

TWITTER-ДИПЛОМАТІЯ: УКРАЇНСЬКИЙ КОНТЕКСТ^{*2}

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Проаналізовано залученість українських політиків та дипломатів до соціальної мережі Twitter та зіставлено особливості використання цієї соціальної мережі в межах їхньої професійної діяльності. Враховуючи те, що в Україні використання соціальних мереж як інструменту електронної дипломатії перебуває лише на стадії розвитку, стверджується про доцільність комплексного вивчення закордонного досвіду, який може бути корисним для українських дипломатів, допоможе їм успішно застосувати Twitter у дипломатичній діяльності. Дослідження українського контексту використання соціальної мережі Twitter як нової соціальної медіа-платформи актуалізується з погляду надання можливостей зменшити дистанцію у взаємовідносинах громадян та політиків, їхнього спілкування один з одним. На основі аналізу особистих сторінок вітчизняних політиків, виокремлено ТОП-10 українських політичних лідерів у мережі Twitter. Виокремлено ключові переваги для політичної та дипломатичної еліти України, які може надати присутність у Twitter: популяризація власного іміджу, налагодження контактів з іншими колегами-політиками та дипломатами, поширення власних думок та поглядів, можливість швидко реагувати на міжнародні події, зв'язок із громадянами, можливість відслідковувати настрої громадськості, реакцію на різноманітні події тощо. Наголошується на тому, що громадяни через мережу можуть звертатись до владної еліти «на пряму», впливати на прийняття важливих політичних рішень. Доведено, що відсутність досвіду в сфері Twitter-дипломатії, зумовлює труднощі, з якими зіштовхуються українські дипломати та політичні діячі. До них зараховано: поширену практику копіювання тексту повідомлень з однієї соціальної мережі в іншу; низьку активність політичної верхівки; відсутність зарубіжної аудиторії серед фолловерів. Наголошено на необхідності розроблення стратегії комунікації з громадськістю та колегами з інших держав, із врахуванням особливостей закордонного успішного дипломатичного дискурсу в межах Twitter-мережі.

Ключові слова: *Twiplomacy, Twitter, дипломатія України, зовнішня політика України, соціальна мережа, цифрова дипломатія.*

TWITTER-DIPLOMACY: UKRAINIAN CONTEXT

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It is analyzed the involvement of Ukrainian politicians and diplomats to Twitter social network and it is compared the advantages and disadvantages of using this social network within the framework of their professional activity. As the usage of social networks in electronic diplomacy in Ukraine is being developed, it is asserted the necessity of complex investigation of foreign experience which can be useful for Ukrainian diplomats and will help them to use Twitter successfully, as a tool for diplomatic activity. Therefore, analysis of Ukrainian context of using Twitter social network as a new social media platform is considered as relevant, and makes it possible to reduce the distance in the interactions of citizens and politicians, their communication with each other. Conveying the analysis of personal pages of politicians, in the article has been identified TOP-10 most popular Ukrainian political leaders on the Twitter network. It is investigated the benefits for political elite's presence on Twitter: the promotion of their own image, establishing contacts with other colleague politicians and diplomats, sharing their opinions and views, ability of quick reaction to international events, communication with citizens, ability to follow public's mood, react to various events. It is emphasized on citizens' opportunity to communicate with ruling elite, to influence the adoption of important political decisions. It is proven that the lack of experience in the field of Twitter diplomacy causes difficulties encountered by Ukrainian diplomats and politicians, including: common practice of copywriting messages from one social network to another, low activity of political elite, and absence of foreign audience among followers. It is also emphasized on the necessity of elaboration communication strategies of Ukrainian diplomats and politicians with the public and colleagues from other countries, taking into account the peculiarities of foreign successful diplomatic discourse within the framework of Twitter network.

Key words: *Twiplomacy, Twitter, Ukrainian diplomacy, foreign policy of Ukraine, social network, digital diplomacy.*

Interconnection between the latest information and communication technologies (ICT), foreign policy and diplomacy has become an attractive topic for modern political practitioners and academics. Wide spread of public diplomacy (apart from traditional), with the involvement of electronic media, has driven attention to the role of social networks as new diplomatic mechanisms of influence on global public opinion.

