

## INFORMATION SOCIETY IN THE CONTEXT OF THREATS TO PERSONAL SECURITY IN CYBERSPACE

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**Abstract:** Significant problems associated with the development and transformation of mass media, which quickly began their expansion in cyberspace, have become one of the most important areas of human life. The author drew attention to the issues of the development of cyberspace whose specific characteristics further the development of cybermedia. She presented selected issues related to cybermedia, the impact they can play in the information society that develops relatively quickly, as well as the threats they pose to personnel security. This article aims to show human threats in the online social space in the context of personal security in cyberspace on the example of pathological behaviour in online communication based on 'pathostreaming'.

**Keywords:** virtual reality, cyberspace, virtual communities, digital freedom, personal security in cyberspace.

### 1. Introduction

The complexity of the world can be analysed in the context of cultural and civilization changes, which cannot be discussed here, but still the analyses conducted by M. Mead (Mead, 2000) and describing the process of development and socialization in various cultures, both primitive and contemporary, in the consistent aspect can bring down cultural transformations of the contemporary world to reversing the traditional principles of upbringing and socialization (the older generation learns from the younger generation – prefigurative culture). The complex and changing living space of human is therefore determined by socio-cultural factors influencing the development and quality of self-creation, which is especially true for the younger generation. What is often noticed is the disturbing superficiality, shortness, shallowness and fragility of relations between people, which are founded on maintaining contacts on the basis of temporality and randomness, not the closeness of face-to-face meetings. The personal ties in the family as well as peer and local environment as constitutive elements

of the human community give way to material (instrumental) ties, characteristic of a given community, and purposeful interactions, where a "commodity" are not emotions and experiences of people, but a common interest, exchange of goods and services. The instrumental ties imply cooperation only if it serves to achieve some limited and direct goal (Marshall, 2008).

The aftermath of globalization processes is the increasing socio-cultural unification influencing the course and character of upbringing process in the contemporary school. The school has largely lost its pedagogical impact by becoming a merely educational institution. This is a highly disturbing phenomenon since education non-supporting the shaping of character can turn against the individual (Banach, 2004.). The richness of the offer and the multiplicity of patterns and environments that people encounter may contribute to the state of internal chaos. Hence the susceptibility of young people to various ideologies, beliefs and impact of subcultures, which the school and the family simply cannot cope with. Creating a certain educational alternative in the form of return to nature and simple life, the roots, tradition, search for universal values and involvement in social and charitable activities can set important goals for school, family or environmental education.

People involved in upbringing currently mention the so-called "new children" who suffer from lack of concentration, they are inefficient at work, introverted and unable to live in society. In many schools in the West, each discipline has completely collapsed and normal teaching has become simply impossible. Despite the use of ever-newer teaching methods, modern laboratories, computers and ITE, as well as employing better educated teachers, the knowledge of graduates of those schools is lower, the ability to independent, creative thinking is pitifully low, willingness is very poor, orientation towards the world and values – none or only little and false (Wellman, and Hogan, 2005).

In many theoretical studies, attention is paid to the situation of educational reality in the modern world, which is increasingly called 'global' due to various processes that it has been undergoing for a long time. These processes, called 'globalization', have been identified with rapid intensification that exceeds the flow of capital, goods, labor, services and ideas. This phenomenon cannot be limited only to economics because it is also the dissemination of certain processes taking place beyond capital, goods, work and services – it also concerns politics, culture or knowledge (Green, 2002).

It can be said that in present-day Poland we are dealing with a cultural vacuum, in which huge, opposing loads accumulate – on the one hand: a sense of freedom, on the other: material degradation. The IT revolution certainly has an impact, which must have caused a deep cultural crisis, because social bonds are weakening, rules are breaking down, various taboos are being broken, we have a sense of chaos of values.

The Internet is a relatively new medium for communicating, expressing thoughts, passing on ideas and views, but the ease of disseminating information also creates a field for abuse, entering the sphere of freedom of other people. Until recently, it seemed that global network is a completely unregulated area, non-standardised by any rules. This situation is slowly changing

– lawmakers and courts are more and more beginning to set limits of behaviour on the network. People posting content on the Internet must do it with minimal caution, so as not to breach the limits of freedom of speech, especially in the field of broadly understood public security, crime, morality, public order, personal rights of others, as well as secret and confidential information.

As Stewart Brand (a creator of The WELL™) said, they wanted to create a space where they could implement their own ideas, experiment. Although they did not have any money or influence at that time, they were aware of the chance that appeared before them. Everyone could say anything there. The largest controversy was related to the philosophical approach to human freedom, traditionally associated with the concept of free will. In the considerations concerning freedom, a distinction was made between two concepts: freedom from something – i.e. from factors limiting the freedom of choice, and freedom to something, understood as an activity based on cognition and the use of natural and social necessity. In both meanings, freedom is not an absolute concept and – like any sphere of human activity – is subject to limitations.

It seems that the great myth of the century in which they had to live was the human right to freely express one's own personality. This myth often takes the same form today: everyone is allowed everything, but not everyone and everything. Contemporary society faces a sort of human crisis, based on a growing distrust of one's humanity, the very meaning of being, as well as the affirmation of joy that is creative. One of the most important changes, being at the same time a threat, is disappearance of the "universal man" thus versatile education. On the one hand, there is an easy contact with culture thanks to the dissemination of it by the media, on the other – reducing the mass culture, causing spiritual sloth and passivity. Freedom is an undeniable value in the process of human development. However, this value is mainly declared and extremely rarely implemented. True freedom is connected with people's development of their own skills and abilities in order to live the life they long for, guided by their aspirations (Sen, 2002). But freedom is also the object of aspirations and ambitions of the collectivity, especially those who, not because of their fault, are conscious of the experienced limitations and their sources. Sometimes, subjective efforts aimed at achieving freedom are related to dishonest, unethical and even oppressive behaviour towards others. Therefore, a person functioning in the space of their life experiences freedom and trust, but, simultaneously, is exposed to numerous threats.

