

# DIGITAL COMMUNICATION BETWEEN BRINGING PEOPLE CLOSER AND FARTHER AWAY

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*"In the beginning there was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."*

(John 1:1-5)

## Abstract

Digital communication has radically transformed the way people interact, influencing every aspect of social, professional and personal life. Through digital technologies, messages are transmitted quickly and efficiently, overcoming geographical and temporal barriers. Social media platforms, messaging apps, and email are just a few examples of tools that facilitate this form of communication. People can connect with other people from all over the globe in real-time, facilitating international collaboration and cultural exchange. In the professional environment, this type of communication allows remote work to be carried out, contributing to the flexibility and productivity of employees. A lack of nonverbal cues, such as tone of voice and body language, can lead to misinterpretations and conflicts. Over-reliance on technology can impair interpersonal communication skills and create social distancing.

**Keywords:** *digital communication, social media, technology.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

If the above quote is true, and I have no doubt that it is, then we can start from the premise that, in communication, the important thing is not the means of communication but the content of the message.

If the above quote is true, then man, as a reflected image of God on earth, is accompanied by the word wherever he may be, and the distance between him and his fellow individuals should not matter.

If the above quote is true, then it is the word that unites us, it is the one that helps us to be discovered and supports us in creating connections with those around us.

Therefore, in terms of communication, it doesn't matter where we are from, it doesn't

matter what we are, but what matters is what we say and especially to whom and why we say it.

The Word was first spoken by all to be understood, then it was written by some to be read by others, then it was spoken by some to be heard by many, and now it is written and spoken by all to be read or heard by those who are in virtual connections.

## 2. THE WORD THAT UNITES

The title of the chapter is a paraphrase of a television show "The Word that Builds" and I think it is relevant in the context in which our desire is to prove the beneficial role of communication on virtual platforms, and in this sense, we will try to argue this degree of relevance.

The first argument is related to the need for truthful, verified and useful information.

In this regard, we can see that most scientists, cultural and administrative people use a social communication network to bring to the attention of those interested, information, articles, actions or opinions regarding certain phenomena, events, research or criticism of fake news or information.

This open, real-time dialogue, whether on social media pages, professional pages, blogs, vlogs or podcasts, offers a real opportunity for learning, knowledge or personal development.

Within this dialogue, which often takes place in an international language, there is also a great challenge, that of perfecting communication in that language, of seeking to understand the culture of the one who posts or dialogues, and

thus increasing the degree of inter-cultural interest, reducing ethno-phobias or racial hatred.

Therefore, digital media are a form through which not only the economy is globalized, but also culture and civilization.

A second argument is that of the possibility of sharing information and images about culture, traditions, culinary offers or visiting regions or localities.

In this sense, anyone interested in travelling or unique experiences has the opportunity to connect with people who live in preserved areas or, on the contrary, in metropolitan areas, and with whom they can share images, films, texts, both for documentation and orientation purposes.

There has never been this easy possibility to see "live" a certain custom in a community or to share the joy of that event with people who for various reasons could not or will never get to that place.

Human emotion is not only triggered by physical presence on the spot, but also by virtual presence in a place or with certain people, given the ability of technology to facilitate dialogue in real time.

A third argument is related to family communication, given that statistics show that the number of mobile phones is equal to that of the Earth's population, although more than a billion people do not have access to electricity (Cașotă, 2019).

Although we tend to believe that only we Romanians have a large number of emigrants, it is also significant for countries with a high level of development, not to mention emigrants from African countries or those at war, and mobile telephony and access to social media platforms offer them the possibility to be in permanent contact with their relatives, not only to provide them with news about what they are doing but also images of their family, which is in a continuous process of transformation.

The possibility offered to grandparents to get to know their grandchildren from movies before they are visited, the possibility of participating, even virtually, in the events of their lives, is a "surrogate" that, even if it does not have the same effect as reality, feeds the longing of each other.

A fourth argument is the one given by the belonging to various professional, confessional, cultural or other communities.

Psychologists talk about the individual's need to belong to circles of people, be it family, friends, co-workers, club or other people, so that people feel valued and feel that they can contribute something to that group.

Digital communication offers this remote meeting platform for different communities, offers the possibility of organizing online meetings, offers space for continuous dialogue and, above all, connects people from different continents, thus increasing both the value of the group and the diversity degree of concerns.

Without considering the arguments for bringing people together through digital communication exhausted, because there are still some data on collaboration and sharing, through networks, of scientific discoveries, cooperation in research fields, communication platforms between the administration and citizens, etc., we will move on to arguments that also prove the less positive side of digital communication, namely the removal of people.

