



READING CULTURE IN THE DIGITAL AGE: TRANSFORMATION, CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

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Abstract

This article explores the culture of reading in the digital age. It examines the evolution of reading practices, the impact of digital technologies on cognitive processes and individual value orientations, and the social and cultural consequences of the changing status of reading. Particular attention is paid to the role of education, libraries, and media education in fostering a sustainable culture of meaningful reading. The need for a transition to a hybrid model of reading culture, combining traditional and digital forms of working with text, is substantiated.

Keywords: reading culture, digital age, digitalization, media culture, clip thinking, information society, reading practices.

Introduction

Reading is a fundamental cultural practice that ensures the continuity of knowledge, the formation of identity, and the development of society's intellectual potential. For centuries, it has served not only as a means of acquiring information but also as a form of human dialogue with culture, history, and oneself.

In the 21st century, amid the rapid development of digital technologies, the internet, and mobile devices, traditional reading culture is facing significant changes. Texts are losing their stable material form and becoming part of a multimedia space, and the reading process is increasingly interrupted by streams of visual and auditory information. These processes require scientific understanding, as they affect not only education but also the foundations of society's cultural development.



Literature Review and Methods

The following researchers have worked on this topic:

1. Naomi S. Baron — professor and linguist, author of *Words Onscreen: The Fate of Reading in a Digital World* (2015). This work is frequently cited in research on the transition from paper to screen reading and its consequences for attention and depth of text perception. Springer Nature
2. Nick Carr — author of *The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains*, which analyzes how the Internet and digital technologies affect our ability to concentrate and read deeply. Eco-Vector Journals Portal
3. B. Yilmaz — a researcher of reading in the digital environment, examining the problems of modern reading and the prospects for its development under the influence of digital media. Ararat Digital Library
4. Shuhua Liu is the author of an article on digital reading culture from a media and technology perspective. Francis Academic Press
5. Truong Dai Luong — a researcher analyzing the impact of ICT on reading, digital skills, and information literacy in the context of reading culture. International Education Journal
6. Yu. V. Maslova is the author of research on the transformation of reading culture in the context of the digitalization of society. Eco-Vector Journals Portal
7. Arkady V. Sokolov is a professor who has contributed to reading theory and cultural studies of reading culture, including its changes in the digital age. RCSI Journals Platform
8. A.V. Martynenko studied the subcultural aspects of reading culture in the digital age (for example, reading communities on social networks). sciup.org
9. A. Umarov studies the culture of reading and the role of libraries

While not all of the authors listed below directly explore reading culture, their work often serves as a context or methodological basis for studying digital reading and its social consequences:

- Kathi Inman Berens and Rachel Noorda studied how the digital generation (Gen Z) is changing reading habits and reading formats. Financial Times
- Evgeny I. Kuzmin is a leading Russian organizer and researcher of reading support programs (including projects on reading in the digital and information environment). Wikipedia

What do these scientists have in common:



- Analysis of the impact of digital technologies on the depth of text perception and reading skills.
- Changing formats of reading activity (e-books, online reading, multimedia texts).
- The relationship between the digital environment and cultural, cognitive and educational aspects of reading.

Discussions

Reading as a cultural and historical phenomenon

Historically, reading developed as an elite and then a mass practice, closely linked to the development of writing, printing, and education. Printed books fostered linear thinking, logical argumentation, and the ability to concentrate for long periods of time.

Reading served a number of key functions:

- cognitive — acquisition of knowledge and information;
- value-oriented — formation of worldview and moral principles;
- communicative - inclusion of the individual in cultural dialogue;
- reflexive - development of self-awareness and critical thinking.

Thus, the culture of reading has always been an integral part of the general cultural capital of a society.

Theoretical approaches to the concept of reading culture

In academic literature, reading culture is examined within various disciplines: pedagogy, sociology, cultural studies, psychology, and media theory. Broadly speaking, it is defined as a set of social norms, individual skills, and value systems related to the perception and interpretation of text.

Modern research emphasizes that reading culture includes:

- motivation to read;
- ability to work with different types of texts;
- ability to interpret and critically evaluate information;
- conscious choice of sources.

In the digital age, this concept takes on an interdisciplinary character, as text increasingly exists in the media environment.

The digital age and the changing media landscape. Digitalization has led to the emergence of a fundamentally new media landscape, in which text competes with



visual and auditory forms of content. The internet, social media, and instant access platforms have radically altered the structure of information consumption. The characteristic features of the digital environment are:

- information redundancy;
- accelerating the pace of communication;
- fragmentation of attention;
- the dominance of screen forms of perception.

Under these conditions, reading loses its status as the primary form of acquiring knowledge, giving way to browsing, skimming, and scanning information.

Transformation of reading practices

Contemporary reading practices are diverse and unstable. Reading is becoming:

- non-linear, based on hypertext links;
- fragmentary, focused on individual semantic blocks;
- utilitarian, aimed at quick results.

Electronic texts are often consumed while multitasking, which reduces depth of perception and makes it difficult to form holistic meaning. At the same time, the digital environment offers opportunities for personalized reading and expanded access to rare and scholarly sources.

Cognitive and psychological consequences of digital reading

Changes in reading culture are reflected in individuals' cognitive processes.

Research indicates:

- decreased attention span;
- decrease in long-term memory capacity;
- weakening of analytical thinking;
- the prevalence of superficial understanding of the text.

At the same time, the digital environment facilitates the development of skills for quickly navigating information space, which fosters new cognitive strategies. The challenge lies in finding a balance between speed and depth of thought.

Clip thinking as a cultural phenomenon. Clip thinking is a consequence of the mind's adaptation to a fragmented information flow. It is characterized by the perception of reality through short, vivid, and emotionally charged images. From the perspective of reading culture, clip thinking presents a dual problem: on the one hand, it reduces the ability to read thoughtfully, and on the other, it reflects



new forms of cultural communication that require a rethinking of pedagogical approaches.

Social and cultural consequences of the transformation of reading. Changing reading culture affects the social structure of society. A decline in interest in complex texts can lead to:

- simplification of public discourse;
- reducing the level of critical analysis;
- the growth of manipulative practices in the media.

At the same time, digital technologies democratize access to knowledge and facilitate the formation of new reading communities, opening up opportunities for the development of a reading culture in new forms.

The role of education, libraries and cultural institutions

Educational institutions and libraries play a key role in adapting reading culture to the digital age. Their goal is to develop students' skills in meaningful reading, critical analysis, and informational responsibility.

Conclusion

Media education is becoming an important tool for integrating digital technologies into the development of a reading culture without losing the depth and richness of reading.

A Hybrid Model of Reading Culture. Contemporary researchers increasingly discuss the need for a hybrid model of reading culture that combines the advantages of print and digital formats. This model requires the conscious use of technology and the preservation of the value of deep, reflective reading.

Reading culture in the digital age is a complex and dynamic phenomenon, reflecting the general processes of cultural and conscious transformation. Digital technologies do not eliminate reading, but they radically alter its forms and functions. The future of reading culture depends on society's ability to strike a balance between technological progress and the preservation of human values.

References

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