Managing Oneself in the Digital Age

Is there any difference in self-management in the Digital Age and before Digital Age?

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In May 2014 Michael Jackson appeared on a stage performing his "Slave to the Rhythm" at Billboard Music Award. The whole audience applauded. And it was not a surprise because all performance was just a hologram as the real artist died in 2009. This holographic show was probably one of these moments when you could catch yourself thinking that the Digital Age had come true. Indeed, A scope of changes in our world amazes. Now information is commodity, so there is no such problem as lack of information but rather selection of it. And this situation makes people concerned about quality, completeness and profoundness of information. In this regard it seems like the challenge of finding a way which will help humanity keep information flow under control is one of the most pressing questions of nowadays. Moreover technologies are actively used to help people go through this problem in some way. At the same time the Digital World creates a whole set of intrinsically new challenges we face today.

But in my opinion, this is the important issue worthy of discussion. It concerns digitalizing of our life and challenges it causes. It seems like life is not the same as before and a lot of changes have taken place. It is only natural therefore that you have to manage yourself in a different way. Nevertheless there is still a question: "what is the difference in managing yourself before the Digital Age and now?».

Managing oneself as overall process was presented to us by Peter F. Drucker in his study "Managing Oneself" that was published in Harvard Business Review in 1999. He raised the most important questions you have to answer to drive this management in a proper way. There are some of the most topical ones which are particularly important in terms of searching into a matter of the Digital Age: "What are my strengths?" "How do I perform?" "What are my values?" "Where do I belong?". Personally I believe the questions have not changed today. But in case of tremendous digital impact we can see the difference before the Digital Age and now. And some changes really exist. I would like to place emphasis on following spheres which demonstrate strongly marked changes in our self-management: reputation, social distance and the question of self-belonging in life.

The first two questions are connected and can be considered as a whole. We cannot deny our strong dependence on social networks and mobile systems. This component of digital life-style influences our way of living. Earlier, for example, we did not pay so much attention to our social network reputation and did not even think how it should be managed in a proper way. Today social networks such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Instagram are prominent representatives of a system that creates a new part of our life. This is social, but mostly digital system which is based on visual content on a user's personal page. At first, this was used for communication and sharing various types of information: thoughts, news, pictures etc. But in the course of time personal pages have become more than just communication. Your personal page on Facebook or Instagram, for example, has become you second personality.

In a manner of speaking when we use a page on a social media site we can create its «digital-self» as a character that demonstrates our views, tastes and opinions. When our society realized this fact in fundamental way social networks became a real tool. Now it is widely used by a large number of employers across the world as they have a possibility to view online all characteristic of an employee even before an interview. The fact that can help both sides as it makes easier to find a better worker for a company or a better job.

On the other hand, others can monitor for their own purposes person's activity on social networks checking text messages, photos and videos - all these things that represent our character or identity. It seems like our privacy could be disturbed and it sounds as a bit discomforting.

«For the first time - and I mean it literally - substantial and rapidly growing number of people have choices. For the first time they have to manage themselves».

<div align="right">Peter F. Drucker</div>

Let's look at this phenomenon in a different way: social activity has its challenges related to private and professional life but it also creates opportunities. These opportunities lead us to a question connected with social distance issue. The Digital Age brings us to a society with a smaller distance between people. We all know about the theory claims that people around the world could be linked through 5 shakes. Now we have the version adapted to the digital reality which claims that people around the word could be linked even through 2 clicks. The whole world comes closer losing borders and cutting away formidable distances. If the main question of «before the Digital Age» was to FIND a person in case of business opportunities so nowadays the Information age raises another question «what do we HAVE to make a person interested in us?» as it is not a problem anymore to find somebody. Thus, for example, thanks to the features of algorithms used on LinkedIn or Facebook users can simply find people (also registered in this social network) or posts that may be of potential interest.

The last but not the least issue that is raised by digital society related to self-association. It could be called as «the question of belonging to» that refers to Peter F. Drucker's "Where do I belong?". Digital society actively develops its presence in human life by, creating numerous resources that make possible to use benefits of so-called «digitalization» and to be fully involved in the digital space. Nowadays, online area is one of the most important parts in human life, which creates new areas for motivations. A striking example of involvement in the digital space is not only care of a social online life, but existence of massive multiplayer online role-playing games as well. One of the game's mail characteristic is interaction with a very large number of people with one another within the world. As a vital thing, «digital-self» care can take a huge part of human's life as it creates our online face that affects its credibility among the other members of a social network, as mentioned above.

The place that the digital-self has modern life can be illustrated by the widespread use of multiplayer, virtual online games. An open world, controls of the action and main character's development, an interception with other players - all this things make online games realistic. In this connection, such activity in the digital reality is hardly can be called virtual, because it is no less real and exists under the same conditions. So, the question of belonging, raised by P. Drucker in the information age, refers to where we have more opportunities for self-realization.

This world gave humanity the opportunity to create a digital person in some ways. We can only guess what will be the main purpose of this «creature» in future. But today as I see it the main idea of "digital-self" is to help a person build up the easiest way to communicate with the outside world. So it can be seen as a tool that helps people to be in-touch with a whole world with no borders and distance anymore. In this case going back on topic asking about the difference between managing oneself in digital and «before digital» age I suppose that there is no significant alterations in a fundamental concept presented by Peter F. Drucker. His questions mostly related to fundamental human being issues that didn't change dramatically in digitalized world. The real difference of self-management leaded by the emergence of digital society is necessity to control not only ourselves but our «digital-self» too. We mostly change our ways in communication with the external world due to the fact of technologies taking a critical part of our everyday life. This «double management» emphasizes the importance of «Where do I belong?» question also raised by Peter. F. Drucker. If a person can find the answer to this question today he or she can make a real step toward an effective self-management in digital society. The Digital Age forced us to raise this issue to the same level of importance as questions about strengths, values and performance. These three elements were selected by Peter F. Drucker as the most important components that should be learned by human being lives in knowledge economy to achieve success. In this context and in terms of the Digital Age we should probably pay due attention to the question of belonging. This aspect seems to be the main difference in

terms of importance between digital and "before digital" society. And if we'll manage this part of our life in a proper way it probably can lead us to a personal development and success.