### **3. THE PLATFORM THAT DIVIDES US**

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Any means that man has discovered, and has improved his life, has also brought with it disadvantages or dangers to his status or safety and, consequently, it is appropriate to recognize that digital communication also produces negative effects on man.

The first less pleasant effect is that of reducing the frequency of face-to-face interactions and, therefore, reducing the communicator's ability to use non-verbal and para-verbal language more effectively.

This reduction of physical presence leads the individual to be more attentive to what he says or writes and less to the way in which he transfers, through voice or gestures, the emotion that should accompany the speech.

Also, the fact that people communicate in front of screens, computer or phone, leads to a tendency to neglect the way they prepare, clothing, attire, conduct, considering that the place from which they transmit, home, personal

office or outdoor space, gives them the right to forget about the customs of communication.

It is also interesting that, through the excessive use of digital communication, some people give up the rules of decency and, hidden behind the screen, allow themselves to launch criticism or unseemly words at their interlocutors or end up manipulating those who are in their social network.

Another drawback is the development of an increased degree of convenience and the tendency to choose online interactions over physical ones.

Here there could also be explanations given by the effort of traveling, especially in urban agglomerations, time pressure, weather, transport infrastructure, but these are much less taken into account in relation to a sedentary lifestyle and the comfort of home.

People find it easier to set up a meeting on platforms, send an email, a movie, a picture, than to plan their time, set a meeting place or change their work agenda.

This way of communication is explained by some people as flexible, that is, handy at all times, but in fact it is an excuse to avoid dialogue with people.

The big problem we will have to find solutions to is that of people's tendency to introvert, their lack of aptitude for socialization and their distancing from emotions.

The third disadvantage of digital communication is its fragmentation and superficiality, given the fact that people tend to be more concise, abbreviations are used and words are replaced by emoticons.

Here there is also the risk of "perversion of the language," not only of the Romanian language, given the fact that expressions are used, whether from slang or jargon, and which, once entered into the digital language, tend to enter face-to-face communication as well.

This tendency impoverishes the language of communication, deteriorates the beauty of expression and leads to an intellectual "laziness" that is reflected in the desire to read little, to read only concise texts and to give up the act of deep thinking.

Increasing emotional distance is another human vulnerability in digital communication, and only for the simple reason that the use of

emoticons drastically reduces the multitude of emotions that the individual experiences.

Through digital communication, the individual has the opportunity to "mimic" emotional involvement, to use words and signs that "display" him as having emotions, but they feel detached and enjoy that he is socially perceived as an empathetic person.

In the same way, the cynicism of some people can manifest itself. These people, behind the screen and the keys, brave on certain topics but, when they are asked to speak, to expose their person and personality, they take a step back.

The increase of the emotional distance produces long-term effects and some of those who spend a lot of time on social networks, due to frustrations and especially because of criticism from unknown people, end up seeking psychotherapeutic help.

Distraction, multitasking, and lack of focus are three elements that integrate one of the biggest vulnerabilities of modern communication.

Distraction is a widespread phenomenon, determined by the "boredom" of work and the desire for "recreation" breaks that some people take during work or determined by warning sounds.

Multitasking is a phenomenon with a high degree of risk in the deterioration of people's relationships, given the tendency to dialogue with one person face to face, while having dialogue or correspondence with another online. This type of behaviour bothers the one in front because there is no longer permanent eye contact, there is no active listening and especially any correct feedback of the dialogue is not provided.

This type of behaviour is visible even in television studios where, instead of looking at the guest and making sure that questions can be built from the dialogue, they focus more on receiving and sending messages, either to the producers or to other people who probably offer information or suggestions.

The most dangerous effect, in my opinion, is that of reducing the concentration of attention, in the sense that people can no longer be attentive, cannot listen, cannot listen for more than 3-5 minutes, regardless of the subject, which has led some platforms to "condition"

both the size of the texts and the duration of the films, so as to please the readers or the audience.

The risk of this vulnerability developing is high and makes it increasingly difficult for people to “keep in their own place,” to be determined to actively listen, to assimilate theoretical concepts, to reason and operationalize such concepts.

#### **4. INSTEAD OF CONCLUSIONS**

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“All things are allowed to me, but not all things are useful to me. Everything is permissible for me, but I will not let myself be overcome by something/nothing should take possession of me,” says the Bible, and paraphrasing we could say that any technology that helps us in our

personal development and in our relationship with others, is worth considering if it useful and necessary.

What we should do is to use with purpose and especially with moderation, both the ease of connection and especially the form of the message.

As long as digital communication has entered our lives, as long as artificial intelligence supports our professional activity, there is nothing left for us to do but make them work for us and not allow ourselves to become their slaves.

#### **References**

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