

**O. I. Goroshko (Kharkiv, Ukraine) POLITICS 2.0: GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES AND LOCAL REALITIES**

The Internet is used practically in all social communications and covers a great number of social activities: from politics to education. In politics, the main functions of the Internet are to inform, communicate and become active political player. The literary data analysis in this area shows a great variety of web genres that are used for political communication running through the web, including e-mails, discussion groups, web pages, blogs, social networks, ad banners, and online news groups with all cutting edge opportunities provided by the web technologies, including Web 2.0. If earlier political stakeholders who moved online used the web to strengthen only long-standing political goals and shaping both public perceptions and media agenda. The latest research reveals that now citizens are using the net as a political vehicle in novel ways, and not only ordinary citizens but numerous political actors including candidates to the presidency. It was Barack Obama who used the Internet effectively to organize his supporters in a way that would have in the past required an army of volunteers and paid organizers on the ground. Thus Obama's campaign took all advantages provided by the YouTube for free advertising and the videos located there were more effective than television ads because viewers chose to watch them or received them from a friend instead of having their television shows interrupted. The Internet also lets people repeatedly listen to the candidates' words in the face of attacks, and as it was with Obama Speech on Race 2008: 6.7 million people have already watched his 37-minute speech on the YouTube.

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**Olena I. Goroshko (Харьков, Украина)**

***POLITICS 2.0: GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES AND LOCAL REALITIES***

*One of the many ways that the election of Barack Obama as president has echoed that of John F. Kennedy is his use of a new medium that will forever change politics. For Mr Kennedy, it was television. For Mr Obama, it is the Internet.*

Claire Cain Miller (Miller 2008)

*In politics, more information is generally a good thing, and that's what Web 2.0 helps to provide. The best everyone can hope for, not only during but also after the election, is that new tech tools provide citizens with better ways to understand and watch government. The more transparent government becomes, the less likely it is to be corrupt, and that's something everyone would like to see.*

Sonia Arrison (Arrison 2008)

Ключевые слова: *политический дискурс, Web 2.0, президентские выборы, онлайн-кампания, интерактивность*

Key words: *political discourse, Web 2.0, presidential election, on-line campaign, interactivity*

## **Introduction**

The Internet is used practically in all social communications and covers a great number of social activities: from politics to education. In politics, its main functions are to inform, communicate and become an active political player. The literary data analysis shows a great variety of web genres that are used for political communication running through the web, including e-mails, discussion groups, web pages, blogs, social networks, ad banners, and online news groups with all cutting edge opportunities provided by the web technologies, including Web 2.0 (see reference list attached to this paper). Earlier political stakeholders who moved online used the web to strengthen only long-standing political goals and to shape both public perceptions and media agenda. The latest research reveals that now citizens are using the net as a political vehicle in novel ways, and not only ordinary citizens but numerous political actors including candidates to the presidency (Web 2.0: an International Conference 2008). It was Barack Obama

who used the Internet effectively to organize his supporters in a way that would have in the past required an army of volunteers and paid organizers on the ground. Thus Obama's campaign took all advantages provided by the YOUTUBE for free advertising and the videos located there were more effective than television ads because viewers chose to watch them or received them from a friend instead of having their television shows interrupted. The Internet also lets people repeatedly listen to the candidates' words in the face of attacks, as it was with Obama Speech on Race 2008: 6.7 million people watched his 37-minute speech on the YOUTUBE (Boynton 2008; Miller 2008).

### **Politics 2.0**

The technological changes very often initiate a shift in social interactions (Posner 2005). The rise of Web 2.0 gave birth to Politics 2.0, the next stage of cyber-politics which influences online and offline political communications as a whole. Thus, the term Politics 2.0 was coined to differentiate political communication based on the intensive use of Web 2.0 technologies from the ones supported by Web 1.0.

Generally, Web 2.0 refers to the explosion of services like social networking sites, wikis, blogs, podcasts, RSS feeds, photo and file sharing systems (e. g., FLICKR, SLIDESHARE, YOUTUBE) and so on. Web 2.0 has become a buzz word describing a set of social media available on the net (Turnsek & Jankowski 2008: 1). These technologies helped make the Internet even more interactive, user-friendly and content-rich than it was in the first stage of its development known as Web 1.0. Due to Web 2.0 the most audacious dreams of the Internet's founding fathers, like Vinton Cerf, Tim Berners-Lee or Robert Kahn, about the web as a global write/read blackboard for everybody have been turned into reality (O'Reilly 2005). Digg, a social book-mark site, announces a partnership with CBS Company for political coverage of the elections in the USA and also hosts its own candidates' pages. MYSPACE holds its own presidential primary the day before the Iowa caucuses where Barack Obama and Ron Paul won. Social network FACEBOOK cosponsored the Republican and Democratic debates with ABC and also published its own polling data. In her recent speech, Hillary Clinton stated that America "had/s a government blogging team" (Arrison 2008). In 2007 when candidates began preparing for the U. S. Presidential Primaries, CNN coined the term *YOUTUBE-fication of Politics* to describe this social activity (Turnsek & Jankowski 2008: 1).

The founder of Web 2.0 concept, O'Reilly suggests that web 2.0 is more participative in nature contrary to Web 1.0 which is static and non-interactive (O'Reilly 2005). Therefore in terms of political discourse Web 2.0 inherently encourages bottom-up communication and promotes grass-root political activities and participatory democracy (Chadwick 2008). Italian social scholars Minucci and Mascheroni also emphasize that the use of Web 2.0 leads to the emerging "convergence culture" which is drastically changing the boundaries between the production and consumption of media content: thanks to the "architecture of participation", Internet-users become *prosumers* (consumer + producer) in sharing, manipulating and re-assembling digital media content, or producing a consistent volume of user-generated content. "These grassroots practices are changing audiences' relationships not only with cultural industries and their products, but also with politics and traditional social institutions" (Minucci & Mascheroni 2009: 188-189).

