

**THE CONFLICTING DISCOURSE OF MODERN MEDIA  
MICROFORMATS**

***EL DISCURSO CONFLICTIVO DE LOS MICROFORMATOS  
MEDIÁTICOS MODERNOS***

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**Abstract:** This article conceptualizes the Internet microformats (memes, short stories, gifs, etc.) as reagents of events and, in particular, conflict situations. The authors argue that microforms also perform equally important functions of event interpretation and faking (actually creating an event). As an empirical base, the case with the popular Internet blogger Anatoly Shariy was analyzed. It is known that the blogger was arrested due to inciting international conflicts. Analytics of the time of publication of Internet content (primarily memes) allows us to formulate some theoretical provisions about microformats. Significant characteristics of microformats are a high speed of response to events and processes, as well as a short information life cycle. Summarizing the results of the analysis we can identify three main functions of microformats: microformats as reagents of events; as interpreters of events; as creators of events. The first function is destructive with the speed of microformat occurrence. The second function has a hermeneutic specialization. detection of microformats of external (secondary) meanings that can hide or transform factology. Finally, the third function is creative. Microformats act as carriers of creative intentions that arise from the creation of imaginary events. These characteristics significantly distinguish microformats from monumental cultural forms that have referential foundations, a historical and cultural background. With the semantic diffraction,

conceptualized in the philosophy of structuralism and poststructuralism, memes and other microformats should be not only pedagogical tools to create interest in learning, but also a special, independent object for analysis and study in an educational setting.

**Keywords:** Internet; microformats; memes; reagent; interpretation; faking; education

**Resumen:** Este artículo conceptualiza los microformatos de Internet (memes, cuentos, gifs, etc.) como reactivos de eventos y, en particular, de situaciones de conflicto. Los autores argumentan que las microformas también realizan funciones igualmente importantes de interpretación y falsificación de eventos (realmente creando un evento). Como base empírica se analizó el caso del popular bloguero de Internet Anatoly Shariy. Se sabe que el bloguero fue arrestado por incitar a conflictos internacionales. La analítica del tiempo de publicación de contenidos en Internet (principalmente memes) nos permite formular algunas previsiones teóricas sobre los microformatos. Las características significativas de los microformatos son una alta velocidad de respuesta a eventos y procesos, así como un breve ciclo de vida de la información. Resumiendo los resultados del análisis podemos identificar tres funciones principales de los microformatos: los microformatos como reactivos de eventos; como intérpretes de los acontecimientos; como creadores de eventos. La primera función de destrucción con la velocidad de ocurrencia del microformato. La segunda función tiene una especialización hermenéutica. detección de microformatos de significados externos (secundarios) que pueden ocultar o transformar la factología. Finalmente, la tercera función es creativa. Los microformatos actúan como portadores de intenciones creativas que surgen de la creación de eventos imaginarios. Estas características distinguen significativamente a los microformatos de las formas culturales monumentales que tienen un fundamento referencial, un trasfondo histórico y cultural. Con la difracción semántica, conceptualizada en la filosofía del estructuralismo y postestructuralismo, los memes y otros microformatos deberían ser no solo herramientas pedagógicas para crear interés en el aprendizaje, sino también un objeto especial e independiente para el análisis y el estudio en un entorno educativo.

**Palabras clave:** Internet; microformatos; memes; reactivo; interpretación; falsificación; educación

## Introduction

The ontological and the related epistemological problematics of the one and the multiple is obviously not exclusively connected with the postmodernist mainstream, and had been tackled on a certain level long before the concepts of nomadology, intertextuality and diffraction emerged. In particular, the Italian philosopher P. Virno in «The Grammar of the Multitude» refers to the contrasting positions of Spinoza and Hobbes on socio-political problems and the corresponding demarcation of the concepts of people and multitude (Virno, 2013, p. 10-11). «People» is known to be a concept of national, territorial and ideological structure, providing a synthesizing unity: «Russian», «people of their country», «people and party are one», etc.