The purpose of this article is to show human threats in the online social space, in the context of personal security in cyberspace on the example of pathological behaviour in online communication based on pathostreaming.

We aim to illustrate how conscious and active human participation in the virtual world, including existing threats, limits human freedom.

## 2. Virtual communities – socio-cultural changes in the information society

The Internet is the first global medium whose users are not only recipients, but also content creators. Virtual reality can be used in many areas of public and economic life: in medicine, entertainment, traffic control; as a tool in professional work or in various branches of industry. Hence cyberspace fulfills educational, service, entertainment, social, economic or culture-creating functions, as well as military ones.

In this context, it is justified to place the issue of freedom not only in the sense of the freedom of the recipient, but also – and perhaps, above all – the freedom of the sender of the posted content. If anybody has the right to use the network, does that mean that they can freely place everything they want on it? At first, we might be inclined to answer yes, but even a very superficial reflection raises doubts as to such a categorical statement. Freedom is undoubtedly a positive, one of the most important values, even constitutive of human existence, but the question is: is it an absolute value? The practice of everyday life indicates that it is impossible to answer this question affirmatively. Immediately, however, another question arises: who and how should limit our freedom on the Internet? Freedom of a human being living in a society is subject to multiple limitations, even if only resulting from the norms of social coexistence. However, the limits of social norms are not rigid and – especially today – are shifted in various ways, most often under the slogan of expanding the area of individual freedom; the very existence of them is not questioned. On the contrary, they are also a vital and absolutely necessary value in the life of every community, therefore they have a global dimension. To some extent we can witness the situation of coexistence and interdependence of two important values: freedom of the individual and social norms. Through such a prism one should look at the issue of freedom on the Internet.

However, the freedom of the global network is expressed not only in the unlimited possibility of using its resources or expressing one's own views (except for provisions in the regulations of particular services, e.g. portals or criminal law), but mainly in the absence of the main centre, which could be an entity / institution of supervision and control over its entirety. The indicated attribute is also mentioned as one of the special features of cyberspace. The others include, i.a.: liquidity, virtuality, unpredictability, modification (in the program and information layer), interactivity, no possibility to set boundaries, universal availability or versatility. The notion of freedom is an ambiguous term and unequally understood in different contexts as well as in relation to various areas of life. Virtual reality can be considered without taking into account its current technological implementation. Thanks to this, on the basis of fictitious and partly existing models, it creates a sort of VR typology, however, separating it from the typology of the virtuality phenomenon itself. Using the Internet, virtual communities (i.e. communities in which people meet in cyberspace) communicate long enough to get to know each other and create lasting relationships. Virtual communities arise because cyberspace is the place where network relationships can appear most clearly. In a network society, cyberspace becomes their natural environment. No wonder that more and more virtual

communities are appearing in the course of the development of this society. Internet and cyberspace become a natural area of their existence (Grubicka, 2017, pp. 230-250).

Globalization processes, as both the cause and the effect of the emergence of information societies, have a huge impact on the economy, politics, culture, education, and thus on a human and their relations with others. The results of these huge transformations are: relaxation and breakup of many traditional ties, disintegration of communities and groups considered before the advent of the information age as permanent and inseparable (Batorski, 2006, pp. 144-146). It seems that the cult of individualism, the pursuit of self-realization and climbing the career ladder cause that the organic communities (i.e. family, neighborhood, professional groups) lose their previous significance. The rapid development of information and communication technologies favours such a process. Time–space compression as well as easy and fast communication cause that members of organic, traditional and primitive social groups enter into new social relations. It turns out, however, that family and neighbour ties do not have to disappear – with the help of highly specialised communication tools, you can overcome all obstacles and barriers, e.g. the distance between your home and your workplace. Although the role of organic communities as understood in traditionally manner weakens – direct communication is lost, it does not mean that the modern human being is completely deprived of contacts with other people. New media, particularly the Internet as 24-hour global network (Hendrykowski, 2005, pp. 13-19), a web that wraps the entire Earth, enable the building of completely new, other interactions and communities that constitute a new quality in interpersonal relations (Stawiska, 2008, pp. 239-250).

Virtual communities can be created using the following tools and web applications that enable people to communicate with each other:

- e-mail, which allows you to send messages to one or many people, enabling discussion. There are countless newsgroups in cyberspace that correspond with each other using electronic mail.
- MUDs (Multiuser Dimensions), or various types of virtual text-based games that enable the player to communicate and establish personal contacts with other players.
- Chats that enable real-time conversation by sending messages together. The largest and most popular chat system is IRC (Internet Relay Chat), consisting of a myriad of free channels.
- BBS (Bulletin Board System), so-called forums where groups of people interested in a specific topic can discuss it there. Their members can write and send so-called posts or comments, to which all participants of the forum have an access. Everyone can read them and answer them with their own posts.
- WWW (World Wide Web), a special tool that supports all the above-mentioned applications and tools, facilitates an access to them and is a great interface for their use. It often occurs that a specific community is formed around a website.