Jackson and Lilleker examine the differences between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 and how these web strategies are used within a political communication context, namely how political parties (and their leaders) in Britain use Web 2.0 applications. Their paper defines Web 1.0 and Web 2.0, specifies the differences and similarities between these concepts, and discusses how they are and can be used by parties in the UK. They also investigate the shifts in the way British politicians communicate. Their analysis suggests that British political parties have sought to create a "Web 1.5" that offers the advantages of both Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 (Jackson & Lilleker 2009). The scholars stress that the increasing move towards professionalism encourages political elites to use new technologies to gain an edge. However, when used by political elites, does Web 2.0 reflect technological, psychological or no change? When considering the social impact of Web 2.0 these scholars fix two distinct features playing; firstly, the concept of an architecture of participation creating an informational democracy from below; secondly, the demand for a shift in organizational thinking in terms of wishing to be an equal, non-elite, partner within that democratic structure. The question is whether these two competing forces can actually be reconciled (Jackson & Lilleker 2009: 234).

Similar results were presented in Minucci and Mascheroni's research of European Election on the Italian web (Minucci & Mascheroni 2009). The scholars traced the influence of web 2.0 tools during the

2009 European Election campaign in Italy. They analyzed the candidates' websites and their use of web 2.0 tools, as well as the monitoring of the campaign in social media (namely, FACEBOOK and YOUTUBE). The main result revealed a persisting divide existing in the distribution of parties and coalitions online. Most candidates who had a personal website integrated Web 2.0 tools. Simultaneously, nonetheless, these social media tools advance some challenges to the traditional styles and patterns of political communication. That is, the control over the flow of information traditionally held by parties or candidates in their top-down communication process becomes the main obstacle for successful communication with their electorate. The authors suggest a strategic appropriation and adaptation of Web 2.0, resulting in a hybrid communication model, in between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0, which allows to use new social media more effectively (Minucci & Mascheroni 2009: 187). This hybrid model is labelled as "Web 1.5" referring to the "extensive use of the architecture of participation, but much less use of the community's democratic structure" (Minucci & Mascheroni 2009: 200).

Kalnes studied Norwegian political parties' adaption of web 2.0 before and during the long campaign of the local elections in September 2007. By 2007, most parties had learned to use their web sites as instruments of professional political marketing. The researcher asked whether the emergence of Web 2.0, with its potential for grassroots participation and networking, as well as multilateral interactivity, was a catalyst of "e-ruptive" change towards greater pluralism or participation. His data indicate that in terms of party competition, Web 2.0 had at best a weak pluralizing effect, as party visibility in Web 2.0 roughly reflected party vote share. However, Web 2.0 enhanced participatory democracy by lowering the threshold for the involvement of the party grassroots and other sympathizers (Kalnes 2009).

In their paper Turnek and Jankowski discuss theoretical and methodological foundations of Politics 2.0 (Turnek & Jankowski 2008) and point out that it is the blogging that is a more researched topic in the subject field of Politics 2.0. Other Web 2.0 tools, such as social networking sites, file-sharing media, wikis, are increasing constantly in popularity among researchers, however none of these studies dealt with politically-oriented topics within the timeframe of their paper.

Reid Hoffman, founder of LINKEDIN professional social network, discusses both positive and negative sides of Politics 2.0 (Arrison 2008;

Coleman 2008). He argues that in politics, more information is generally a good thing, and Web 2.0 helps to provide such information. The best everyone can hope for, not only during but also after the election, is that new tech tools provide citizens with better ways to understand and control government. The more transparent government becomes, the less likely it is to be corrupt, and that's something everyone would like to see. That is of critical importance to CIS countries with emerging and unstable democracy as in Ukraine now. Politics 2.0 based on the conceptual principles of Web 2.0 advances interactivity and provides more possibilities for creating practically unrestricted and free content on the web. It also deepens personal campaigning on the web or tries to make an illusion of it. On the downside, however, the danger is that too much information may "make people unwilling to change their views". There are worries about a personalized "massive inundation of information and massive stimulation" that creates a situation where people stop thinking and making real decisions because they can choose to listen only to others who share the similar opinions (Cone 2010). Lilleker and Jackson researching the British political web inquire:

*When used by political elites does Web 2.0 reflect technological, psychological or no change? Whether Web 2.0 is a progression of Web 1.0, or something fundamentally and conceptually different? Whether the content political elites use in their Web 2.0 applications is shovel ware and more appropriate for Web 1.0, so considering whether Web 2.0 is something which only the disenfranchised can use? The analysis of political elite's use of Web 2.0 features will determine how effectively these elites are using Web 2.0 and whether we are viewing a shift in the way politicians communicate, or whether the use of tools from FACEBOOK to YOUTUBE represents a mere fad more likely to disappear than become entrenched in practice (Jackson & Lilleker 2008: 1).*

### **Interactivity as a driving force of Politics 2.0**

Central to thinking about the potential of the Net for enhancing democracy is the notion of interactivity, as most scholars claim (Endres & Warnick 2004; Jackson and Lilleker 2008; Trammell et al. 2006). Recent research on interactivity and its connection with web-technologies testifies its complexity and shows the absence of a strict

definition. Thus, Busy (2004) asserts that in modern social thinking there is a lack of coherent theory to show how this phenomenon operates in our society, and studies of interactivity have been engaged only in defining the elusive concepts and describing instances of its existence through various mediated contexts (Busy 2004: 373). Strome-Galley stresses that the definition of interactivity is confusing as it refers to different things. One can identify interaction between people and computers, and only between computers through software, hardware and networks (Strome-Galley 2004: 391).

