operates as an independent government agency and is supervised by the Congress, it is the main body of the United States for regulation, legislation, and the introduction of innovative technologies in the field of communications. The main tasks of the FCC are: stimulating competition, promoting innovation and investment in broadband services and related equipment; promoting the goals of the national economy by providing an adequate competitive basis for the communications revolution; revision of the media-related legal framework; maintaining a leading position in the field of protection of the national communications infrastructure, etc. (Federal Communications Commission, 2023).

Certain aspects of the interaction between mass media and regulatory bodies are also enshrined in EU legislative documents. The 2013

Cybersecurity Strategy of the European Union states that, in cooperation with Member States, the Commission and the High Representative should, inter alia, promote and protect fundamental rights, including access to information and freedom of expression, focusing on the following issues:

- development of new guidelines for the community on freedom of expression online and offline;
- monitoring the export of goods and services that can be used for censorship or mass use;
- online monitoring;
- promoting the expansion of access to the Internet, maintaining openness and resilience to counter censorship or mass monitoring through the use of communication technologies;
- empowering stakeholders to use communication technologies to promote fundamental rights (European Commission, 2013).

The Japanese model is often mentioned as one of the most effective models of the information society. The Basic Act on the Formation of an Advanced Information and Telecommunications Network Society adopted by the Government of Japan in 2000 (hereinafter referred to as "the Basic Act") stipulates the obligation of mass media to adhere to ethical standards in the field of information security.

Article 22 of this Act (Security of Modern Information and Telecommunication Networks, etc.) states that the strategies developed for establishing a progressive information and telecommunication network community ensure the application of measures to achieve and maintain the security and reliability of the latest information and telecommunication networks, to protect personal information and other actions aimed at ensuring safe use of such networks by citizens (Japanese Law Translation, 2000).

The analysis of international experience identified the key areas of improvement of the interaction between the state and mass media in the field of information security. This document can be adapted for Ukrainian realities and applied to improve information security at the national level.

# 3.2. Determining the place of mass media in the information security public management system of Ukraine

The legal framework of Ukraine includes a number of laws and other acts that are directly or indirectly related to mass media and information security, in particular, the Laws of Ukraine "On National Security", "On Information", "On State Support of Mass Media and Social Protection of Journalists" and the Decree of the President of Ukraine on the Decision of

the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine of 15 October 2021 "On the Information Security Strategy".

The last of these documents reveals the main global and national challenges in the information sphere. The national challenges include imperfect regulation of relations in the information sphere. It is noted in this regard that the regulation of relations in the information sphere does not meet the actual challenges and threats, thereby hindering the development of the media market of Ukraine, as well as preserving the dependence of mass media on their owners and does not ensure compliance with professional standards of journalists (Decree No. 685/2021, 2021).

The analysis of the existing laws and other regulatory legal acts gives grounds to state that much attention is paid in Ukraine to the development of legislation on information security and the mass media. The government has taken a number of significant steps to improve the legal framework in this area, but numerous problematic issues remain.

Therefore, the state and mass media exert a mutual influence: the state promotes the development of mass media by enshrining relevant provisions in legislation, providing financial support, etc. types of support, regulation of issues related to monopolization, privatization, and guarantee the rights of mass media representatives.

Inturn, mass media convey information about the activities of government bodies and critically important events to the public. It is important how the mass media present the necessary information, because the line between the presentation of reliable facts and manipulation or distorted information is sometimes very thin. Determining whether information has signs of manipulation or propaganda may require specialized knowledge. Moreover, the mass media often shape public opinion using both ethical and manipulative means.

The information security issue is especially relevant under martial law, because the country's national security is the most vulnerable during this period, and the outcome of the conflict may depend on the effectiveness of measures to ensure it. Threats to information security intensify even more because of the Russia's information against Ukraine even before the full-scale invasion, as well as the unprecedented information aggression observed even after it.