Social networks recently have become an important instrument of diplomacy, which is used to disseminate information and communication between the ruling elite and public. Global leaders and governments around the world have begun to use social networks as a strategic resource, as the multimillion audience watches news feeds, primarily on social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Telegram, etc. Social media provides a platform for unlimited communication and has already become a powerful communication tool. Thanks to the usage of social networks by diplomats not only for personal communication, but also through the professional activities, citizens, as well as politicians in other countries, have got the opportunity to learn about international political events and instantly communicate with other citizens, commenting on these events. Recent occasion, such as the victory of Donald Trump in the US presidential election, Iran-American diplomatic relations, Twitter-based US campaign in Venezuela, prove that Twitter has become an innovative instrument of public diplomacy and changed the way diplomatic processes are perceived.

As the usage of social networks in electronic diplomacy in Ukraine is being developed, foreign experience will be useful for Ukrainian diplomats and will help them to use Twitter successfully, as a tool for diplomatic activity. Therefore, analyzing Ukrainian context of using Twitter social network as a new social media platform is relevant, and makes it possible to reduce the distance in the interactions of citizens and politicians, their communication with each other.

The purpose of the article is to investigate the involvement of Ukrainian politicians and diplomats to the Twitter social network and analyze the peculiarities of using this social network within their professional activities.

Among the sources of this study are works that analyze the possibilities of social media to inform, mobilize and organize people. Extra interest was driven to the article by N.Bryant [Bryant 2012], which states that, despite Twitter-messages' size (140 characters), many politicians use this social network to increase their impact on the Internet and consider it as an alternative to email. In academic studies, a new term "twiplomatics" (twiplomacy) is also being analyzed within the framework of understanding e-diplomacy [Бережная 2014]. In June 2012, French Press Agency launched the E-Diplomacy Hub website, which accumulates Twitter-activity of heads of state and representatives of foreign policy departments in real-time [The e-diplomacy hub. 2012]. A significant amount of data has been gathered at the research of American public relations research group Burson-Marsteller, which was dedicated to the

development of Twitter and the engagement of politicians from different countries to this on-line communication channel [Twiplomacy Study 2017].

Taking into account that Twitter is a dynamic platform and its information content is constantly updated, official pages of political leaders, state structures and diplomatic institutions of Ukraine on the Twitter network has become the basis for this research [Arsen Avakov @AvakovArsen; Vitaliy Klychko @Vitaliy_Klychko; Mustafa Nayem @mefimus; Oleh Liashko @OVLiashko; Oleksandr Turchynov @Turchynov; Pavlo Klimkin @PavloKlimkin; Petro Poroshenko @poroshenko]. Messages from Ukrainian politicians are informational resource, as those messages reflect personal views of diplomats and political leaders, and often official state positions on a particular event in the international arena. Their messages also trigger the reaction of Twitter – users' comments and retweets.

The analysis of source base and peculiarities of using Twitter social network by Ukrainian segment of users will actualize studying of Twitter diplomatic discourse as a communication component of international relations, and Ukrainian policy, whose diplomatic and political elite with the proper usage of this network will achieve convergence with the public within the state and convergence of positions with political elites of different states on various international issues.

“Twiplomacy”, or using Twitter social network for diplomatic and political purposes, has become an important component of electronic diplomacy. Using social networks is beneficial for both political elites and public: citizens can influence ruling elite, expressing their views on the network, and the authorities, on the contrary, can monitor public sentiment and popularize their own political program. That is, today we can observe the process of changing the form of political communications, emergence of new communication channels, foundations for which were laid by the Government of Sweden in 2011, by creation of national on-line project, which was aimed to popularize the image of country beyond its borders [Yepsen 2012].

Analyzing the world-wide practice of involving citizens to political participation through social networks, Ukrainian political elite also began gradually use this platform for interaction with wide audience. As a medium of political communication, social networks, in particular Facebook and Twitter, began to be used by representatives of Ukrainian political elite from 2009-2010 – time when the first electronic political accounts of some politicians (M. Brodsky, L. Orobets, S. Tigipko, A. Gritsenko) and journalists (M. Nayem, V. Pornikov) were created.

