

S.M. Zhakin¹, N. Mukan^{2*}

¹*Karaganda Buketov University, Karaganda, Kazakhstan;*
²*Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Almaty, Kazakhstan*
(E-mail: samatsky7@gmail.com, mukan.nurzat@gmail.com)

Digital Technologies and the Reformatting of Values in the Post-Truth Era

This article critically examines how digital technologies are reshaping public values in the post-truth era. Bringing together insights from philosophy, sociology, media studies, and cognitive science, it considers how algorithmic personalization, emotional engagement, and surveillance capitalism are redefining traditional concepts of truth, power, privacy, and autonomy. The study identifies six key transformations: the rise of synthetic media destabilizing evidence-based knowledge, influence-based epistemologies replacing institutional gatekeepers, and conflicts between algorithmic efficiency and substantive justice. The findings illustrate a shift from truth as factual accuracy to truth as emotional engagement, and from autonomy as individual freedom to autonomy mediated by algorithmic systems. The final recommendations include regulatory harmonization, the development of an ethical platform, data trust models, cooperative ownership structures, and life-long digital literacy training. Ultimately, the article offers a normative framework and practical ways to align digital innovation with democratic and ethical values.

Keywords: digital technologies, post-truth, algorithmic personalization, influencer epistemology, digital humanism, democratic deliberation, values, data colonialism.

Introduction

Nearly every everyday action in late-modern life is now supported by digital technologies: we read the news through feeds put together by opaque algorithms, build relationships in apps designed for constant interaction, and negotiate group decisions within platforms whose business logics are mostly hidden from users. A “network society” — a planetary web of synchronous communication that permanently changes the circumstances under which meaning is produced and exchanged, which has been created in just three decades by the combined influence of social media, mobile computing, and the internet [1].

However, the same affordances that democratize expression also challenge long-standing epistemic norms, making it challenging to discern between compelling spectacle and evidence-based knowledge. The “post-truth” state has emerged in this tension, requiring philosophical examination of how digital affordances reconfigure the fundamental ideals that public reason is based on.

When the Brexit referendum and the 2016 U.S. presidential election occurred, the term “post-truth” became popular, but its conceptual origins go back longer, combining concerns about relativism with the media ecology of capitalism in the twenty-first century [2]. Instead indicating the end of truth in general, the term refers to a socio-technical environment where political identity and emotional appeals frequently take precedence over empirical evidence [3]. On platforms designed to encourage virality, a message’s ability to generate engagement-likes, shares, and hashtags-that can be monetized through targeted advertising is more important than its factual consistency. The resulting attention economy encourages spectacular material, which shifts normative hierarchies of trustworthiness by pushing communal speech towards emotive resonance and away from deliberative reason.

By approaching the issue from a genealogical perspective, it becomes clear that “post-truth” is the result of lengthier epistemic transformations predicted by simulacra and hyperreality theorists rather than an unintended consequence of digitalization. According to J. Baudrillard, autonomous self-referential images have replaced the actual in late capitalism media, which permeate daily life with indications that are not connected to referents. Digital infrastructures make signs completely programmable, making it possible to deepfake films, spoof places, and create bot networks that mimic popular consensus [4]. The ontological distinction between the real and the fake becomes hazy in such a setting, undermining the significance society has traditionally placed on “truth” as being in accordance with objective reality.

* Corresponding author’s e-mail: mukan.nurzat@gmail.com

Algorithmic recommendation systems that tailor information streams are at the core of this change. Based on Sunstein's concept of "filter bubbles," researchers have demonstrated how platform algorithms reinforce confirmation bias by showing users material that matches their previous preferences [5]. Because emotionally charged content is more likely to retain attention, Bakir and McStay further illustrate how emotional valence—particularly outrage functions as a crucial ranking indicator [6]. These feedback loops create alternative epistemic universes over time, each immune to contestation, in which people live in different realities composed of carefully chosen facts and pseudo-facts. As a result, the civic ideal of a common public sphere, which has been essential to liberal democracies since Habermas, breaks up into a patchwork of disparate micro-publics.