To clarify the interactivity definition Kioussis develops a synthesized concept of interactivity imposing the notion of medium (Kioussis 2002). The medium includes two-way communication, equal roles for the sender and the receiver of information, third-order dependency, and the speed of communication must be close to real. However this new synthesized definition borrows also some weak spots such as the requirement of equality both for the sender and the receiver of information. Some scholars try to enhance this definition adding the notion of text-based interactivity (Endres & Warnick 2004; Trammell et al. 2006). They argue that the textual constructions must foster interactivity containing special appealing strategies, which promote immediacy, personal presence in the web-texts, and multivocality. The researchers think that the text-based interactivity must be augmented by a number of technical features such as hyperlinks, user-contribution features (guest-book, or the possibility to make comments, etc.) (Trammell et al. 2006: 27).

At the same time scholars working in discourse studies and corporate communication research indicate that interactivity should be a goal of any organization aiming at building relationships with its consumers, supporters and audiences (Chaffey et al. 2006; Van Dijk 2006) and this may be particularly useful for electoral political organizations who seek to interact with their potential voters.

Up-to-date views on the interactivity suggest not only a conversational, text-based character of this phenomenon, but they also imply that all parties that participate in communication can be influenced by a great number of external and internal factors. This means that the traditional top-down hierarchical political communication from parties and government to voters and citizens is replaced by a more horizontal style of communication. At the same time, are the uses of Web 2.0 tools meant to offer real interactivity allowing all parties to be in-

fluenced, or are they used purely to make the impression of seeking a dialogic relationship with voters?

Recent research on interactivity suggests that online conversations lead to relational exchanges and building of communities (McDonald & Chalkley 2003), particularly when interaction is based upon multi-directional communication between multiple participants where control and power are shared among users. It leads to a new participatory and deliberative democracy that is taken as a basis for the concepts of e-representation and e-democracy. Jackson and Lilleker assert that “the communication most likely to have an impact on attitudes is face-to-face, relevant to the individual, tailored to their needs and concerns and shaped as a dialogue not a monologue” (Jackson and Lilleker 2008: 10). This multifocal conversational interactivity is best attainable through the use of Web 2.0 tools since the very conceptual base of Web 2.0 services with possibility to create common content and communicate with unrestricted number of Internet-users facilitates greatly this process. The concept of online interactivity can be used as an analytical tool for understanding the aims of the communicator and receiver (McMillan 2002), and more recently the idea of participatory democracy was initiated (Ferber, Foltz & Pugliese 2007).

However, a broader question appears whether all political actors are ready to use these Web 2.0 technologies properly adapting to the rules of the Web 2.0 user community in order to receive maximum benefits (Jackson & Lilleker 2008: 9). Certainly, politicians were criticised for “jumping on to the website bandwagon without having a clear communication strategy for their use” (Jackson 2003: 128).

### **Personal campaigning**

To be successful, political campaign must be not only highly interactive and technically sustainable but also personally-oriented. Although there has been a tendency to see personal campaigning as concentrated on presidential political systems, where individuals are directly elected to high office, there is a widely observed trend toward increased personal campaigning in parliamentary democracies (Stanyer 2008). Party leaders have assumed an increasingly central position in parties' campaigns for Office. The leaders have come to embody their respective parties and dominate the national media campaign. At the same time there has been a trend toward greater self-disclosure by leaders and personal attacks on leaders of rival parties. Candidate-



centred, or personal, campaigning is an increasingly common feature of elections in many democracies (Trammel et al. 2006). The term usually refers to two key developments in electioneering. First is the degree to which leading political actors, rather than parties, have become the visible focus of election campaigns. This trend can be seen most clearly in presidential elections in the United States, where candidates for the presidency use the electronic media “to sell” themselves to voters. Second, personal campaigning can be understood as the extent to which personal information and imagery about a candidate or party leader, rather than policy programs, has become a major element of campaigns. Personal information includes: candidates’ biographies, their appearances, beliefs, tastes, values, and any past or current misdemeanours – that is, all information concerning the candidates themselves, not their record or what they propose to do if elected. Political blogging, including twittering, becomes also part of candidate-centred campaigning.

Theoretical analysis also reveals that it is not enough to locate the personal information about political persona on the web. The Internet should not be considered as a broadcast-only medium, flooded with political speeches and statements. Everything will be in vain, if the candidates are not prepared to allow for feedback (Casey 1996: 143).

### **Research design**

The latest Internet research reveals that the Net is not a culturally neutral medium: there is a great amount of differences in information delivery and presentation, patterns of interaction and language use initiated by culture (Goroshko 2008a; Herring 2007).

Analysis of works in this field indicates that the topic of Politics 2.0 has been broadly researched within the English-speaking Internet, but it is still understudied within the Slavic-speaking Internet.

The assumption that the interactivity and personal online campaigning of key political actors on the Net leads to the success of Politics 2.0 can be illustrated by the Ukrainian political web.

The recent 2010 Presidential Campaign was chosen as an object for this research. The main research objectives were to analyse the effectiveness of personal web campaigning of all nominees to the Presidential Office in Ukraine (18 candidates) and to describe how their virtual presence and use of Politics 2.0 tools facilitated participation in presidential race relying on the assumption that the nominees’ personal

interactivity on the web provided a foundation for their successful election.

In addition, in the light of the deepening digital divide in Ukraine (Goroshko 2008b), the accessibility of web resources to the ordinary Internet-user must also be traced as the second key factor influencing the political campaigning online (Goroshko, Zhigalina 2010).