In 2011-2012 trend of attracting Internet-users to social networks began to increase, by expanding

possibilities of access to social networks from mobile devices. Comparing ratings of using world social networks abroad and in Ukraine, it should be noted that statistics of our state differs from leading countries of the West, and is more prone to the post-Soviet countries. Due to the geopolitical location and centuries-old influence of Russian Empire, in Ukraine, as of 2014, the most popular social network was Vkontakte, while the world was dominated by Facebook. But here it is worth paying attention to such a detail: in social network Vkontakte was not developed diplomatic discourse [Minchenko 2014].

Social network Facebook, founded in USA in 2004, began to gain popularity in Ukraine since 2009, however, its Ukrainian version appeared only in 2011, immediately after the appearance of Russian social network Odnoklassniki. Twitter took fourth place in ranking of social networks, covering the smallest in Ukraine audience of 11.22% (2 million).

The situation began to change gradually in 2014-2015, during the Revolution of Dignity, when social networks began to perform another, equally important function – mobilizing activists and coordinating actions of citizens, public leaders and politicians during mass protests. During this period, the content of discussions in social networks became qualitatively different: it was sent and commented not only on the statements of politicians and news about events in Ukraine and the world (as a rule, texts and photos), but above all amateur video-footage on political topics that were instantly circulated among users and were one of the motivating factors of active political actions of citizens. Experts of communications have stated the dependence of Internet traffic on Facebook and Twitter on political events. Under the influence of Maidan's events, the study showed that popularity of large social networks Vkontakte and Odnoklassniki decreased and popularity of Facebook rose from 29% in October 2013 to 32% in January 2014, Twitter - from 10 % in October 2013 to 13 % in January 2014 [How Euromaidan Events Affected the Traffic of Social Networks and Media Sites in Ukraine 2017].

In 2017, there was a second wave of increasing in the number of Twitter and Facebook users. The reason was that on May 15, 2017, President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko, by his decree, enforced the decision of National Security and Defense Council “Application of Personal Special Economic and Other Restrictive Measures (Sanctions)” which prohibited using on Ukrainian Territory such Russian social networks as VKontakte and Odnoklassniki, search services Yandex and Mail.Ru for 3 years. During the next two weeks, after the entry into force of this presidential decree, number of

visits to the VKontakte from Ukrainian segment of the Internet decreased by 15.37 %, Odnoklassniki – by 17.62 %. At the same time, numbers of Facebook.com and Wikipedia.org users has increased significantly. If in the previous years Ukrainian audience of Facebook grew by a stable 35–40 %, then only two weeks after the official ban of Russian social networks on the territory of Ukraine it grew by one and a half million and amounted to, as of May 30, 2017, 8.3 million users.

Twitter social network also appears in the political life of Ukraine. Thus, at the end of February 2010, Deputy Lesia Orobets, with the help of this service, broadcasted the course of closed session of fraction “Our Ukraine-People’s Self-Defense”. On February 24, 2009, former President of Ukraine V. Yushchenko created account on Twitter, and on February 15, 2011, Y. Tymoshenko’s account appeared.

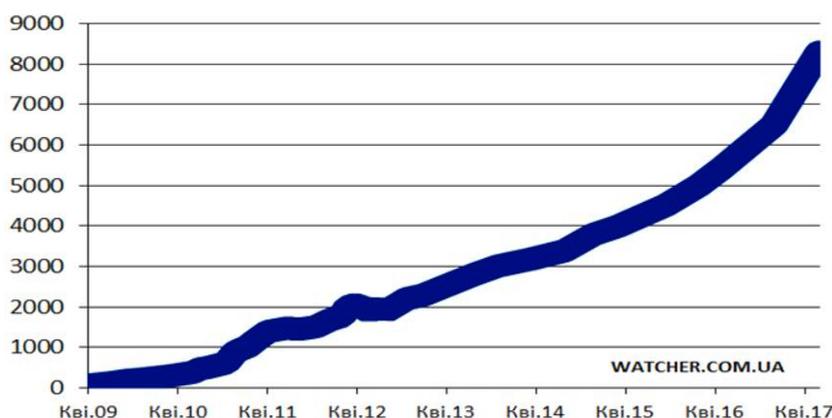
Despite the fact that most politicians from developed countries prefer to use Twitter for “working” communications with public, in Ukraine, on the contrary, Facebook got a big amount of politicians’ and officials’

attention. According to the research by Internews-USAID, nearly one-third of our compatriots are using Facebook for news. As of 2018, Facebook is the leader in social networking among Ukrainian Internet users; Ukrainian citizens also continue to use Russian social networks Vkontakte and Odnoklassniki, the fourth place took network Instagram, and the last continues to be Twitter [Davidenko, Lozovoj, Tyshchuk 2017].