Two types of virtual communities can be distinguished (Casrells, 2003, pp. 145-146). The former are specific virtual communities that are an extension of the real world community. There is no process today in which virtual communities would completely replace real communities. Communities organised in real time and space, which can be described as organic communities, obviously exist, but their existence depends to a large extent on technical means of communication, including the Internet. The Internet is increasingly used by people to transfer ties from the real world to the virtual world, extend these ties, shorten the distance to people they know in the real world. It also facilitates maintaining contacts with people we know from real space, but with whom, for some reasons (most often because of spatial distance), we cannot communicate. The Internet enables us to constantly refresh these contacts. M.P. Effrat has identified three types of interpersonal communities (Szpunar, 2004, p. 107), many examples confirm the fact that today they are increasingly supported by the Internet.

The classification is as follows:

- Communities as institutions of social solidarity, e.g. family, ethnic group, voluntary organization. Members of these groups feel mutual solidarity. Norms, roles, the feeling of warmth and closeness play a big role in these communities. Examples of such communities supported by the Internet may be: communication maintained by family members who are separated from one another, friends from other cities or immigrants who are outside their country.
- Communities as interactions, i.e. those in which relationships exist, connecting people beyond what is necessary. These informal relations make people cooperate. An example of such communities supported by the Internet may be a group of alter-globalists, who plan protest actions via the Internet.
- Communities as institutionally different groups, i.e. communities associated with a common institution on the basis of belonging to a social category (Nowak, and Krejtz, 2006).

The second type of virtual communities are those existing only in cyberspace.

It often happens that people participate in virtual communities that arise spontaneously and independently of human relationships outside the network. In cyberspace it is extremely easy to find people similar to us and make contact with them, satisfying the need of belonging to a group, building our identity in this way. The community network that emerges in the society is not connected by any territorial bond, but the similarity of interests, views or values, which is why cyberspace is a perfect environment for it. Communities created only on the Internet are predominantly based on similarity. This is facilitated by the intentionality of virtual communities. Members participate in them voluntarily, with complete freedom and freedom of choice unheard of in any organic communities. In addition, abandonment of such communities is extremely easy because Internet users do not have to stay in them, trapped by necessities, conventions, roles or social norms. Without being restricted, people usually choose to participate in communities consisting of people similar to them (Siuda, 2006, pp. 179-186). The intentionality of virtual communities and their increasing popularity is influenced by their

spatiality and asynchrony. The point is that interactions in cyberspace are not limited either spatially or temporarily. Internet communities exist in every part of the globe, at any time. Spatial proximity does not matter and communication does not have to take place in real time.

It coincides with the nature of the network society, which is becoming less and less dependent on the territory. Virtual communities are also anti-stigmatic, i.e. the status and physical appearance of people are not significant. Race, nationality, age, gender, physical handicap or education do not matter. Community members often never get the chance to meet in reality and only the Internet enables them to establish mutual relationships (McKenna, and Seidman, 2005). Anti-stigmatism strengthens the role of similarity in shaping these communities. They are as homogeneous in terms of interests, values, views or attitudes of their members as heterogeneous they are in terms of age, social status and other status factors (Wellman et al., 1999, p. 15). It often happens that virtual communities are continued in real space. You can find many examples of such interweaving of real and virtual contacts. A person met in a chat or online forum may want to meet offline. It happens that groups of people who have met on the Internet also meet in reality, creating organic communities. The fact that cyberspace initiates real relationships proves that a network society is the best environment for the emergence of human communities. In view of this fact, the question arises: whether virtual communities can really be called full communities that can complement or completely replace the participation of people in organic communities? Many Internet critics emphasise the fact that in cyberspace individuals are alienated, unable to build relationships with other people, they enter into accidental, short-term and superficial contacts. Building internet communities is not possible due to the anonymity of people in cyberspace, enabling them to adopt any identities, which means that they live in a world of delusion and fantasy.

### **3. Virtual communities – socio-cultural changes in the information society**

The effect of IT revolution is that the modern world has become dual and simultaneous – both real and virtual at the same time. The spatial paradox of the global network implies the need for deeper considerations regarding the idea of digital freedom in a safe security space. In the aspect of the virtual network – the freedom to manifest itself will be both in an access to the legal resources existing in it, as well as the freedom to use them in any way and express our own beliefs or views. In turn, the parameter should be determined both by freedom from limitations in an access to resources as well as those related to censorship and threats. However, the dynamism of development implies not only positive changes, but also new challenges and threats. These threats have a twofold character: existing negative phenomena transferred to the real-world networks and the emergence of new categories of dangerous behaviour and crimes.