P. Virno's concept «multitudo», on the contrary, does not imply such unity and at the same time is not an intermediate form, it is literally and tautologically the existence of multiple as multiple. Demarcations in the cartography of multiplicity are conditioned by a pool of factors: confessional, political, economic, ideological, cultural, etc., within each of which, in turn, there are innumerable and weakly registerable segmentations. Multiplicity at the categorical level fixes potentially infinite differences of any order in all conventionally allocated spheres of social life. Of course, this state of affairs is also characteristic of culture with its inherent multiplicity of interpretations, intertextuality, and permanent growth of the world of ideas and things. Internet technologies and, in fact, the network itself have catalyzed processes of information explosion and diffraction (spontaneous, chaotic dissemination) that do not lend themselves to traditional growth («exponential», «logistical»). In the second half of the last century informational expansion was grasped by individual authors, Heidegger in the 50s («Gelassenheit»), Toffler and McLuhan in the 60s, etc. However, they were focused on

«historical» media channels that lost monopoly. The web had the advantage of chaotic, virtually uncontrolled distribution, the limits of which were by no means constituted (in the twenty-first century this is obvious) by the globe. Recalling Heidegger's assessment («today cognition of everything is available so quickly and so cheaply...» (Heidegger, 1991, pp. 102-111), it is possible to describe the cost of modern network information as dumping, or «super-cheap». It is no coincidence that the massovization and domestication of the Internet has aroused the enthusiasm of many optimistic intellectuals: some believed that the network is the result of radical free-thinking and secession from the world of «weary giants of flesh and steel» (Barlow, 2004, p. 349), others saw in the network the conditions for a technological leap from capitalism to cybernetic communism (Barbrook, 2015). The network is a special topos, accommodating an actual and potential statistically uncovered multitude of data, connections, and relationships. The avant-garde of the information revolution, the marker of our time, is not only the permanent growth of information (not fixed in traditional terms), but also the intensification of the elementary binary connection of «request – response», compressed to a few seconds.

Exceptional emphasis on this temporally insignificant connection can lead to an erroneous assessment of the technology impact on human cognitive functions (easy access to information causes dysfunction) and to a concomitant erroneous assessment of technology itself («degrading», «primitivizing» innovations). Having made the most elementary request, the user receives on the output thousands (often millions) content variations. An undefined part of the resulting information is duplicated, but this does not cancel the fact of encountering multiple. Of course, user reactions are well known (it is not our task to search for psychological determinants of these reactions), which influence the following behavioral strategies: to turn to the first page of a browser and copy

the information from the title site (a problem of pedagogy, psychology, teaching and research) or to analyze the query results, sifting out irrelevant information. The first strategy does not require any significant cognitive effort, the second, on the contrary, requires a pool of skills: the user, speaking hermeneutically, must have «precognition» to perform at least elementary navigation and mapping of electronic resources. Returning to the Heideggerian evaluation, marked by the combination «fast and cheap», we note that it does not imply «easy». The second strategy (in fact, the only one claiming to be a strategy without quotation marks) really confronts the individual with multiplicity. The result of the first behavioral response omit multiple.

### **Theoretical Framework and Methodology**

Theoretical framework and methodology of microformats research are inextricably linked to the discourses of structuralism and poststructuralism, which worked directly with language and various modes of expression (including performative). Internet microformats are characterized by semantic diffraction (R. Barthes) and an orientation to instant effects (affectation, emotionality), miniaturization (perception requires comparatively little effort, grasping at once). Conceptually, the trend was expressed by futurologists (Bestuzhev-Lada, 1990): in particular, M. Penn and K. Zalesne argued that the future is largely determined by «micro-trends» (Penn, Zalesne, 2009). The fact is that once marginalized and sporadically emerging micro-formats over time have formed the mainstream, that is, they have actually turned into a cultural trend. The miniaturization and «spontaneity» of their emergence and the short life of many microformats is inextricably linked to their potential: orientation on instant impression, low barrier to entry,

often functioning in the context of fake industry (M. Foucault, J. Baudrillard), functioning as an interpretative and openly simulative propaganda micro-mechanism. Of course, this characteristic is not attributive and appears in specific microforms interpreting political, international relations, etc.