The level of particular website usability can be measured with the help of certain indicators (like GOOGLE Page Rank, YANDEX Thematic Index and ALEXA Traffic Ranking). The interactive content categories used in this research also include types and the number of links, feedback information, links to the detailed information created by the campaign team, links to press coverage, and links to web candidate's 2.0 accounts used in the campaign. Additional research categories include forms, specially located on the site for contributing and volunteering, a guest-book, a sign-up form for getting involved, an option to print/download the nominee's distribution materials, and an opportunity to sign up for e-mail updates. The number of Web 2.0 services (blog, twitter, social network, share site services attached directly to the sites or linked to them) are also traced and calculated. Thus, the candidates' personal web sites, their social network accounts (FACEBOOK, ODNOKLASSNIKI, VKONTAKTE), TWITTER, YOUTUBE and BLOGS) are analyzed by counting their Page Rank (PR), Thematic Index Citing<sup>1</sup> (TIC) and Alexa Traffic Ranking<sup>2</sup> (ATR), the number of subscribers, posts and comments in blogs, their updates, the number of web 2.0 services icons outgoing to other nominee's web-resources. All calcula-

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1 Thematic Index of Citing (TIC) – an indicator of the importance (degree of credibility) of the web-site or, more precisely, an Internet resource from the search engine Yandex, determined through internal analysis of the quality of external links to this resource. It should be understood that TIC is calculated for the whole site, not for each page. To check the value of this index one should write the site address in the browser address bar (<http://help.yandex.ru/catalogue/?id=873431>).

2 The traffic rank is based on three months of aggregated historical traffic data from millions of Alexa Toolbar users and data obtained from other traffic data sources, and is a combined measure of page views and users. The main Alexa traffic rank is based on a value derived from these two quantities averaged over time (so that the rank of a site reflects both the number of users who visit that site as well as the number of pages on the site viewed by those users). The three-month change is determined by comparing the site's current rank with its rank from three months ago (Alexa Internet).

tions were made with the help of Semonitor 4.0<sup>1</sup> software and conducted between the first and second rounds of voting in January and February, 2010. However, the sites of Yushchenko and Yanukovych (the former and the current presidents of Ukraine) were researched twice – before and after the presidential campaign: in February, and later, in August 2010.

There are practically no works concerning the Ukrainian features of Politics 2.0, and all research in this field shows new developments in this area both in Eastern Europe and in the CIS region. Therefore this exploratory research is designed to answer the following questions:

- To what extent did the nominees to the President Office 2010 in Ukraine use the range of available online communication tools including web 2.0 services?
- To what extent did these nominees encourage interaction, public input and participation through their online communication?

The research objectives are also to evaluate whether Web 2.0 can really offer the potential for political communicators suggested in previous research and to trace the impact of the local context on Politics 2.0 in Ukraine.

## **Ukrainian context**

### **1. UaNet today**

According to the INTERNETWORLDSTAT AGENCY there are currently 15,300,000 Internet users in Ukraine. It indicates 33.7 % Internet Penetration Index for this country. Thus, Ukraine occupies the 9<sup>th</sup> place among Internet Top 10 Countries in Europe (Internet Top 10 Countries in Europe 2010) at the moment. However, the broadband Internet-connections are accessible to only 1,600,000 people. It means that only 3.2 % Ukrainian population has an access to the broadband Internet and hence Web 2.0 services. One can emphasise that there is no accu-

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<sup>1</sup> Semonitor 4.0 Program is a web-ranking software intended to determine the web site rankings in the major search engines. With Semonitor one can easily obtain information on the positions (rankings) your web site holds for the selected search queries. Semonitor provides several types of web ranking reports and includes some built-in tools (<http://www.semonitor.com>).

rate Internet user statistics data for Ukraine and it is possible to operate only with approximate figures (Goroshko 2009a: 59). At the same time, the largest Ukrainian portal BIGMIR)NET published the latest Ua-Net statistics dated May 2010. According to this study, the number of Internet users in Ukraine equals 7.2 million persons per week (<http://ain.ua/2010/08/06/29849>). No significant changes in the geographical distribution of users are noticed as compared to previous reports compiled in 2009 or 2008. As before, the Kiev region has the largest number the amount of users. Its share counts 58.66 % of the total audience. Then, in descending order, Kiev is followed by such major areas as Odesa, Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Kharkiv, Lviv, Krym (Crimea), Zaporizhia. Their total share in the Ukrainian Internet audience amounts to 30.31 %. The remaining regions account for 10.49 %. The most popular search engines among the Ukrainian audience are GOOGLE (74.92 %) followed by YANDEX (18.24 %), UKR.NET (2.15 %), MAIL.RU (1.93 %), META.UA (0.82 %). Most popular search queries among Ukrainian users are: *automarket*, *news*, *Ukr.net*, *Ukrainian news*, *weather*. MS WINDOWS XP (76.72 % of users) operating system is the most used among Ukrainians (<http://en.expert.com.ua/uanet-statistics-less-users-in-november.html>).

As for the Internet-users structure, people between 20-29 years old (32.3 %) and males (51.9 %) prevail. Among Internet-users in Ukraine there are more students (28.3 %) and specialists (19.8 %) according to the latest research data published by TNS Company (<http://proit.com.ua/news/soft/2010/07/19/141630.html>).

One can take a broader view and speak about the building of information society in Ukraine, since according to the Networked Readiness Index 2009–2010<sup>1</sup> Ukraine rates 3.53, indicating the eighty second place among 133 countries in the world. It shows indirectly a rather deep digital divide gap in Ukraine currently (Goroshko 2008b).

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1 The World Economic Forum's Networked Readiness Index (NRI) measures the propensity for countries to exploit the opportunities offered by information and communications technology. It is published annually. The NRI seeks to better comprehend the impact of ICT on the competitiveness of nations. The NRI is a composite of three components: the environment for ICT offered by a given country or community, the readiness of the community's key stakeholders (individuals, businesses, and governments) to use ICT, and finally the usage of ICT amongst these stakeholders (Goroshko 2009b).

Only one article devoted to Ukrainian cyber-politics has been found. Relying on the study of political queries conducted by online search agency META (<http://www.meta-ukraine.com>) Larisa Kompantseva's research mentions 279 sites existing in UANET and covering political matters with a number of unique documents on these sites – 70325. The volume of text information equals 1.9 Gb. (Kompantseva 2004). The research also revealed that 66 % of political websites in UANET were written in the Russian language, 3 % in English, and only 31 % of the sites were presented in Ukrainian. The analysis of the structural distribution within this sector shows that the sites of political parties and politicians do not form the core of the Ukrainian political Internet: 55 % of the political Internet space are news media sites, news agencies, or online media, 23 % – sites of political parties and organizations, 14 % – analytical websites and forums, 8 % – personal websites of politicians. 70 % of political websites are hosted in the Kiev region. Other regions occupy from 5 % to 1 % of the Ukrainian political Internet (Kompantseva 2004: 112-113).