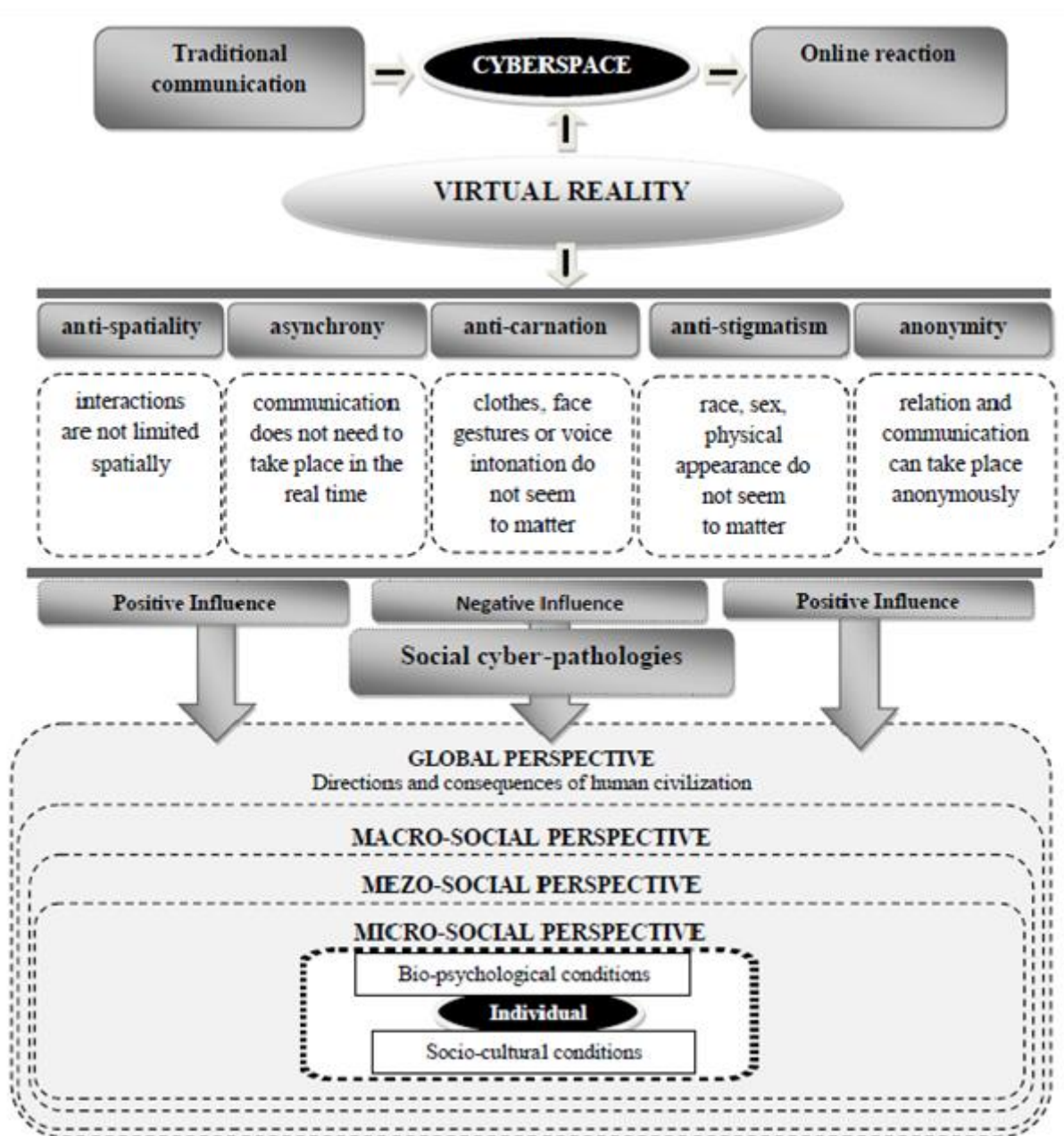
Open Internet resources facilitate access to various content, including illegal one, as well as the one that is not illegal in the light of the law, but belongs to the harmful category. The harmful content is considered to be the one that can cause negative emotions in the recipient and may affect their emotional, social spheres and behaviour. This include, e.g.: the content depicting violence, physical injuries, presenting drastic scenes, cruelty to animals, calling for self-destructive activities, as well as discriminatory and pornographic content. Almost a quarter of Polish young Internet users have been in contact with "content potentially threatening the social development of children, created by other Internet users" (Kirwil, 2011, pp. 42-44). Not only can the harmfulness of the content affect human development. Its attractiveness is also paradoxical. Interestingly, attractive content and applications with which users come into contact using the network may result in the loss of control over the time and intensity of the use of the Internet, computer, computer games, social networks and other virtual activities. This may result in the limitation or resignation from other activities of daily life and lead to neglecting of the family, duties, education or hobbies and / or avoiding contact with peers. Surveys of Polish teenagers have shown that they stayed on the Internet longer than they originally planned (83.3%) and more than half of them felt irritated when the Internet stopped working or they did not have access to it (64.2%). In addition, every fifth teenager has resigned from sleep and every third from their duties in order to be able to use the Internet (29.8%) ("Raport Nastolatki 3.0...", 2016).

Currently, there is a right to choose between the real social space and the alternative space – cyberspace. If the real space is as real as possible, then cyberspace is virtual. If the real space is territorially limited, meetings can take place at a certain latitude, in a specific time zone, then there is no time limit in cyberspace. In each unit of time you can contact people around the world, therefore, cyberspace becomes a new space of interpersonal or social relations. Anonymity in cyberspace causes that without these barriers you deal with a low stress level in this virtual reality. If contacts through these barriers are in fact exclusive, limited to a certain group of people, they are of an egalitarian (Grubicka, 2017a, pp. 135-145) character in cyberspace. It determines that cyberspace is becoming an increasingly attractive social space. More and more often, cyberspace is also becoming an opportunity to escape from problems in the real world. While avoiding uncomfortable dialogues, questions, comments or contacts in reality, Internet users are able to hide themselves on the network and create a space there, corresponding to their current needs or giving anonymity and a relative sense of security (Grubicka, 2017b, p. 142).