Content analysis, search query research, and semiotics methodology are adequate as tools for microformats in the context of the Internet environment. Research problems arise already at the stage of assembling and codifying material that is scattered on the web and occurs sporadically on a variety of platforms and sites. Working with the web is difficult without big data analytics, and without specific tools to collect and analyze user search queries. The most common and simplest of the tools are, for example, Google Trends and Yandex WordStat. The latter provides chronologically strictly limited data (from 2019-2020). In turn, Google Trends captures «full» statistics and ignores small values of user queries. Working with visual and textual material requires contextual knowledge, since microformat generally does not represent the context of the event.

## **Results**

Strategies (psychological, cognitive, social, cultural) of thinking and behavior under conditions of permanent and hyperactive information growth have yet to be studied. Using P. Virno's conceptual framework, it is obvious that knowledge of the «grammar» of multiplicity is on the agenda today among educational trends. In research discourse, «grammar» can carry a range of names, such as the popular «Internet skills» (Van Deursen, 2011; Hargittai, 2019; Miliou, 2021). In essence, research tactics are often reduced to the codification of a certain number of skills and is accompanied by a

declaration of the importance and even necessity of putting this spectrum into practice in the education system. To illustrate the point, let us quote O. Miliou and C. Angeli: «... the use of these technologies [Internet technologies – hereinafter the author's note] is limited and may not cover sufficiently the knowledge and skills necessary for effective performance of Internet activities in higher education. In addition, [students'] exposure to digital devices and tools varies qualitatively. Consequently, higher education institutions need to close the skills gap» (Miliou, 2021, 1359).

The latter point, despite its frequent reproduction in research texts, is not self-evident and needs to be argued for. An ontology of multiplicity is inextricably linked to a pluralism of forms and contents, formats and ideas. Again, in the discourse of network libertarians (Barlow) and even «cyber-communists» (Barbrook), cyberspace was positioned as a frontier domain, free from the hierarchies and structures of the «flesh-and-steel» world. In general terms, this meant that the network could encompass the entire possible spectrum of propositions, without any of the elements of the spectrum being forcibly annihilated. Today, at the end of the first quarter of the twenty-first century, we know that cyberspace is not an anarcho-libertarian topos, but is in fact a territory segmented into zones of discursive influence. Like a cybernetic «black box», cyberspace receives an event, indefinitely processes it, and produces an interpretive pool in which it is difficult (or even impossible) to see any regularities. Of course, the position of the person acting as a user is also in question. The uncertainty of the position is fundamentally due to the complexity of the relationship and link between the user and the network space: does the user connect to the processes taking place in the «black box» and, therefore, retain relative autonomy, or is he a «black box» element? There should not be a strict disjunction here, at least if we examine the problematics from different angles. In the old conceptual-anthropological optics,

it is as if man remains multidimensional, eccentric, a special being, not reduced to any single dimension in principle (figuratively speaking, he is always «irrelevant»). In the context of the contemporary cultural situation, the network has become an attractor, absorbing the potencies and impulses of the individual. It is not only a matter of psychological «addiction» to the machine: from an objectivist perspective, the user is (by analogy with the Deleuze-Gwattari concept) a machine of opinions. The latter has been elevated to a cult by almost all democratic constitutions, declarations and legal instances. It is important to understand that opinion, an ambiguous phenomenon, for example, in the optics of Platonism, is positioned as one of the highest values in the semantic register of the individual. As a consequence the Web cannot be called a space of dialogue. This does not mean that dialogue is fundamentally impossible in a network: the very architecture of the network, with its endless junctions, intersections and transformations of texts, turns dialogue into a random, «spontaneous» event. The label «polylogue space» would also be questionable; «polyphony» seems appropriate, in this terminology structuralists and semiologists recorded textual multiplicity.

In the context of conflict situations with cross-acting agents (political structures, social institutions, social movements, individuals) the trend of plurality of opinions has a twofold meaning. On the one hand, a wide range of ideas emerges, preventing the transition from totalization of any particular opinion (expansion of the sphere of influence) to totalitarianism (monopoly of ideas and maintenance by punitive structures); on the other, «noise», i.e. the simultaneous functioning of various agents, significantly impedes any attempts to constructive dialogue. One cannot help thinking that silence (even forced silence) remains the only and, at the same time, a dubious way out. We assume that many members of the younger generation pass over conversations about large-scale conflicts not