## 2. Political system of Ukraine

Political system in Ukraine presents a semi-presidential representative democracy based on a multi-party system where the executive power is exercised by the Cabinet and the legislative power is a prerogative of Verkhovna Rada (the Ukrainian Parliament). The President of Ukraine is elected by the citizens of Ukraine for a five-year term on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage, by secret ballot. A candidate must be a citizen of Ukraine who has attained the age of thirty-five, has the right to vote, has resided in Ukraine for the past ten years prior to the day of elections, and has command of the state language as required by Article 103 of Ukrainian Constitution.

Ukraine has a large number of political parties; many of them have tiny memberships and are practically unknown to the general public. Small parties often join in multi-party coalitions, so called electoral blocks, to participate in parliamentary elections. At the same time, the overall trust to the political parties in Ukraine is very low: 84 % of Ukrainians do not trust parliament (<http://www.nrcu.gov.ua/index.php?id=148&listid=107707>). Simultaneously, the former German Ambassador in Ukraine (2000–2006), Studemann considers that personalities in Ukrainian politics are more important than ideological platforms (<http://www.kyivpost.com/news/politics/detail/55635/>). It indi-

cates indirectly the importance of personal factor in local politics, including presidential campaigning.

### **3. Race for the Office 2010**

The Ukrainian presidential election of 2010 is Ukraine's fifth presidential election since declaring independence after the breakdown of USSR in 1991. Eighteen candidates were nominated by The Central Election Commission. Sixteen applications for candidate registration were rejected, due to errors in their documentation, qualifications or failure to pay the required 2.5 million hryvnas nomination deposit. Nominations closed on November 9, 2009. The Central Election Commission had to process nomination documentations until November 11, and to finalize the election list by November 13. It was the first time the state register of voters was used in a Ukrainian election. The first round of voting took place on January 17, 2010. Eighteen candidates (3 females and 15 males) were nominated for election (10 independent candidates and 8 representing political blocks and parties) in which incumbent president Viktor Yushchenko was voted out of office having received only 5.45 % of the vote (see Appendix N1). The two highest polling candidates, Viktor Yanukovich (34.32 %) and Yulia Tymoshenko (25.05 %), faced each other in a final run-off ballot on February 7, 2010. The run-off between Prime Minister Tymoshenko and opposition leader Yanukovich followed on February 7, 2010. On February 14, Viktor Yanukovich, with 48.95 % of the popular vote, was declared President-elect and winner of the 2010 Ukrainian Presidential election.

### **Results and discussion**

The research showed that among all nominees only two candidates (Vasiliy Protvytsikh and Mykhailo Brodskyi) did not have either personal sites or their party's sites. Three nominees (Petro Symonenko, Oleksandr Moroz, and Oleksandr Pabat) had virtual affiliation only with their party's sites. However, the former and current speakers Vladymyr Lytvyn and Arseniy Yatseniuk had two personal sites but only one site was updated regularly. The site of Incumbent President of Ukraine possessed the highest PR indicator which equaled 8. This indicator was calculated twice: before and after Elections 2010. Among "non-president" nominees only the personal sites by Anatolii Hrytsenko and

Yulia Tymoshenko show PR equal to 6. The Suprun's, Riabokon's, Yatseniuk's, and Tihipko's sites show PR equal to 5. GOOGLE search gives two old versions of Arseniy Yatseniuk's and Viktor Yushchenko's sites. They are without practically any update and unranked by GOOGLE or YANDEX. They appear abandoned and are not in high demand by the Internet users (see Appendix N<sub>2</sub>). The site of the Leader of Ukrainian National Party Yurii Kostenko is also unranked by GOOGLE. Simultaneously, the site of the present president of Ukraine Victor Yanukovich shows the highest scores in ATR and TIC (ATR = 122 684, TIC = 5100) (see Appendix N<sub>2</sub>) being the most popular Internet-resource among the research sample sites. Yulia Tymoshenko's site occupies the second position in popularity (ATR=147.314, TIC = 400) then the web-site by Hrytsenko (ATR=391.567; TIC =250) follows. Thus, one can speak about three leaders on the political Ukrainian web now. Sites by Yanukovich, Tymoshenko, and Hrytsenko reveal the highest PR, TIC and ATR ranks. The Tihipko's and Yatseniuk's occupy the fourth and the fifth positions in accessibility, popularity and visibility rankings on the Net (see Appendix N<sub>2</sub>).

There are four sites owned by Tihipko, Tymoshenko, Yanukovich, and Yatseniuk that are registered by the DMOZ Directory. Practically all the sites covered by the present research are indexed by GOOGLE and YANDEX. There is only one exception (the Kostenko's site) that is unranked by any search engine. The site of Yanukovich (as a leader of Partii Regioniv) contains the biggest number of web-pages indexed by GOOGLE. The sites of Tymoshenko, Tihipko, and Suprun follow.

The total amount of ingoing and outgoing links of the personal sites shows that the Ratushniak's site maintains the highest number of them. The research testifies that the personal sites of Ukrainian candidates are integrated into the web space rather weakly.

As for the use of social media by the aforementioned sites, it is the site of Tihipko – the leader of Silnaia Ukraina Party, that maintains the links practically to all Web 2.0 Tihipko's accounts: FACEBOOK, ODNOKLASSNIKI.RU, VKONTAKTE, TWITTER, LIVEJOURNAL, YOUTUBE and YANDEXVIDEO. There is an RSS feed, a search slot, a site map, and a 'virtual possibility' to join the Party, or to "ask Mr. Tihipko any questions online". The site also maintains Tihipko's personal blog. There are a number of pod-casts with video and audio materials about the leader of Silnaia Ukraina. This site indicates the highest level of interactivity, virtual presence on the web being the best example how to use social

media and Internet tools properly and effectively in personal campaigning online. There are three language versions of the site: Ukrainian, Russian and English differing slightly one from another.