In these conditions, constant monitoring of mass media for an appropriate and timely response to the manifestations of manipulation or threats to information security becomes important. For example, the monitoring carried out by the online publication Detector-media for February 2022 (the month of the beginning of the full-scale invasion) revealed certain custom-made materials in Ukrainian television news (Figure 1).

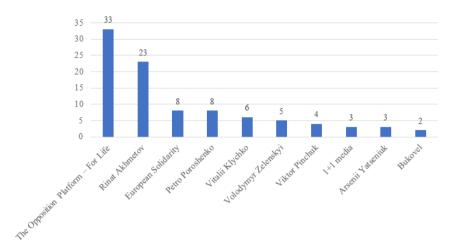


Figure 1. Number of custom-made materials (built by the author based on Detector-media (2022).

Custom-made media materials can mostly be beneficial to the pro-Russian party The Opposition Platform – For Life, so they can carry propaganda and misinformation for the purpose of manipulation by the aggressor.

It can be concluded that the role of mass media in the information security system of the state can be both positive (expanding access to important information, increasing the transparency of the actions of political figures and parties), and harming the interests of the state in cases of non-compliance with ethical and professional standards (presentation of custom-made materials, assistance to pro-Russian organizations).

### 3.3. The main directions of improving the interaction between the state and mass media in Ukraine based on the analysis of foreign experience

It can be noted based on the analysis of foreign experience that the countries with the most effective information society models pay much attention to the interaction between the state and mass media. They focus on the following areas:

- improving media literacy of the population;
- constant monitoring of the information sphere;
- · development of innovations in the field;

 expanding access to information and the ability to freely express views, etc.

The analysis of the experience of Japan identified the following main directions of state policy of creating a progressive information and telecommunication network community, as well information security and transparency, which should be considered and adapted for Ukrainian practice:

- the realization of the creative potential and other abilities of society through free access and use of a wide range of information;
- improving the quality of life and comfort of the population through the use of information and communication technologies;
- elimination of the digital divide between citizens;
- ensuring the appropriate level of digital literacy of the population;
- creation of conditions for free and disciplined competition in the field;
- active cooperation with the world community in order to exchange information, advanced technologies, etc.;
- increasing government transparency through the opening of government data;
- stimulating the participation of citizens and their cooperation with the state, etc. (Japanese Law Translation, 2000; E-Japan Strategy, 2001).

Some of the indicated directions have been successfully implemented in Ukraine (for example, expanding access to information, improving the quality of life, increasing the transparency of government actions, international cooperation, etc.). Given the importance of the outlined directions, the government's work on their improvement should be improved. The analysis of the legislative framework of Ukraine and news monitoring gives grounds to identify the following priority areas:

- providing an appropriate level of digital literacy of the population;
- · creating conditions for free and fair competition in the field;
- developing relations not only between the state and the mass media, but also between the state, the mass media and citizens for achieving information security.

#### 4. Discussion

The results of the study show that the priority directions for making the interaction between the state and the mass media in the context of information security more effective are campaigns aimed at improving citizens' media literacy, stimulating free and fair competition, and involving citizens in cooperation in the field.

Panchenko (2020) emphasizes the importance of mass media, noting that their activity determines the dependence of national security on the information security. The role of the state in ensuring information security in the context of mass media activity should consist, among other things, in countering the subordination of mass media and increasing influence on them by certain government agencies and businesses, regulating the monopolization and concentration of mass media, etc. It can be noted that the researcher focuses on creating conditions for proper competition in the field of mass media, which is consistent with the results obtained in this research.

Gonina *et al.* (2020) also provide a number of recommendations for improving the effectiveness of state-media interaction in Nigeria. In their work, in contrast to this article, improving public awareness is primarily related to informing about the potential threats of new technologies, and not to improving skills in using them and understanding the information received. This may be related to the insufficient information literacy of the population of the region, because threats that are known to citizens of developed countries may be new to residents of developing countries.