because they are not «interested» in the topic or because they do not accept political ideas or any state ideologies on a «genetic» level, but because the conditions of permanent socialization today are significantly different from those of the past. Despite the persuasiveness of the conceptual framework of organoprojection (as well as intellectual projection (Gubanova, 2018, p. 254), we should remember the historical uniqueness of net status: it is possible to talk about it in terms of topology. This means that the net accommodates. According to common sense, any topology is inherently bounded and, therefore, the architecture of the net also has limits. The question of limits has been known to arise acutely throughout virtually all of human history and, of course, has rarely been quickly resolved. It is risky to assume that the net has no boundaries at all (cyberlibertarians), but just as unreasonable would be the view that the topos is quite limited. In the latter case, net boundaries are reduced to phenomena outside the net (e.g. silicon, electricity, etc.) that is, to the material substratum. The polar and extreme points of view on the boundaries of the net, of course, concern not only and not so much its “physical” limits, as the behavioral and thinking practices of man.

The ultimate libertarian position in anthropological optics is characterized by the following attitudes (we will formulate them in a primary form that requires further elaboration).

1. Unlike disciplinary units that are strictly limited, integrated into other structures, and have certain legalized limits, the Internet is limitless and, therefore, can accommodate anything. By «everything» is meant not only content-volume, but also semantics. The libertarian point of view crystallized at the turn of the web development in the 90's. The flip side of free expression of any, even the most provocative ideas, is anonymity. It could be said that it was positioned as a kind of protective mechanism that ensured impunity. According to E. O. Trufanova, «anonymity implies complete

protection of the private, since the real person and his private life remain beyond the reach of the Other's gaze. Anonymity, the use of fictitious role images, personas, were characteristic of the early period of Internet development, but since the Internet has been mediating a large number of socially significant activities – trade, bureaucratic procedures, negotiations – the degree of users' anonymization is decreasing, masks are increasingly being replaced by real people» (Trufanova, 2021, p. 20).

The final part of the quoted proposition, in our opinion, is far from being unambiguous: where and how is it possible to find the criteria that allow claiming that some «real people» are replacing the simulacra of the 1990s? The author seems to be right when she speaks about the illusion of anonymity directly influencing the behavioral practices of the network. This illusion is a kind of legacy of the libertarian ideology of the last century. The Internet in libertarian optics is a unique (paradoxical) topos without borders. The only thing with which it can be compared is the universe. Dozens of «theories» of the structure, origin and evolution of the Universe create a poly-discursive noise and turn it into a topos-enigma. With the advent of the World Wide Web, the Internet has «squeezed» the Universe into its direct competitor.

2. Another libertarian proposition is that «everything can be found on the Internet». The guide to the total repository of information, or rather to the world of universal trans-epochal collective knowledge, is, of course, the search query. It is hardly possible to say exactly when the infocommunication network created by military structures became enriched with social mythology and «transformed» into an information universe – most likely, this process of «transformation» took years, although it was largely accelerated by libertarian ideas about the boundlessness of the network.

3. The searching-and-consumeristic orientation, according to

which searchers must «find everything», is supplemented by a primitivized dialectical opposite – the productive orientation. Infoproducts are massively «thrown» into the Internet, generating disputes about quality and consumer properties. The illusion of an absolutely free commodity turnover, not mediated by monetary equivalent, conditions the practice of copying and «uncontrolled» duplication of information. In its turn, the freedom of the market as freedom of production has as its flip side the mass dumping of information that has no social value (flooding) and is harmful in the light of jurisprudence and legislation (advertising of legally forbidden goods and services, propaganda of nationalistic, racial and other similar ideas). The examples outlined are obvious. However, there are immeasurable amounts of microformat content – in particular user generated content – that have an ambiguous impact on the overall state of the Internet environment. A specific feature of such content is its viral or quasi-viral nature, sporadic emergence and uncontrolled spread. Using Plato's conceptual apparatus, we can say that any spectrum of commentary de facto turns into a conflict of multiple opinions and positions, many of which openly claim to be true. At special moments in the development of society and the state, polydiscursive «noise», of course, plays a contradictory role and is almost always both a cause and a consequence of conflicts. Commentaries are specific content, subject to analytics. A fertile environment for the emergence and spread of this content is social networks, which technically support this type of user activity (or destructiveness). Obviously, moderation filters do not always effectively cope with massive commentary activity. As a rule, clusters of comments lack structure because they do not fit the format of a dialogue or conversation. They are capable of creating pseudo-tree-like structures that rapidly disintegrate and are replaced by a new fragile architecture. The example of one of the microformats – user comments – shows that traditional research methods (above all,

observation) can produce unjustifiably limited and even distorted results in the output. The methodological problem stimulated the search for alternative solutions and the entry into the research vanguard of special methods and techniques.