The site of Yulia Tymoshenko, the former prime-minister of Ukraine and the leader of Joint Opposition in Ukraine also displays a great level of interactivity. It is possible to join the block of Tymoshenko followers, download party materials and posters, connect with official and private blogs, visit her LIVEJOURNAL account, watch movies about Tymoshenko from YOUTUBE Channel. Unfortunately, there are no links either to her TWITTER or ODNOKLASSNIKI.RU accounts. Simultaneously, it is possible to download the latest video and audio materials. The site keeps an RSS feed, a site map, and an archive as well. Additionally, registered site visitors can comment upon any news located on this web-resource. There are three identical versions of the site functioning on the web: Ukrainian, Russian, and English.

The site of Hrytsenko, the former Minister of Defence and current Head of Verkhovna Rada Committee for National Security and Defence also impresses by its professional design, easy navigation, and very high level of interactivity. There are a lot of social media tools' icons to TWITTER, FACEBOOK, LIVEJOURNAL, YOUTUBE, personal blogs accounts (two of them maintained by leading political e-media in Ukraine: KORRESPONDENTNET and UKRAINSKAYA PRAVDA) located on this resource. The site keeps a search slot, an RSS feed, a mailing list, a guest-book, a forum, and many podcasts. It is possible to address question to Mr. Hrytsenko, to join the Grazhdanskaya Pozitsiya Party, to donate money, to find the nearest regional party office, and to make any comment in blog posts attached to the site. Unfortunately, this site is accessible only to native speakers of Ukrainian.

It is also interesting to analyse the website of the current Speaker of Ukraine Volodymyr Lytvyn. He, in fact, owns two personal sites located at (<http://litvin.in.ua>) and at (<http://www.lytvyn-v.org.ua/news>). However, the first serves exclusively as a Virtual Parlour for the online sign-up to the party headed by the Speaker. The second site presents a virtual Speaker's office that is rather functional and operative. The visitor can find a lot of interesting things about Volodymyr Lytvyn's personality reflected in his academic career and priorities, professional advances, etc. Visitors can also expand their knowledge about the Party headed by the Speaker, obtain the information about the Speaker's office hours, read Lytvyn's speeches and articles, his bio, or view pho-



tos. The site also provides useful links to the Official Site of Ukrainian Parliament (Verkhovna Rada) and to his party site. The site keeps the search slot and site map to facilitate the navigation through it. The visitor can also evaluate the design of the site going through the survey located and filled in online. Nevertheless, there are no indications to the social media services used by the Speaker in his everyday political activity at all. The site is unranked by GOOGLE (PR=0) and displays a very low index of popularity (ATR=6.133.201). There is only a Ukrainian version of the site presented on the web.

Similarly, the site of Arseniy Yatseniuk (the youngest politician among the candidates) does not maintain any social media. Simultaneously, it reveals rather high PR and ATR indices, equal to 5 and 1.973.868, correspondingly. For the visitor there are only two options to interact with this resource. He/she faces the opportunity to donate money or obtain information about the party and its leader in verbal (text) and non-verbal (audio and video) formats. The site is written in Russian and Ukrainian.

As for the sites of Viktor Yanukovych and Viktor Yushchenko, two examinations were conducted before and after election (see Appendix N2). There are no differences in accessibility, interactivity, visibility of state versions of sites (presidential) on the web: the same values of PR (PR=8), ATR (ATR=122.581), and TIC (TIC=5100) indices; both sites are registered in DMOZ Directory and indexed by GOOGLE and YANDEX.

Comparing the sites before and after the 2010 election, one can argue that the site of the former President of Ukraine Viktor Yushchenko is augmented by the links to the Web 2.0 services substantially. There are links to the President's FLICKR, FACEBOOK, YOUTUBE, and TWITTER accounts located on the site. The site visitor faces the possibility to join the President's Team, become an electioneer, invite friends, receive invitations, add any gadgets, subscribe to e-mail lists, view news, photos and movies about Victor Yushchenko as a President of Ukraine, and even vote for him online.

The site of Viktor Yanukovych (his opponent in two latest election campaigns) differs considerably. There are no social media located on it. As for interactive elements, the site keeps only an RSS Feed, and a "Feedback" slot on the start-page of the site. Earlier, the site was overloaded by movies, photos, and speeches by its owner.

After the 2010 election, when Mr. Yanukovych became the President of Ukraine, the site layout and its URL-address were replaced by

the Official web-site of the President of Ukraine in *gov.ua* domain. Currently, the site is functioning in Ukrainian, Russian, and English. The site visitor can make a virtual tour of the Main Office; get acquainted with the Main Law and the latest orders, decrees, instructions that are published on this site immediately after being signed by the President. The site also offers a handy search option. Concurrently, there are a lot of audio and video files attached to this portal. However, there are no web 2.0 communicative tools located there: blogs, or links to presidential social media accounts, and the like.

On the contrary, the site of his forerunner (Viktor Yushchenko) looks abandoned and non-demanded by the Internet users at present. Its PR and TIC indicators have zero ratings, and ATR index shows only 19.832.450, which displays a stable unpopularity of this resource.

The research of political parties affiliated with candidates to the Office 2010 was also conducted (see Appendix N3). According to its results, the sites of *Komunystychna Partii*a, *Nasha Ukraina*, and *Partiia Regioniv* are the most visible on the web (PR=6, TIC=500, 800, 900), followed by *BYUT*, *Sotsialistychna Partii*a, and *Narodno-demokratychna Partii*a (PR=5, TIC=85, 20), and *Svoboda* and *Front Zmin* are the most demanded among Internet-users (ATR=241.695, 359.467). The site by *BYUT* maintains the most number of hyperlinks and displays the highest level of integration into the web. Seven party sites are registered by *DMOZ* Directory.