This ecology's economic foundation is what Zuboff refers to as "surveillance capitalism": a system that uses human experience as a source of data for behavioral prediction and control. Each click, pause, and scroll turns into a piece of data that may be exchanged, modelled, or used as leverage in real-time advertising space auctions. In such a system, privacy is recoded from a basic right into a tradable commodity, and algorithmic pushing competes with human agency. Individual rationality, informed consent, and self-determination—values typically associated with the Enlightenment are thereby reframed in a market that values predictability above moral agency [7].

The decentralization of epistemic authority occurs together with the commercialization of attention. Digital platforms enable almost anybody with an internet connection to publish, remix, or weaponise material, whereas print culture and broadcast media used to channel information through institutional gatekeepers, such as newsrooms, peer-review boards, and academies. According to Gillespie, platform businesses have a conflicting stance: they deny editorial responsibility, but their moderation guidelines covertly limit what may be heard, seen, and debated [8]. These rules' opacity creates new asymmetries between nation-state regulators and multinational internet firms by undermining institutional trust and giving corporate actors unparalleled normative authority.

The emergence of "affective publics" emphasizes the emotional reformatting of civic engagement, which goes beyond epistemology. Memes, response GIFs, and hashtags create a language where feeling spreads more quickly than well-reasoned arguments, condensing complicated topics into digestible emotional cues. Such dynamics have the potential to unite under-represented voices and promote international solidarity, but they also make it possible to deliberately manipulate public sentiment, as demonstrated by well-planned misinformation operations [9]. As a result, democratic discussion becomes more difficult, and government becomes vulnerable to unexpected surges of digitally enhanced emotion.

Schools find it difficult to adapt to this quickly changing world. Despite their importance, media literacy programs are still based on antiquated notions of authorship and verification that do not account for the volume and velocity of algorithmic content creation [10]. At the same time, public policy struggles to strike a balance between the negative effects of misinformation, algorithmic prejudice, and data exploitation, and the right for free speech. The way towards universally enforced rules is still up for debate, however Redeker, Gill, and Gasser propose for a "digital constitutionalism" that would include human rights concepts into the construction of information infrastructures [11].

Importantly, the distribution of the post-truth situation is not uniform. Digital gaps continue to exist within and across countries, determining who has access to and how they may use the informational commons. According to Castells, discussions of truth and morals are inextricably linked to more general issues of access, literacy, and geopolitical power since networked connectedness exacerbates already-existing socio-economic disparities [1]. Social media affordances may strengthen monitoring and censorship rather than free speech in areas where authoritarian governments have significant influence over digital spaces, therefore bolstering what Zuboff refers to as "instrumentarian power" [7].

Philosophically speaking, traditional conceptions of knowledge and value are called into question by the digital age. The infosphere is now the main setting of human existence, according to Floridi, who argues that mankind has entered a "fourth revolution" that calls for a "information ethics" that rethinks ontology, agency, and responsibility [12]. Thus, the post-truth phenomena is both a symptom and a catalyst, highlighting the weakness of inherited epistemic standards and requiring the development of new frameworks that may support inclusive, just, and honest digital communities.

In light of this, the current paper promotes two objectives. It first explores the ways in which digital technologies challenge conventional value systems, emphasizing the interaction of economic incentives, emotive amplification, and algorithmic personalization. Second, it shows how societies might re-establish their commitment to truth, autonomy, and democratic discussion in a digital environment by educational,

regulatory, and ethical means. The study uses hermeneutic analysis and critical synthesis of previous research to achieve these aims by integrating concepts from media studies, philosophy, and cognitive science.

Methods and materials

Through the use of critical analysis, hermeneutic techniques, and qualitative secondary source analysis, this study takes an interdisciplinary philosophical approach. A thorough explanation of the phenomena has been provided by a survey of important works in the fields of philosophy, sociology, media studies, and cognitive science.

McIntyre, Lewandowsky et al., Baudrillard, Castells, and Floridi are among the pertinent authors whose works profoundly examine the connections between digital technology, media, society, and values.

Results

Digital perception is now an active, ongoing co-production between users and algorithmic systems that anticipate, infer, and subtly direct cognitive focus rather than a passive reception of external inputs. “Synthetic plenitude” is the state in which nearly any conceivable visual or discursive product may be created in a matter of seconds due to the explosion of generative artificial intelligence, as demonstrated by text-to-image diffusion models and big language models. While “voice cloning” techniques undermine the authenticity historically associated with vocal presence, photorealistic deepfakes undermine the evidential privilege typically afforded to audiovisual records. The ensuing epistemic environment creates a widespread ambiguity regarding the ontological state of items encountered digitally, which researchers refer to as “epistemic vertigo” [13].