The situation with Twitter social network in our country is a little different: only a few domestic politicians of high rank are present on Twitter. Among them are: President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko, Prime Minister of Ukraine Volodymyr Groisman, Minister of Internal Affairs Arsen Avakov, Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada Andriy Parubiy, ministers and representatives of political parties.

As of April 2018, there are no official statistics of about the number of followers of the Ukrainian political elite. Therefore, it is advisable to analyze personal pages of domestic politicians and highlight TOP 10 most popular Ukrainian political leaders.

Кількість українських користувачів на Facebook, тис.



Dynamics of changes in the number of Facebook users in Ukraine (2009–2017)



Usage of social networks by Ukrainians (January–March 2018)

Rating of TOP-10 most popular Ukrainian political leaders on Twitter (as of May 2018)

№	Political Leader	Followers	Readers	Number of publications
1	Petro Poroshenko @poroshenko President of Ukraine	1 280 926	28	11 540
2	Mustafa Naim @ mefimus	872 712	131	12 507
3	Arsen Avakov @AvakovArsen Minister of Internal Affairs	634 146	232	1 779
4	Arseny Yatsenyuk @Yatsenyuk_AP Leader of the Political Party “Narodny Front”	614 805	54	2 282
5	Vitali Klitschko @Vitaliy_Klychko Kiev Mayor, leader of the Political Party “UDAR”	416 567	48	748
6	Pavel Klimkin @PavloKlimkin Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine	352 142	170	2 729
7	Oleg Lyashko @OVLiashko Leader of the Radical Party	303 465	872	3 023
8	Alexander Turchynov @Turchynov Secretary of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine	291 099	234	1 944
9	Yulia Tymoshenko @YuliaTymoshenko Leader of the Political Party “Batkivschuna”	251 113	7	523
10	Mikhail Saakashvili @SaakashviliM Leader of the movement of new forces	250 511	190	3 215

Analyzing this data, we see that most politicians who seem to occupy the highest government positions do not have large number of subscribers on Twitter (V. Groisman and A. Parubiy have personal pages on Twitter, but did not fall into the 10 most popular politicians, as number of their subscribers reaches only about 150 thousand). The problem of Ukrainian tweeting, in contrast to the international, is low activity of politicians themselves. For example, Yulia Tymoshenko, leader of political party “Batkivshchyna”, has her own account on Twitter with 250,000 followers, published the latest post on December 18, 2014; Kyiv Mayor, leader of political party “UDAR” V. Klitschko with 416 th thousands followers on Twitter uploaded the latest post on April 7, 2018, congratulating the Ukrainian people on Easter holiday.

One weaker link in activities of Ukrainian politicians within Twitter social network is practice of copying. The point is that post written for one social network (in Ukraine it is Facebook, because posts appear there quicker), with a delay in few hours also appears on another social network (Twitter). Often in both social networks, texts are identical, but usually posts for Twitter are shorter, due to the quantitative limitation of signs in message and appear later than on Facebook.

Also, it is worse to pay attention to the geographical coverage of users pages of political figures. Most of Ukrainian politicians’ followers are citizens of Ukraine, and only 12 % are citizens of other countries. This shows lack of well-established communication with

Ukrainian Diaspora, as well as low level of influence of Ukrainian political elite on international level. In order to expand geographical coverage of Twitter users and improve their international rating activity experts recommend “Duplicate Twitter accounts and social networking pages in English – diplomatic lingua franca on the international area – to allow Ukrainian diplomats be more active in the domain of virtual diplomacy and deepen their ties with foreign politicians through Twitter-diplomacy” [Twitter-diplomacy 2013].

In 2016 in study “Twiplomacy” has implemented new monitoring aspect of using Twitter by countries-networks for political purposes, questioning heads of governments and Ministers of foreign Affairs from different countries about their understanding and usage of hashtag #DigitalDiplomacy. In the interview representatives of MFA of Ukraine and Minister of foreign Affairs Pavlo Klimkin spoke about development of digital diplomacy in Ukraine and its achievements [Reaching the World through 11 Social Media Platforms 2016]. So, 2014 was created an account of MFA of Ukraine in Instagram (2014), V Kontakte (2014), Storify (2014), Google+ (2015), Vine (2015) and three Ministerial blogs – Medium, WordPress, Blogger (2015). Ukrainian diplomatic mission has expanded its activities on the Internet, and now on Facebook and Twitter are present in nearly 90 embassies and consulates.