Users of cyberspace, participating in various virtual communities, begin to believe that it is not only a simulation of contact with another human being or group, but actually a form of interpersonal communication (Burszta, p. 175; Nowak, Krejtz, 2006). According to W. Burszta, this leads to the phenomenon of social loneliness, difficulties in defining one's identity, as well as the inability to communicate with others face to face (Burszta, 2003, p. 159).



From the observation of the online social life, i.e. the activity of its members is the beginning of the interaction continued in reality or vice versa, this reality is transferred and continued in the virtual space. This shows that the virtual community is not a completely separate reality, but only one of the ways to conduct an interaction that can affect other aspects of human life. Particularly that its participants have their socio-economic statute, gender, age, cultural environment and offline relationships. M. Smith lists five basic features that define the virtual community and are unachievable in traditional communication at the same time (Burszta, 2003, p. 200). These include: anti-spatiality, asynchrony, anti-carnation, anti-stigmatism, anonymity. Dependence of the virtual community on its assigned features in the perspective of social pathology analyses, is presented in Fig. 1.



**Figure 1.** Virtual community in the perspective of analyses of social pathologies. Source: own study.

In cyberspace (as in any social space), however, various deviations appear. That means behaviour which to a greater or lesser extent deviates from the applicable norms and value system.

Social pathologies are one of the greatest threats to a human in the social security space, although, it is often overlooked or marginalised in the broadly understood problem of social security. This is, however, an important problem, not only from the perspective of individuals affected by the pathological behaviour, but also of the whole society. It is not important whether we are dealing with new or old signs and whether other society is being even more disintegrated. What is important, however, is that all these phenomena indicate a serious mental illness of society (Leszczyńska, 2006).

Currently, in the social pathology itself, the term deviation and social pathology are often used interchangeably. However, these terms should be clearly distinguished for a simple reason – abnormal behaviour can be positive and negative. For instance, devotees can pose a threat, but they are needed in society for social progress. New cybersocial pathologies are characterised by an objective criterion for assessing pathological phenomena. The assigned criteria in real space take on features in cyberspace, including: behaviour that deviates from norms, is contrary to the system of values, accepts social damages; behaviour that requires appropriate social intervention through appointed people and/or institutions that counteract these attitudes.

The examples of behaviour that is destructive to social objects of both personal and structural entities in cyberspace are: cybercrime, cyberbullying, cybersex, Internet addiction disorder (netholism) and cell phone addiction (phonoholism). It should be noted that an individual, small social groups or larger communities can be a victim as well as the perpetrator of pathological behaviour via IT tools. The reference subject of activities undertaken by the social environment in the scope of ensuring their safety and protection against pathological phenomena can also become the causative agent of these activities. Self-harm and self-destruction seems to be a logical activity, typical of a madman.

According to S. Freud, each individual has an instinct which pushes them towards life, the so-called "life-drive", but also has a completely opposite impulse inclining them towards death and destruction – "death drive". It is also a factor causing the development of disturbing symptoms and self-destructive behaviour in some people. However, only in some cases these attitudes become rooted and transform into permanent personality traits. Usually, this happens if there are large layers of suppressed anger (Kulesza, 2012). Aggressive impulses in cyberspace are directed towards another person, but for some reason, it is impossible to express them. Sometimes this happens because these negative feelings are directed towards a loved one or they are hidden because of fear of the consequences of saying them out loud. In these cases, the aggression is directed at the person. In this way, a human learns how to behave like their own greatest enemy and develops self-destructive personality.

Self-destructive thoughts include all thoughts aimed at the devaluation of a person, preventing their progress or undermining their achievements. In the mind of a self-destructive person, such thoughts appear almost automatically. People with self-destructive tendencies often behave in a hostile or even harmful way towards others. They provoke unnecessary conflicts, behave in a mindless way, they are rude, jealous, they gossip, etc. They perceive the other person as a source of quarrel (Grubicka, 2015). Other people cause frustration in them because ties are based on comparisons in which, for one reason or another, they always lose. After such conflicts, they usually fall into the stage of deep self-pity. They attack, but when someone responds to their attack, they behave like victims of injustice. They offend, but when someone offends them, they feel sorry for themselves. They do not admit that it was their own fault.

The Internet is conducive to interpersonal contacts, however, online contacts carry certain risks, especially in cases of using the network to establish relationships with people that are unknown directly in the offline world. It is worth noting that just such an activity – communicating online with people who are personally unknown – is declared by as many as 25% (Kirwil, 2011, pp. 42-44; Żmijewska-Jędrzejczak, 2004) of young Internet users. Additionally, many of them admit to a personal meeting in the real world with previously unknown people, who they have met on the network. The group of dangerous contacts should also include the phenomenon of children's seduction on the Internet, based on creating a relationship via the Internet between an adult and a minor (under 15 years of age) in order to seduce and abuse them.

Dangerous contacts are also contacts aimed at drawing a teenager into various types of sects, groups, communities and subcultures e.g. expressing radical views, propagating aggressive behaviour, such as: self-mutilation, restricted diet or the use of psychoactive drugs. Such contacts are also made by people interested in obtaining personal data and other confidential information, later used for criminal purposes.

Building and maintaining potentially dangerous contacts with strangers is not only the domain of young people, but due to their inexperience and smaller age competences in the proper assessment of the situation as well as understanding and predicting the effects of actions taken; plus their openness, willingness to make friends and excessive trust; it is them who are more exposed to serious consequences.

