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THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES ON TODAY'S YOUTH

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Annotation: This article analyzes the impact of information technologies on the psychological state of today's youth. The positive and negative effects of modern digital technologies, in particular the Internet, social networks, and mobile devices, on young people's consciousness, behavior, communication culture, and emotional state are highlighted.

Keywords: Information technologies, youth psychology, psychological impact, social networks, Internet addiction, digital environment, media literacy.

Over the past decade, the rapid development of information technologies has led to fundamental changes in human life. Digital technologies, Internet networks, social media platforms, and mobile devices have deeply penetrated all layers of society, especially the lives of young people. Today's younger generation is growing up in an environment closely connected with information technologies, which directly affects their psychological development, socialization, and formation as individuals. In modern psychology and pedagogy, the impact of information technologies on the psyche of youth is considered an important object of research. Studies show that while technologies expand opportunities for acquiring knowledge, they also lead to psychological problems such as stress, distraction, Internet addiction, depressive states, and social isolation [1]. Today, information technologies have become the main source of information and a primary means of communication for young people. The concept of the "digital generation," proposed by M. Prensky, indicates that young people's processes of receiving and processing information differ significantly from those of previous generations [2]. Although youth raised in a digital environment possess rapid thinking skills and the ability to quickly perceive visual information, they face difficulties in deep analysis and maintaining long-term attention. In addition, N. Carr emphasizes in his research that constant Internet use can change brain functioning and increase the tendency to process information superficially [3]. This situation particularly leads to a decline in independent thinking and logical analysis skills among school and university students.

Social networks (Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, TikTok, and others) have become an integral part of young people's daily lives. Research conducted by J. Twenge shows that excessive use of social networks contributes to increased levels of depression, anxiety, and feelings of loneliness among youth [4]. Constant exposure to images of "ideal life" in the virtual environment negatively affects young people's self-esteem. This results in psychological instability, lack of self-confidence, and an increase in social comparison syndrome. At the same time, as noted by D. Boyd, social networks also create opportunities for youth to express themselves, increase social activity, and exchange knowledge [5]. Internet addiction is considered one of the widespread problems among youth today. According to research conducted by K. Young, Internet addiction limits real-life social relationships and leads to

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disruptions in psychological balance [6].Internet addiction manifests itself in the following ways:
• withdrawal from real-life communication;
• disruption of sleep patterns;
• attention deficit;
• aggressiveness and irritability.

These conditions negatively affect young people's educational processes and personal development.

Along with negative aspects, information technologies also have positive effects on youth psychology. Online education platforms, electronic libraries, and digital resources have significantly expanded opportunities for learning. Researchers note that independent learning through technology increases young people's motivation for self-development [7]. In addition, information technologies create broad opportunities for developing creativity and acquiring new professions and competencies.

According to A. Bandura's social learning theory, young people acquire a culture of using information technologies through their environment and adults [8]. Therefore, the formation of digital culture in educational institutions and families is of great importance. Psychologists put forward the following recommendations:
• limiting the time spent using technologies;
• maintaining a balance between real and virtual communication;
• developing skills of critical analysis of information.

In conclusion, information technologies have a strong impact on the psychological development of today's youth. While they create broad opportunities for learning and personal development, improper and excessive use can lead to psychological problems. Therefore, forming a culture of rational use of information technologies and protecting the psychological well-being of youth is considered a pressing task.

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