

ARTICLE

FEATURES OF INFOGRAPHICS IN THE RUSSIAN MASS MEDIA

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ABSTRACT

The study is devoted to determining the characteristics of info graphics in the Russian media. An increased presence of materials of this type in journalistic practice has been noted, and attention is drawn to the typological features and modern trends in this segment of the media. The analysis of infographics materials presented in such largest Russian editions as newspapers "Arguments and Facts" and "Kommersant" is carried out. A substantive analysis revealed the presence of infographics in almost all thematic blocks, especially in the sections of the economy, finance, real estate, and the automotive industry. It has been established that, from the structural point of view, infographics is presented in the form of maps, graphs, pie charts, diagrams, timelines, visualized tables, structured lists, tree diagrams, and bar charts. The results for the studies of electronic versions of these publications suggest that there is a steady increase in the volume of infographics in the media; newspaper practice uses template elements; interactive elements are used, feedback becomes more and more significant (comments, likes); in addition, user activity itself is increasing.

INTRODUCTION

If to define the concept of infographics and trace its evolution, we should note that it came from the reduction of the phrase "information graphics" and its active distribution began in Europe and the United States at the turn of 1980-1990 [1, 2]. We note that in Russia this happened later, in the early 2000s. Impulse to this was given by applied and theoretical studies, as well as the activities of professionals in the public communications systems (the use of similar materials in media practice, research in this direction) [3]. It should be emphasized that at present the term under investigation is revealed as a visual representation of the mass media; however, researchers focus their attention on narrower values. So, Western researchers see the decisive importance in data structuring ("functional art") [4]. Russian scientists reveal the essence of infographics as a verbal-graphic element while seeing its main purpose in the effective transfer of information to the audience. Speaking about the media component of research in the field of infographics, one should pay attention to the developments of scientists in the field of definition and formation of the concept of the proper media infographics. There is no single definition of this term, but more often it means a synthetic element containing verbal and non-verbal elements that performs various functions: visualization, strengthening of argumentation, data visualization, increasing availability of information impact on the audience [5,6]. The proliferation of infographics, and its active use in the mass media is promoted by the rapid development of technologies, digitalization and convergence processes, multimedia technologies, changes in the psychology of the audience, the transition to visual and non-linear data formats [7,8].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The materials of this study were the publication of Internet representations of print publications and the actual Internet media. The following publications were investigated: "Kommersant" and "Arguments and Facts". The history of the "Kommersant" newspaper dates back to 1988, when the "Fact" information cooperative was registered. Already in 1989, in cooperation with the Union of Cooperators, the cooperative "Fact" began to publish the weekly newspaper "Kommersant" which at that time was the first Russian commercial business newspaper. Since September 1992 it became to be published daily [9]. "Arguments and Facts" is the leading Russian weekly magazine now, which occupies a leading position in the media market. It is published in Russian, has regional supplements, an extensive correspondent network, and representative offices in various countries.

The methods of research used by the authors: system analysis, content analysis, and comparative analysis, which allowed identification of the essential features in the development of the studied periodicals [10].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study are as follows. On the pages of the site kommersant.ru [9], there are high-quality infographic materials that attract readers' attention due to their brightness and areas of interest of topics. The presence of infographics is established in almost all thematic blocks, but most of them are contained in the sections on the economy, finance, real estate, and the automotive industry. Infographics is also an integral part of the "Special Projects" section, both in own and in partner materials. We note that the entire infographics in the periodical is structured, it has a certain system for presenting information, and there is also a clear sequence of visualization of information in the form of pictures or diagrams. A good example of this is the material: "How the European Union works: 12 points about the most important thing". It

KEY WORDS
infographics, the newspaper "Arguments and Facts", the newspaper "Kommersant".

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discusses the history, structure of the European Union, its funding and priorities for action. The material is accompanied by the following infographics: tables which show the interaction between EU institutions with each other; maps showing countries that have performed transfer to the euro and countries that have not done so; pictures with countries that have applied "Schengen" in full or partially. The data on the maps are easily understandable and convenient for perception, all zones are highlighted with various colors, and these maps and the table do not repeat the information of the main text, which makes the material more complete. We believe that infographics fit into the text, complements it and creates a certain structure for the presentation of information. As for the consistency and conciseness of information, we can say that a logical narration is observed in the infographics of the periodical, and the information is presented briefly, clearly, but at the same time does not create a feeling of incompleteness or understatement. An example would be the material "Penalty to the bottom" which is fully implemented in the form of infographics; the article deals with innovations in the system of punishing drivers for violations. All information is presented on one platform using several text sentences, pictures, maps, charts, numerical indicators and icons. All this together creates an interesting, logically built, and understandable material.