Agubor *et al.* (2015) suggest taking measures to counter threats to telecommunication networks, including cybercrime, in the following areas: security of telecommunication networks (through the introduction of necessary technologies), operational security (prevention of information leakage), security by default (prevention of attacks, stability of systems even after failure, system recovery), criminalization of cybercrime, restriction of sensitive areas, implementation of security infrastructure. The results obtained by the researcher indicate the importance of the technological component of information security along with the directions outlined in this article.

Zakharenko (2019) considers increasing the transparency of information, preventing the presentation of distorted information the main tasks of the information policy of the state in the introduction of an effective public broadcasting system following the example of leading states. This approach is aimed at counteracting the subordination of mass media and ensuring pluralism of information, which is identified in the article as one of the priority tasks for Ukraine.

The works of researchers who focused on improving the media literacy of the population are also worth noting. It is impossible to control all information flows in the information age, therefore it is important to form critical thinking in citizens, the ability to evaluate and filter out information, as well as to increase social responsibility in the fight against harmful information (propaganda of violence, inequality, etc.).

The work of Guess *et al.* (2020) on the effects and ways of improving media literacy is worth noting. The researchers established that a lack of media literacy largely determines people's trust in fakes, and conducting a media literacy campaign reduces these negative effects. However, such intervention should be regular, because later the positive effects decrease. Jones-Jang *et al.* (2021) also testify that the intervention to improve the literacy of the population in the media sphere is effective, but only information literacy among the types of literacy (media, information, news and digital) significantly increases the ability to recognize misinformation.

Hameleers (2022) and Clayton *et al.* (2019) found that the combination of media literacy and fact-checking is the most effective tool for disproving false information for citizens. Such recommendations should be taken into account in the development of media literacy campaigns by the state in cooperation with mass media. In the author's opinion, the most effective measures and programmes for improving media literacy can be implemented when studying in educational institutions, because they require their completion for all students and form critical thinking at a young age.

A number of researchers also studied international experience in the field. Studying the information society model in Japan, Mkhitaryan (2020) notes that the following aspects can be adapted and used in Ukrainian practice: development and phased implementation of target strategies with plans for their implementation, comprehensive regulation of IT reform, appropriate and timely response to problems, elimination of the main causes of problems, automation of public services.

Studying the experience of the EU countries, Bagmet and Harkusha (2020) came to the conclusion that information policy strategies and programmes should take into account the guarantee of the constitutional right to receive, distribute and store information, to freely express one's views, as well as gender and age aspects in the course of information environment development. As a supplement to the previous studies, this research examines, among other things, the experience of the United States, and contains relevant recommendations.

The limitations of the study are related to the extensive legal frameworks in the countries under consideration, so covering all important legal aspects is an unattainable goal within a single study. The results of the study can be used by the representatives of the government and mass media to improve their interaction in the field of information security. A direction for further research may be determining the level of media literacy of Ukrainian citizens and its impact on information security using a sample of citizens taking into account gender and age characteristics.

#### Conclusions

The place of mass media in the information security public management system was determined as a result of the research. The analysis of international experience established that the countries with the most effective information society models focus interaction between the mass media and the state on the following areas: improving media literacy of the population, constant monitoring of the information sphere, development of innovations in the field, expansion of access to information, and opportunities to freely express opinions, etc. Creating conditions for honest and free competition deserves special attention.

The legal framework of Ukraine related to the information security, mass media, freedom of speech, etc. was analysed. The analysis showed that the government of Ukraine has being implemented a number of important steps to improve the legislative framework in the studied area and harmonize it with the provisions of the EU regulations. However, there are a number of unfulfilled objectives which require the fastest and most effective solutions in the context of a full-scale invasion.

The results obtained in the course of the study can be applied in the practice of representatives of the government and mass media to improve their interaction in the field of information security. Further research may focus on determining the level of media literacy of the population of Ukraine and its impact on the information security using a sample of citizens, taking into account gender and age characteristics.

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