To estimate the use of social media gadgets by the nominees to the Office 2010, the number of blogs, *TWITTER*, *FACEBOOK*, *VKONTAKTE*, *ODNOKLASSNIKI*, and *YOUTUBE* accounts; the number of *TWITTER*'s followers, followings, and twits on the *TWITTER* nominee's account with *TWITTER* account PR, friends in *FACEBOOK*, *VKONTAKTE*, *ODNOKLASSNIKI*, and posts, comments and friends in blog accounts and the date of last post or entry have been examined and counted (see Appendices NN4-9).

The research revealed that there are only eight active bloggers among the nominees (Tymoshenko, Tihipko, Yatseniuk, Tiahnybok, Hrytsenko, Kostenko, Brodskyi, and Riabokon) (see Appendix N4). The others do not create any accounts at all (Symonenko, Pabat or Protvytsikh) or abandon their accounts before Election 2010 (Moroz in 2007, Lytvyn in 2008, Bogoslovska and Suprun in December 2009). Some candidates (Kostenko or Yatseniuk) have several accounts but only one of them is in use. Among the most interesting blogs that are

constantly updated and contain serious analytics, political and even personal materials one can mention blogs by Hrytsenko, Tihipko, Tiahnybok, Tymoshenko, and Brodskyi. It is Yulia Tymoshenko, who is the most advanced user in Ukrainian blogosphere. She has got two acting accounts – one hosted by LIVEJOURNAL.com (Official), and one stand-alone personal blog without politics. They contain the biggest volume of posts and comments among all accounts (see Appendix N4). The author introduces her personal blog posts with an emotional invitation to her virtual community:

*It's me, Yulia Tymoshenko. Today I am starting my blog. They say that Roosevelt won his Presidential Election by means of radio, Kennedy by means of television and Obama by means of Internet... I am not trying to repeat President Obama's deed. I will communicate with all of you; analyze your suggestions, criticisms and remarks. It is not a secret to me that among the users of the Internet there are many of my supporters as well as my opponents. It is all very good... It is very important for me to hear your voice... In this blog there will be none of point-blank political themes. Well, almost none :-)* Maybe this will be the only Internet resource, where the name of Tymoshenko is not associated with politics. In order for us to communicate freely, I would like to say a few words about some rules and principles that define the existence of my blog. 1. This is my personal blog. Everything that is posted here will be my own words and ideas. I will be honest with you. In my opinion a blog must be 'alive' so that it could work. 2. There will be freedom of speech on this site. However, irrelevant profanities on this site will be ruthlessly deleted. 3. Obviously, I will not be able to communicate with you every day. Nonetheless, I will try to respond several times per week. Let us also agree that we will not discuss the topics of the blog during my press conferences and briefings. This blog, as you can see, is still a bit 'raw'. This is my fault, since I do not have much time for the photo sessions. But I promise you that soon there will be colourful photographs and new headings here... That's all, folks. Thank you very much. We'll talk later! (Tymoshenko 2009).

This is the only blog maintained concurrently in three languages. However, Tihipko is catching up with Tymoshenko having opened a LIVEJOURNAL account and attached a second blog to his personal site. The start-up page of his blog contains links to all virtual offices of this

candidate on the Net (his official site: <http://tigipko.com>, Site-news through RSS: <http://tigipko.com/rss>, site-attached blog (<http://blog.tigipko.com>), TWITTER: <http://twitter.com/SergeyTigipko>, LIVEJOURNAL: <http://tigipko.livejournal.com>, FACEBOOK (Russian Version): <http://facebook.com/Tigipko>, FACEBOOK (Ukrainian Version): <http://facebook.com/SergiyTigipko>, VKONTAKTE: <http://vkontakte.ru/SergeyTigipko>, Official Group of Sergii Tihipko's Supporters: <http://vkontakte.ru/club12958639>, YOUTUBE: <http://youtube.com/user/SergeyTigipko> and YANDEXVIDEO: <http://video.yandex.ru/users/SergeyTigipko>) (Оновлення представництв в соціальних мережах та блогах 2010).

As for the use of Micro-blogging service TWITTER, 13 candidates (Brodskyi, Tiahnybok, Tymoshenko, Tihipko, Yatseniuk, Yushchenko, Lytvyn, Hrytsenko, Protvyshk, Bohoslovska, Ratushn'iak, Kostenko and Yanukovych) had their accounts on TWITTER.COM (see Appendix N5). Even Vasyl Protvyshk started twittering online. However he tweeted only once: "There will be a voting in a couple of hours. I advise you to think again in your voting-booths: is the person selected by you worth to be the President of Ukraine?!" One can mention that TWITTER is the only web 2.0 service used by this candidate (protvyshk 2010). As for other candidates, Tymoshenko was the most active user on the TWITTER, too. She twitted 3990 twits. Brodskyi and Tihipko follow with 672 and 471 twits, correspondingly. Bogoslovska, Hrytsenko and Yatseniuk follow the greatest number of twitter subscribers. Tihipko has the greatest number of followers (2228), followed by Yatseniuk and Yushchenko (when he was President) 'tweet' with 1442 and 1160 followers accordingly. Yanukovych, Yatseniuk, Tymoshenko, Brodskyi, Tihipko and Tiahnybok updated their accounts regularly.