With the development and domestication of artificial intelligence systems, microformats have advanced to a new stage. “Domestication” literally means the social absorption of the technology. The technology becomes easily accessible to any user with basic personal computer or mobile phone skills. Artificial intelligence has made it possible to algorithmize certain processes not previously available to algorithmization. This applies in particular to contentmaking and, among others, memes.

Some researchers correctly and reasonably argue that artificial intelligence, at least at the current stage, is incapable of “understanding” memes. The growing capabilities of artificial intelligence have catalyzed the view that machines will exceed humans and acquire an intelligence equal to or greater than that of humans. This circumstance is often viewed in alarmist optics as exceptionally negative. According to Ishaani Priyadarshini & Chase Cotton, artificial intelligence has become a “pariah,” a subject that generates a storm of negative emotions and gloomy predictions. The Technological Singularity, that is, the hypothetical development of computing power to the level of autonomy and self-governance of intelligent systems, is considered a serious problem in both academia and business. In reality, according to the assessment of research teams, artificial intelligence is not omnipotent and cannot definitively outperform humans. The scientists focused their research strategy on identifying the limitations of machines and analyzing their “incompetence,” which can draw a line between humans and so-called machine “intelligence”. The authors did this on the basis of Internet meme cases. Internet memes are a mixture of images, videos, underlying messages, ideas, feelings, humor and

experiences. An Internet meme is perceived by humans in a way that is not exactly how a machine “understands” it. Results have shown that “understanding” memes is indeed a difficult task and thus a serious limitation for the functioning of artificial intelligence and the creation of simulation algorithms (Cotton & Priyadarshini, 2021, p. 781).

The Internet meme industry is expanding rapidly, driven by the intensive exploitation of social networks and special platforms. Memes generate humor that travels the web and connects people through popular images and humor. Humor, according to the authors, is the main obstacle to imitation by machine algorithms. Hundreds of thousands of memes are generated every day, some refined from previous patterns. Many patterns are actually being created for the first time. Meme humor expresses not only mainstream trends, but also specific, local topics. These topics are difficult to reproduce with an algorithm. Meme generation data is constantly updated, and such data is difficult to manage. Combinatorial creativity has made it possible to present the same meme template in millions of different variations. Behind the millions of variations are millions of meanings and implications. This is a difficult task for AI to understand because AI learns from patterns and specificity (hence repeatability) of data. These patterns and features are very different when it comes to Internet memes. In the future, the number of memes and patterns for them will only grow, and understanding Internet memes will become a much more difficult problem for AI, as it must learn what is already there and make decisions for those it has never seen. Consequently, total understanding of Internet memes may always remain an intractable problem for AI (Cotton & Priyadarshini, 2021, p. 796). It should be noted that a total understanding of memes and the fixation of their circulation is also not available to the user, even those with research skills. However, if we consider humanity rather than an individual

as the subject of meme production, it demonstrates much greater semantic flexibility than algorithms of artificial intelligence systems.

The average user, who has no special qualifications, can now make content of a practically “industrial” volume. Internet resources that generate memes have emerged. These resources work on relatively simple AI algorithms. The general principle of the resources is as follows: the user selects any available meme template and activates the “generate meme” option. The meme template is constituted by the original image and/or phrase. For example, the famous character of the Lord of the Rings, the warlord of the southern state of Middle-earth Boromir, became a meme hero relatively long ago thanks to the phrase “One does not simply walk into Mordor”. The resource offers a template and the first part of the famous phrase. After activating “create meme” a picture appears with the addition of the second part. The user can download the meme and upload it to any other available resources. An analysis of the capabilities of the AI-powered meme generator suggests that its combinatorial resource is actually not exhaustible. The user is offered 48 templates, each of which can be filled with tens of thousands of variations. Our work with the pattern “One does not simply...” was suspended at the 500th variation. We recorded the absence of lexical repetitions. However, the first words of the second part of the meme were of course repeated. Frequent markers were as follows: “create”, “meme”, “meme war”. The semantics of a number of propositions is unreadable and cannot be qualified as humor. Here are some examples of the results of the generation of memes belonging to the group of unqualified semantic correlation (probably, we can talk about the absence of correlation as well): "One does not simply / Pass on a Second to be a free wall"; "One does not simply / Create a car without a party"; "One does not simply / Stop talking about the Master"; "One does not simply / Stop the Senate of the free state", etc. The general meaning of these