The Internet is a place of experimentation, also with its own identity and tendency to take risky behaviour. What is the behaviour of web users? This include: seeking information about drugs and other psychoactive substances or activities harmful to health; making dangerous contacts (e.g. communication with strangers who may have paedophile tendencies or individuals/groups that encourage others to behaviour that is risky or illegal); sexting (including camera sexting) – the phenomenon of sending content (photos, videos) of an erotic nature, mainly sending one's own naked or half-naked photos via the Internet and a mobile phone. Sexting can also take the form of live sex communication – instant messaging using a video

camera on a device. Research shows that every fourth Polish teenager has received intimate pictures, 7% of teenagers have sent intimate pictures, and approximately 30% of teenagers "know a person" who sends intimate pictures. In addition, teenagers abuse the Internet (13%), gamble online and, above all, do not protect their privacy by sharing too much information about themselves, publishing numerous photos and accepting random people as 'friends' on social networking services. This "openness" is a contribution to other users' electronic aggression and violence, including: intrusive calling, scaring, persecuting, denigrating, humiliating someone on the Internet using new technologies. Such various forms of cyberbullying as: altering and publishing ridiculous photos and videos; revealing the victim's secrets via public posts; persistent, vulgar and malicious comments on entries; deliberate unnoticing of the victim's online activity, have been confirmed by many young internet users ("Raport Ogólnopolskie badanie Nastolatki...", 2014).

What is the future of the Internet? Modern technologies, changing at an extremely fast pace, will make technical use of the network even easier. Perhaps voice communication will be enough to work with a computer, as long as it is adequate to use such a name. Certainly, the network will become richer source of knowledge, information, entertainment and a communication platform. Such a perspective is quite real and perhaps quite close. One thing will not change – the Internet usage is and will be a matter of responsibility; there is a need and reflection on which materials should and should not be used.

#### **4. Personal security assessment in the virtual world and web threats in the minds of users**

In practice, in security research it is impossible to clearly separate the aspects of structural security without interfering it with the personal aspect, where the main subject is a human being and human communities. The structural security plays a service-related role towards people, regardless of time and space, which means that structural security only makes sense when it is considered and implemented in a personal context. In order to bring all the stances regarding personal and structural security entities together, three types of entities can be distinguished: individual personal entities, collective personal entities and structural entities, i.e. institutions of social life that affect personal security. These entities divide into three basic security categories: individual security, collective security and institutional security. The details of the above-mentioned classification are summarised in Fig. 2.

This classification can be used to distinguish social pathologies. These are: individual personal entities (i.e. individual entities exhibiting pathological behaviour), collective personal entities imposing on their members or other societies tolerating behaviour that is considered by the international community as pathological. The collective personal entities include: family

and pathological phenomena occurring in it, small social groups, also pathological ones (youth subcultures, criminal gangs, sects), society, or a part of it (e.g. marginalised groups of people referred to as subclasses). Finally, there are structural entities, i.e. various institutions of a social nature, in which pathological behaviour, specific to various types of social organisations, may appear.