Speaking about social networking services used by the candidates, ODNOKLASSNIKI.RU is the most popular web-resource: 11 politicians have accounts on it; 10 have accounts on VKONTAKTE and five persons are registered on the FACEBOOK (see Appendix NN6-8). Lytvyn, Tihipko, and Tiahnybok have the biggest number of friends; Tiahnybok and Pabat are registered in the greatest number of groups. Ms. Bogoslovska exposes the greatest number of photos on her webpage in ODNOKLASSNIKI.RU. The leader of "Svoboda" Mr. Tiahnybok is most active in social networks ODNOKLASSNIKI.Ru having 234 events in his profile, and then Mr. Tihipko, the leader of Silnaia Ukraina Party, follows. At the same time he is among the top in VKONTAKTE, the

second most popular service among the Ukrainian Internet-users (Top 100 Saitov Ukrainy 2009). All five candidates (Brodskiy, Pabat, Riabokon, Tihipko, and Tiahnybok) registered on the FACEBOOK also have their profiles in VKONTAKTE and ODNOKLASSNIKI. Tiahnybok and Tihipko possess most of all contacts, photos, activities with this media. Especially Sergii Tihipko is very up-and-doing in VKONTAKTE. Through the research of candidates' accounts in social networks a great number of fake accounts (clones) have been found. As an illustration there are more than ten accounts by 'Tymoshenko' registered on ODNOKLASSNIKI at present.

As for the effectiveness of YOUTUBE use in presidential campaign some Politics 2.0 researchers point to the number of people, that view a video, the number of people engaged in debates about the video, and the extent to which a video spreads to other online resources outside the Channel (Turnek and Jankowski 2008: 11).

Candidates' YOUTUBE accounts and the total amount of candidates' videos located on this channel and separate accounts, the number of comments, subscribes, channel views, video views and the last visit to the account are examined and counted in this research. There are only four candidates (Hrytsenko, Tymoshenko, Tiahnybok, Tihipko) who created their accounts on this web-resource (see Appendix N9). The Tymoshenko's YOUTUBE account is in high demand by the YOUTUBE visitors. It maintains the biggest number of movies, comments, views of channels and videos, and Tiahnybok's and Tihipko's accounts stand next. As to the number of videos located on this channel, the Tymoshenko's account also leads, followed by the accounts of Yanukovich and Yushchenko. Three candidates (Suprun, Protyvsikh, and Riabokon) score the lowest rates on this resource (see Appendix N9).

## **Summary and Future Perspectives**

The research reveals that personal, candidate-centered campaigning and interactivity on the web provide a foundation for successful election. There is a direct correlation between the candidate's interactivity online and his/her success in presidential race.

The online presidential campaign by Sergiy Tihipko presents the brightest example how to interact online timely and justly. Having started practically without any political capital (without any party affiliation, official position in the government or parliament, etc.) he became a third force in Election 2010 and influenced greatly the presi-

dential campaign results. It was also possible due to intensive and proper use of modern media including the Internet. His communicative strategies in the social media sustained greatly his success in Presidential Election 2010 and are facilitating substantially the current race in forthcoming local elections to regional bodies. His personal web site serves as a virtual operative headquarter, not even 'office', to expand and consolidate his constituency. This virtual headquarter organizes the work with the candidate's accounts registered with other social media: TWITTER, YOUTUBE, FACEBOOK, etc., providing the latest info, organizing primaries, or expanding and consolidating his followers' virtual community. Additionally, the immediate and constant feedback with his constituency through comments on Tihipko's videos, speeches, permits to coordinate and enhance all election activities.

The research indicates that the use of Web 2.0 services with their high level of conceptual interactivity and possibility to generate common content constructs a 'social thermometer' *sui generis* permitting to measure political temperature timely and accurately. The challenge is to develop the appropriate communicative strategy to be used with this social tool.

One can also speak about a particular e-networking, a communicative strategy that permits to find, consolidate, and expand the followers' community who, in the course of time, offer political support for certain candidates.

Nowadays it is rather difficult to differentiate between the real and the virtual. One can suggest that your followers on TWITTER or friends on VKONTAKTE will turn into your strong supporters and volunteers in political campaigning in real life. It will probably be the greatest impact of social media on future political developments.

The research also reveals that it is rather difficult to run for the Main Office without the Internet. Candidates who practically had not used the web came last in the presidential race.

Additionally, the results reveal the influence of local context on political communication on the web manifesting in deepening Digital Divide between the developed and the CIS countries as to the access to the broadband Internet connection especially in non-urban areas.

One can speak about the increasing influence of personal candidate-centred online campaigning when the leader's charisma off- and online influences the election results greatly, as Yulia Tymoshenko's

political campaign shows. Of course, she lost the presidential race but with a minimum gap to Victor Yanukovich.

The research also reveals one of the greatest threats for Politics 2.0. It is the problem of clones and fake accounts by political leaders existing on the Net, see “Вся правда про Твіттер Яценюка” (<http://watcher.com.ua/?p=1486>). One can recommend providing special links from officially registered sites affiliated with certain parties or politicians to their registered accounts on social media. It would be one of the tools of protecting virtual political existence on the web.

The increasing impact of e-networking on Politics 2.0 supports greatly the effectiveness of election campaign offline. Online communities let people not only support the candidate, but also be active in their support – becoming “an extension of the political process beyond the candidate” as Cone delineates (Cone 2010).

The findings present some new tendencies of Politics 2.0 as part of a larger national media spectrum. However, new media and digital technologies advance rather quickly and the constant monitoring of political web on a regular base at a national level is needed to understand how these new media shape our public sphere.

From a methodological point of view, the cyber-society requires a mixture of quantitative and qualitative research methods, that would further look into the imbrications of different media forms and forms of political communication, examine people’s relationship with various expression and information media and observe the reshaping of the traditional statuses and roles in various environments – electronic versions of newspapers, political blogs and forums, social networks and mash-up media, etc. “Finally, another step further will be to refine and expand the research questions, develop and adapt valid but also innovative methodological tools that have been proven useful in other social and political settings and draw fruitful theoretical and empirical comparisons about different new media landscapes in Central and Eastern Europe”, as M. Barbovschi argues (Barbovschi 2008: 13).

At the beginning it was Politics 1.0, currently Politics 2.0 appears. What will come next? Will the term Politics 3.0 be coined in the nearest future?

































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