propositions is not clear and probably has nothing to do with humor. However, in the list of generated variations there are propositions that contain explicit humorous correlates: “One does not simply / Stop smoking in Math Class”; “One does not simply / Remove the cat period”.

The intensity of the memes circulation, as well as the possibility of rapid generation of memes using platforms with artificial intelligence, has ambiguous social consequences. On the one hand, meme culture is rapidly evolving, and there is a build-up of information content. The dynamics of meme content has increased. In particular, the growth of dynamics is due to the automation and algorithmization of contentmaking. Artificial intelligence working with databases is trying to generate humor and irony. Researchers analyze various aspects of such generation. In particular, in Beth Singler’s article “The AI Creation Meme: A Case Study of the New Visibility of Religion in Artificial Intelligence Discourse” the author argues that the creation of memes by AI (actually by artificial intelligence) will generate many notable cultural artifacts, arising in a variety of places, to be analyzed and discussed for religiosity, apocalyptic and posthumanist narratives (Singler, 2020).

Just as a specialist philologist is able to distinguish between a poem written by a human being and a generated rhyming product, so AI-generated memes are significantly different from those made by humans. It does not follow from this statement that AI is completely safe and that its “products” are easy to recognize. We agree with Cotton & Priyadarshini's position on the learnability of AI. It is unable to “understand” memes, because the meme industry shows a tremendous increase in information, a permanent change of meaning and variations in representation. However, there are propositions in memes, including those created by AI or literally generated by an “intelligent” system, that are directly borrowed from the cultural mainstream. These include racist, chauvinistic, nationalistic and

anti-religious ideas that insult the honor and dignity of a person belonging to a particular nation, ethnicity or denomination. Researchers pay attention to this problem. In particular, employees of Innopolis University in Russia drew attention to the undefined and dynamic group of so-called “hateful memes” in the article “Hateful Memes Classification using Machine Learning”. In the article, the authors focus on the virulent nature of memes. Users often limit themselves to memes instead of reading any article about an event that contains extended interpretation and extended data. They express fears, supported by physiologists and psychologists, of reduced attention to content. Not surprisingly, Internet content is “miniaturizing,” with popular bloggers often creating 5-15 minute videos or small podcasts and targeting large numbers of views and positive reactions. It would take millions of content analysts to track and qualify malicious memes containing blatant propaganda, calls for violence, nationalism, and other similar ideas (Badour & Brown, 2021). Even this hypothetical circumstance is unlikely to save the situation. The hybrid structure (picture and text) makes it difficult to analyze memes and crystallize malicious content. Already from these theses it is clear that machine learning could replace millions of content analysts, but its application is also difficult. Qualifying a picture requires an advanced image recognition and labeling mechanism, qualifying text requires text recognition, respectively. Added to this is the problem of comparing the two layers of the meme, because separately the picture and the text can be qualified as “permissible”, but in synthesis contain information that is degrading. In terms of elementary linguistics, the analysis of individual semes, lexis and icons does not equal the analysis of the totality of these signs. Nevertheless, researchers have created and described several models for segmenting images and text to identify hate labels.

Probably, the activity of science centers is not the only way to combat miniaturized viral Internet content. But it is unequivocally



the most effective way today because it directly engages artificial intelligence, Big Data and Machine Learning. Private agents create apps to suit the market and the needs of the public. In particular, the market for meme-based content retrieval applications is expanding, as the latter is rapidly becoming obsolete. It seems possible to use these applications in addition to serious technological solutions from institutions and professional communities. We believe that entertainment content as well as special research content (software, mathematical models, AI models, etc.) can be used for socially acceptable purposes - regulating the behavior of social agents, tracking malicious messages and images, revealing the attitudes of social groups. Such research is already being conducted on cases of online games and game chats. However, this work has yet to be put into practice.