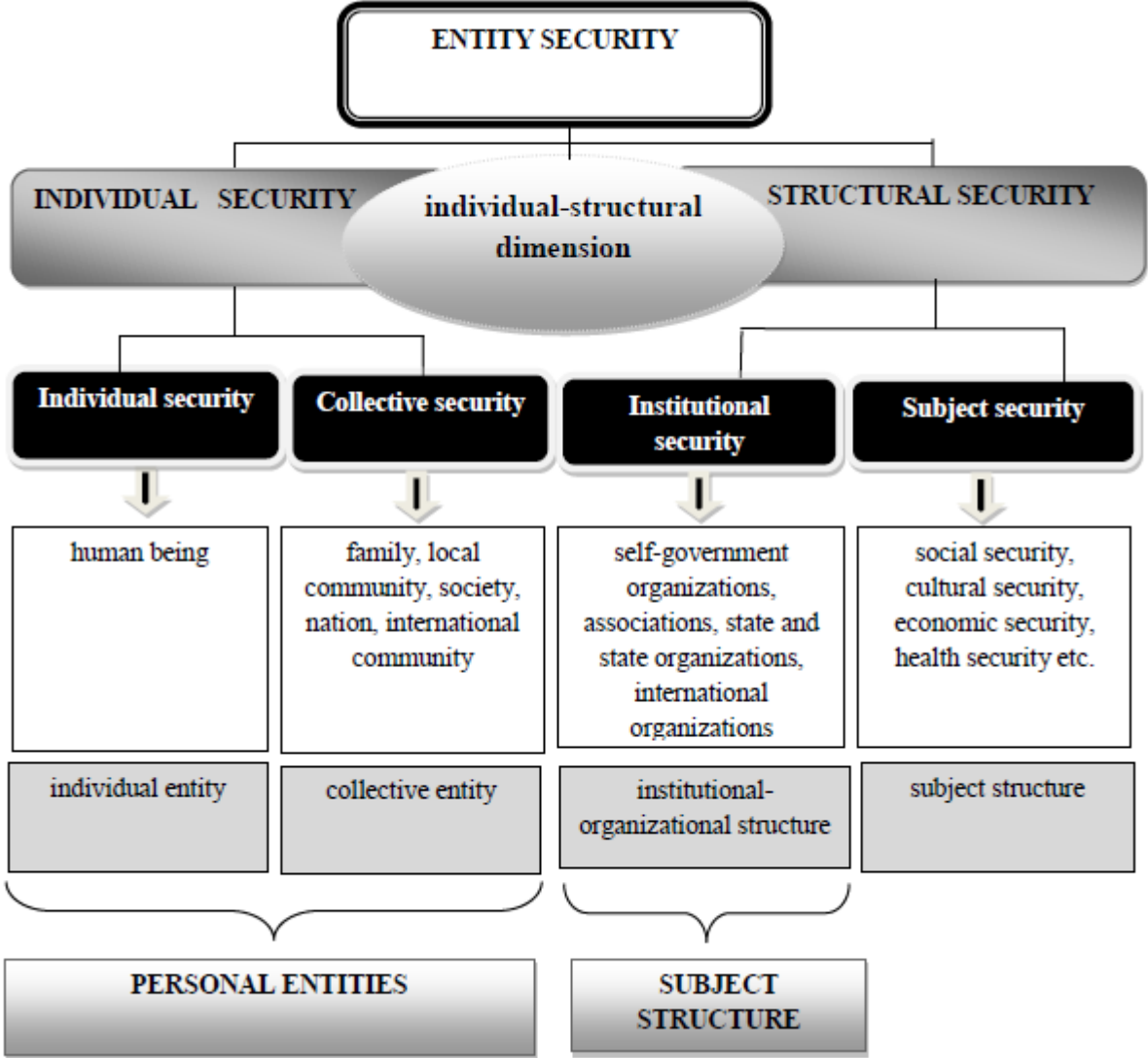


Figure 2. Personal and structural security entities. Source: own study.

Human being, as an individual in society, is able to develop properly, fulfill their needs and shape their knowledge which they acquire by communicating with other people. Communication is the basis of interpersonal contacts and its distortion can lead to misunderstandings, conflicts, as well as to alienation and exclusion from social life. Without ability to communicate, it would be impossible to create a community, as well as to create a civilization and initiate technological progress. Communication has undergone a huge transformation: from speech, which was initially based on a set of vocal symbols with a logical structure, through the first symbols, petroglyphs, writing, pictograms, ideograms, heliographs, semaphores, mail, telegraphs, to telephones, radio, computers, television and interconnected

network called the Internet which has become one of the most popular media of the modern world, enabling people to mass communication in which a human being assumes the role of both the recipient and the sender (Puchała, 2009; Filiciak, 2006; Grzenia, 2006). B. Dobek-Ostrowska defines communication as the course of interaction among individuals, groups or institutions, which aims to exchange thoughts, knowledge, information and ideas (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2004; Olcoń, 2006a, 2016b, 2016c). This process takes place at different levels and with the use of different means, producing different effects. Incorrect communication contributes to the spread of pathological behaviour and thanks to new media it can spread on a global scale. The unrestrained development of communication technologies entered human life dominating almost every sphere of its functioning (McQuail, 2005). Particularly important elements that have revolutionised social space and significantly influenced the way society communicates on the web is the philosophy of designing and building internet solutions directed towards the use of Web 2.0 collective intelligence and social media that are based on web application solutions, on the basis of ideological and technological foundations of the Web 2.0. This concept is concentrated on creating applications that will allow the user to use so-called collective intelligence. Furthermore, this philosophy focuses on the perception of the Internet as a platform connecting people, not websites or applications. The escalation of Web 2.0 has united individuals in the community and instead of leading the modern generation to alienation, it has unleashed the considerable potential for creativity and prosumer attitudes. Web 2.0 is not just blogs, portals, sales platforms or social networking sites – it is the entire communities that are created within these pages (Jung, 2010, p. 7).

## **5. Pathostreaming as a modern form of online pathology**

The development of pathological behaviour in cyberspace is supported by freedom of speech which causes that certain individual personal entities feel unpunishable for their spoken or written content. The physical distance between interlocutors makes it easier for them to attack. As a consequence, many people behave in a socially unacceptable way. Combining freedom of expression on the web, a sense of impunity, a desire to stand out from among the crowd of Internet users, as well as the opportunities offered to us by communication in cyberspace, form a new threat called pathostreaming.

Pathostreaming is the name of a phenomenon derived from streaming. “Pathostreams” are live online broadcasts, often lasting for many hours, which content is controversial and morally reprehensible. While watching the pathostreaming material, the recipient may encounter such examples of bad behaviour: primarily vulgarisms, aggression and violence. Pathostreaming is often a way to relieve frustration caused by disruptions in the functioning of the family or problems occurring in the peer or school environment, the desire for revenge for harm suffered,

the desire to draw attention, which is a cry for help and a way to gain advantage and victory over someone. In addition, pathostreams often show people consuming alcohol or engaging in fights, devastation and sexual activities. Recipients can communicate with other viewers and the author of the pathostreaming material by means of the option of commenting. These messages are often displayed on live broadcast video. In addition, viewers can ask the pathostreamer in the comments for performing a task that they would like to see and for which they will pay donations. The amount of money paid depends on the level of danger of the challenge being faced. The more difficult and dangerous the task, the more money the viewers donate.

The manifestations of pathological behaviour in the ways of communicating on the network based on pathostreaming are defined as, among others, the problem of values, the problem of good and evil. We live in times when the problems concerning values, good and evil, are of little interest. We should get to know one another and understand others (the magic of labels: "we", "they", "others"). There is a romantic myth that a child is good and capable of self-development by nature if only we create necessary conditions for growth. The family, school and church are rapidly losing strength for the benefit of the peer group and mass media (computer games, colourful magazines, sports and music shows). The peer group becomes a dangerous educator (aggressive, hedonistic and consumerist behaviour).