Infographics is also an important element of the website "Arguments and Facts" [10]. A special department was formed in the editor office to work with infographic materials. Exploring infographic content, it is worth to note its multiplicity. Thus, according to our calculations, from 30 to 50 infographic materials have been placed on average per month (reference point is March 2018) on the web-site covering a wide range of topics. The analysis shows that the infographics on the site is poly thematic and contains journalistic materials on economics, politics, military affairs, medicine, lawmaking, sports, etc. In addition to thematic diversity, a wide range of different types of infographics are represented to readers. It is revealed that the most common are maps, graphs, pie charts, diagrams, timelines, visualized tables, structured lists, tree diagrams, bar charts. Moreover, infographics can be presented in a journalistic text only by a map or a scheme and be single-component that is, illustrating a specific fragment of media material ("Areal collapse. As the fall in prices has improved the post-war economy of the USSR" (04/07/2018), or it can be multi-component, including a variety of infographic segments. Such infographics plays the role of the semantic core in the material ("What are the types of petroleum products?"(04/10/2018) where the short text that precedes the infographic contains analysis and background information on how to get fuel, while the bright infographic describes the typology of oil products. It should be noted that the newspaper "Arguments and Facts" applies templates in the creation of news infographics to increase the speed and convenience for designers and journalists.

Aesthetic appeal and imagery of info graphics is at a high level. In graphs, tables, figures, diagrams, diagrams, many colors are used, the text is highlighted in color for convenience of perception, all colors are bright and pleasant to read. In terms of size and structure, infographics is also quite convenient and good; it also attracts the use of various icons, pointers and other small graphic elements. If these are drawings, they are also always interesting, original and related to the topic of publication. There are not observed typical publications of infographics in periodicals: all the drawings, diagrams, icons, and graphs are different and created in different formats depending on the subject matter. Color design is also different. There are no circulations of infographics, it does not even repeat the already written text, because it contains some additional information on the topic. But in the infographics of the newspaper "Kommersant", there is a certain pattern in the use of maps and statistics. In many materials there is a cartographic visualization of the text built on the same principle, and the same is observed in the use of statistics.

After conducting a study of infographics in the Russian mass media, it can be noted that all schemes, drawings, diagrams and statistics are presented in an accessible form, are concise, aesthetically correct and attractive. Infographics is well structured, and the information in it is systematized. The range of topics is wide, but most often it is politics, economics, finance, and special projects. Infographics differs with bold combination of colors and shapes, which makes it bright and attractive. Sometimes authors use ready-made map templates and statistics, changing only the words and colors in them, but this does not spoil the external perception of the material. It is even impossible to say which colors are most used in the preparation of graphs or diagrams, because their range is very wide; the authors use all colors. It is also worth noting that the sites have materials consisting of only infographics, which is filled with diagrams, drawings, icons, several sentences, measurements, and all this constitutes solid material that is practically not necessary to read. Infographics is widely represented in materials on various topics, logically built and correctly embedded in the general text of publications.

SUMMARY

The key features and trends in the modern development of media infographics are as follows. First of all, it should be noted that there is a steady increase in the volume of infographics in the media. We see that template elements are actively used in creating information of this type. Interactive elements are activated in the infographics system: availability of feedback (comments, likes) is becoming increasingly important. Moreover, user activity also rises. Summing up the results on research of infographics in the studied publications, we have revealed: 1) moderate presence of infographics in the texts; 2) a variety of infographics available: the presentation of information in the form of quantitative visualization, and in the qualitative form: tables, charts, diagrams, etc.; 3) lack of a ready-made template and, as a result, all infographics are different from each other; 4) consistency and a certain color range; 5) a variety of

infographics in certain sections of the publication, such as "Country", "World", "Finance", "Special Project", "Hi-Tech"; 6) the information content and usefulness of the infographics presented in the materials of the studied publications.

CONCLUSION

Further understanding of the issues under study may occur in the following areas: a comparative analysis of Russian and foreign experience, and the study of thematically determined infographics materials. It is interesting to consider the experience of Russian regional, urban, specialized and corporate publications; it remains poorly studied in the scientific media environment.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors confirm that the presented data do not contain a conflict of interest.

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None

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