## **Conclusion**

Summarizing the results of the analysis we can identify three main qualities of microformats. 1. Microformats as reagents of events; 2. Microformats as interpreters of events; 3. Microformats as creators of events. The first quality is directly related to the speed and intensity of microformats emergence. It fixes a relatively high speed of their appearance and circulation. It should be stipulated that the life cycle of a microform can be very short, although this, of course, is not the general rule. When we refer to a comparative degree, it means that microforms circulate intensively in the space of media unlike «monumental» cultural practices (films, educational lectures, etc.). The latter accumulate social and cultural experience, refer to an array of sources, are subjected to tests of validity, are mediated by a set of complex technical operations and procedures, etc. Microformat is often technically simple and can be implemented at

home. The comparative ease of implementation of microformats is responsible for the hard-to-measure, unprecedented frequency of their appearance. There is a feeling that virtually any event (whether with or without the participation of media persons) is instantly represented. On May 5, 2022 (12:28), news about the arrest of Ukrainian politician and blogger Anatoliy Shariy in Spain on charges of treason and incitement of hatred was published. On May 5 on lux.fm there was an article «Memes about the Anatoliy Shariy's arrest that warm the soul» (16:17). At 17:21 there was a rewrite about the arrest of the blogger and the fact that Ukrainians mocked the event with memes.

Acting as interpreters of the event, microformats record the assessment of the event and contain connotative superstructures focused on the refraction of the consumer's view of Internet content. The meme industry has accompanied the blogger's arrest event with numerous connotations. In particular, a meme appeared with a scene from the movie «Ivan Vasilievich Changes His Profession», depicting a phone call from A. Shpak: «Hello, is that the SSU? (Security Service of Ukraine). My neighbor is giving likes to Shariy». The same message is conveyed by memes with a shocked Dwayne Johnson turning to a car passenger («Did you really like Shariy?») and a puzzled Chuck Norris («How can you like Shariy without the IP noticing?»).

Microformats also act as fakemakers, «completing» what happened «after the fact» or literally inventing the event. In particular, the arrest of the blogger was accompanied by a cluster of memes directly pointing to pedophilia and imprisonment. This special cluster of memes is characterized by an abundance of obscenities, scenes of violence, etc., so we cannot refer to specific examples. Fakemaking is one of the most powerful and controversial functions of microformats that determine the general orientation of the Internet mainstream. In essence, it is the flip side of the rapid response to an

event and the intensification of interpretive mechanisms. The skills of decoding the products of the fake industry are on the agenda today. It should not so much be a special knowledge, preceded by a special initiation, but an educational trend, pragmatically oriented to each individual.

The intensity of spread, the high rate of occurrence, and the shortness of the text make microformats a convenient and effective tool for demythologizing and critical thinking. For example, a recent study of Internet memes contained the following argumentative conclusion: memes act as tools for decoding manipulative media techniques. Memes reveal the selectivity of the media in presenting information (part of the information is deliberately hidden), word games (playing with polysemy, abstractness, etc.), the skillful use of the audience's emotions, etc. (Troshchenkova, 2022). But it is also clear that memes can be a tool of visual and verbal manipulation. As an example, let us refer to the study of political content. In particular, an analysis of the British National Party on the Facebook page showed that the production of fabricated images (including photos and memes) is a practice that is also typical for power structures (Klein, 2020, p. 154).

The general strategy of responding to microformats under conditions of meaning diffraction can work effectively within the framework of education. In pedagogy, for example, there is already considerable experience in the use of Internet memes for learning. In the recent past, there has even been research on memes for young children. Researchers argue that meme-culture helps children who leave home and move into institutions to adapt to the changed conditions of life (Westbrook, 2021). Memes are used as stimulating and motivational tools for learning. However, it makes sense to use memes as the main subject for the deciphering of cultural, political, ideological and other codes. The practice of demythologization is well known to linguists, sociologists, and social philosophers. At the moment,

unfortunately, civilized societies have not yet developed the practice of integrating memes (and other microforms) into education as basic objects for analysis.<sup>7</sup>

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