Counting over 63,000 followers, most of whom joined MFA account in 2014-2015, Twitter, according to the words of P. Klimkin, is the most dynamic digital

communication channel. According to the minister's worlds, main goal of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in social networks is not only to inform about important recent events in Ukraine, but also to engage wider audience.

Consequently, Twiplomacy, along with other modern diplomatic terms such as «public diplomacy 2.0», «selfie diplomacy», «net diplomacy», «real-time diplomacy» and «cyber diplomacy», convey realities of 21st century. Therefore, for effective communication, both policy makers and ordinary citizens, should use actively digital diplomacy and social networks, otherwise they will remain behind the challenges and opportunities ahead of time.

As a result of analysing using social networks by Ukrainian politicians, diplomats and state structures, it should be concluded that Ukrainian diplomatic Twitter discourse is being developed now. Most Ukrainian politicians prefer Facebook social network to Twitter, in contrast to their western counterparts. Therefore, in order to improve communication of internal diplomatic corps and to strengthen the relations with external partners, Ukrainian politicians and diplomats need to strengthen usage of Twitter-diplomacy tools and develop real Twitter communication strategy based on experience of foreign colleagues.

Analyzing the involvement of Ukrainian politicians to twitter social network and peculiarities of using network within their professional activities, it should be noted that one aspect of implementation effective system of electronic diplomacy in Ukraine is presence of political figures, diplomats and government agencies on social networks in order to support communication and conduct constructive dialogue with the public. By 2014, due to the geopolitical location and centuries-old influence of the Russian Empire, the most popular social network in Ukraine was V Kontakte. Such events as Revolution of Dignity and president's decree on the official ban of using Russian social networks in Ukraine led to redirection of Internet users towards Facebook and Twitter. The activity of political leaders on Internet clearly illustrates greater demand for Facebook social network among representatives of Ukrainian political elite, while diplomatic discourse on Twitter network is being actively developed in the rest of world. Problems that delay development of domestic Twitter diplomacy, as opposed to the world, are low activity of the political leaders themselves – frequency of distribution messages on Twitter network is very low; practice of copywriting – post written for one social network (Facebook) with a delay in few hours also appears on another social network (Twitter). The situation with presence of state bodies on social networks

is also critical. Most of ministries and public councils have their own official pages in Facebook, and only a few of them are officially present on Twitter. Today, Ukrainian diplomats should use all the opportunities and benefits of Twitter-diplomacy more actively to be an effective actor of digital diplomatic community.

Summarizing the research of using Twitter by Ukrainian politicians, we noted that this social network plays role of an important instrument of XXI century-diplomacy. For political elite, presence on Twitter has following benefits: the promotion of their own image, establishing contacts with other colleague politicians and diplomats, sharing their opinions and views, ability of quick reaction to international events, communication with citizens, ability to follow public's mood, react to various events. Citizens also have the opportunity to communicate with ruling elite, to influence the adoption of important political decisions. However, influence of Twitter on internal and foreign state policy cannot be assessed uniquely positively, there is list of real threats that may face both political power and citizens of any country in the world, namely: using Twitter to group individuals with extremist views (mobilization and organization of ethnic conflicts or terrorist attacks); instant distribution of fake messages that misinform public; different interpretations of messages on Twitter, which often leads to conflict situations; manipulation of public opinion to pressure the authorities or organize different performances.

Ukrainian diplomatic Twitter discourse is being developing now. Political leaders are gradually joining to the network, official accounts of state structures are being appeared (Cabinet of Ministers, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defense etc.). However, lack of experience in the field of Twitter diplomacy causes difficulties encountered by Ukrainian diplomats and politicians, including: common practice of copywriting messages from one social network to another, low activity of political elite, and absence of foreign audience among followers. For successful implementation of Twitter social network, practical Ukrainian diplomats should develop their own strategies for communicating with public and colleagues from other countries, and take into account the peculiarities of internationally successful diplomatic discourse within the Twitter network.

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