We live in the world of different values. Human life is about making constant choices. Today, great attention is paid to the need for "axiological education," leading to the conscious selection of values by people and determining their hierarchy as the basis for constructing their own philosophy of life, professional aspirations and preferred lifestyles. Axiological concepts influence educational goals because:

- axiology gives an overall view of the world of values,
- it is a determinant of education goals in large and small social groups,
- more and more attention is paid to individual systems and hierarchies of values.

The overriding value, in terms of contemporary axiology, is a human being, their life, mental and physical development, self-realization, freedom, identity, subjectivity (Benkler, 2008, p. 476).

There is a crisis regarding the norms of social life and quality of life (fast, carefree life, immediate gratification). Schools still create a large group of functional illiterates (misunderstanding commands, reading without understanding). The reason is that the school primarily provides memory-alphabetic knowledge and fragmentary information that cannot be merged into operational knowledge. It may not be an exaggeration if one take the stance that nowadays fewer and fewer people are going to pursue happiness, and more and more people are looking for ways to save themselves from threatening and upcoming misfortunes. The range of such conflicts seems huge nowadays. People cannot cope alone with themselves, and in their mutual relations there is a wave of reluctance and unfriendliness, jealousy and aggressive actions. The fundamental rights of the information society include: free access to the global

information infrastructure, ownership, credibility of information and the right to privacy protection (Benkler, 2008, p. 476). The enshrinement of these rights and their protection is a great challenge for modern countries. National legislation on the Internet is territorially limited. The immanent feature of the Internet is its global reach enabling messages to be included in its resources. Therefore, the problem of contemporary states is to counteract the publication of certain content on the web. It is often emphasised that the Internet – however generally associated with the freedom of expression – can also become a tool for surveillance and surveillance of citizens. It gives various companies and institutions great opportunities to track users, collect messages and create databases of potential clients and customers. In addition, state institutions are increasingly interested in network activities (Podgórski, 2006, pp. 105-106). That is why, one can risk saying that cyberspace is expanding the sphere of not only freedom, but also control.

## **6. Summary**

Cyberspace is a huge space created by billions of people, which makes it difficult to control all activities that take place in it. Lack of control over published materials and content in the virtual world creates an ideal environment for the creation of pathological behaviour spreading through communication via the Internet. Incorrect communication is often escalated by using profanity. This type of behaviour is increasingly observed during pathostreaming which took the wrong form of communication in the modern world. Its authors and recipients often abuse freedom of speech by humiliating, insulting or threatening one another. The Internet could become a sort of panacea for communication barriers. It gave people the opportunity to communicate from the farthest corners of the world, not only by sending voice messages but also by video. Unfortunately, its improper use can pose a serious threat to the security and development of society as well as individual entities. Lack of control over the Internet access results in the impossibility to struggle with the occurrence of social pathologies on the web, including pathostreaming. Streaming services that will stop publishing broadcasts of socially offensive material may be helpful here. Furthermore, Internet users and recipients of inappropriate content play a major role in combating pathologic behaviour in network communication. The problem of pathostreaming will not end until the online community wants to watch such messages.

Another extremely important issue is the lack of responsibility for words commonly found on the Internet, especially anonymous vulgar posts deliberately aimed at the dignity of the person, good name of the social group or organisation they concern. It seems that practical implementation of the rule that entries and comments on the Internet cannot be anonymous, would not violate the right if the technical condition for displaying content on the Internet was



to register and provide your personal data in the form hidden for the general public. The applied rule should exist – as much freedom as responsibility. Limitations, however, should always be individualised, referring to a specific person or group of people who are against social norms of behaviour. In no case, however, can these restrictions be imposed by the administrative decisions of the authorities and concerning society. Such forms of action are a manifestation of totalitarianism and cannot be justified in any way.

Social pathologies cannot be fully identified with such social phenomena as maladaptation, maladjustment or social derailment. Those phenomena primarily reflect certain states of the individual's relationship with society, which manifest themselves in the form of unacceptable behaviour of an antisocial nature. Social pathologies, in turn, refer to specific behaviour and attitudes which may be the result of these states. Nevertheless, not all attitudes typical of social maladaptation, maladjustment and derailment meet the criteria attributed to pathological behaviour. Pathological behaviour, pathologic factors (socio-cultural conditions) or processes contributing to them are present in human life. It can be argued that there is a considerable diversity and complexity of the phenomena.

Summing up, it should be said that there is an attempt to show human threats in the social space in the context of personal security in cyberspace in relation to several important elements of its functioning. The first issue is the specific level of consciousness of a human being, especially their predispositions, moral and axiological attitude, reflexivity. The second issue is the appropriate potential of freedom of culture, which is manifested in the areas of human functioning, i.e. education and upbringing. In each of these areas there are specific conditions for shaping and updating emancipating competencies. An important issue of proper assessment of opportunities and threats in cyberspace is an appropriate educational system which should provide education and dominant participation of people in social life. It should shape intellectual independence, criticism and creativity, professional flexibility, the ability to participate in the scientific cognition and transformation of reality, as well as responsibility for the social environment, i.e. the eco-human attitude to this environment, including empathy.

Education still has to undergo transformations and changes. It must give a human being much more opportunities to experience life, discover opportunities and best prospects for their own development. A greater emphasis should be placed on individualising, getting to know oneself and managing oneself. Certainly, it will take a long time to develop a consensual, common vision of a safe and simultaneously free digital space. The Internet makes it more difficult for authoritarian regimes to control the population, and the unprecedented openness and freedom of the networked environment requires new ways to protect societies which are open to individuals and groups that are destructive.

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