In this context, the traditional correspondence theory of truth gives way to a pragmatics of plausibility: a claim gains temporary legitimacy regardless of its factual veracity if it “functions” persuasively inside an attention economy — generating clicks, inciting anger, and mobilizing publics.

By learning from fine-grained behavioral data, such as scroll speed, haptic pressure, and dwell duration, algorithmic curation highlights these dynamics by delivering material designed to maximize “affective arousal” [14]. The phenomena van Dijck refers to as “datafication of desire” which occurs when hyperpersonalized feeds turn into psycho-graphic mirrors where users see stylized reflections of their own dispositions [15].

A similar transformation takes place in the area of epistemic authority. Today’s citizens are increasingly placing their trust in “influencer epistemology,” a patchwork of micro-celebrities, live streamers, and “citizen experts” whose credibility comes from perceived authenticity rather than credentialed expertise, in contrast to the twentieth-century publics who relied on institutional gatekeepers-newspapers, scientific bodies, and clerical offices [16]. For instance, during the COVID-19 epidemic, popular lifestyle vloggers sometimes had a larger audience reach than national health organizations, allowing both destructive conspiracy theories and life-saving information to spread quickly [17]. Thus, platforms’ metricized visibility rewrites the social contract of knowledge by replacing the conventional standards of peer review and proof with measurable popularity.

The platform businesses’ dual function as arbitrator and infrastructure further exacerbates institutional mistrust. They are accused of both incompetence and overreach because of their opaque moderation practices, which create procedural opacity. Since motivated reasoning frequently trumps corrective cues, attempts to restore credibility through third-party fact-checking or “friction-in-design” (e.g., share-confirmation prompts) have mixed outcomes [18]. On the horizon of technology, blockchain-based proof-of-provenance systems assert that verifiability is directly included into digital artefacts’ metadata; yet, detractors point out that cryptographic assurance does not settle semantic disagreements over interpretation or context.

The “chrononormativity” of push notifications, trending hashtags, and 24-hour “story” cycles accelerates the pace of information and prioritizes immediacy over deliberation, compressing deliberative periods. The ethical disorientation that results from futures being invaded by predictive analytics and pasts being continually revived by algorithmic “memories” is best described by Rushkoff’s concept of “present shock.” Rapid emotional signaling (such as emoji reactions) is rewarded under such circumstances, but qualities like patience, caution, and measured scepticism become maladaptive [19].

Furthermore, users are placed under what Couldry and Mejias refer to as “data colonialism” — an unequal appropriation of experienced life that reflects the expropriation logics of past imperialism — when behavioural surplus is extracted [20]. Privacy is no longer a “right” but rather a variable that is priced into freemium service levels, and autonomy is reframed as optimal participation in platform ecosystems rather

than self-determination. Calls for a “relational ethics” that prioritizes communal data stewardship are made when the moral language of liberal individualism-consent, ownership, and accountability-begins to falter under the weight of widespread monitoring.

Additionally, Lasch previously described the “culture of narcissism” as being exacerbated by digital culture, which repackages selfhood as an ongoing performance for algorithmic evaluation [21]. Follower counts and “like” counts are used as stand-ins for social value, fostering performative authenticity and rivalry. Such a metricized self-presentation is linked in psychological study to divided moral feelings, bodily dysmorphia, and elevated anxiety. As a result, both micro-level self-perceptions and macro-level civic standards are impacted by the ethical implications of digital mediation.

Algorithms increasingly determine welfare eligibility, credit scores, predictive policing, and even bail judgements in addition to influencing conversation. Efficiency, risk minimization, and cost reduction are “procedural values” encoded by these systems that may conflict with substantive ideas of justice, equality, and human dignity. There are pressing discussions on “algorithmic fairness” as a result of public disputes like the COMPAS recidivism tool, which show how supposedly “objective” methods may replicate systemic prejudices. However, the concept of fairness itself is numerous, with definitions ranging from equated chances to counterfactual fairness to demographic parity, each of which operationalizes a distinct moral sense [22].

How autonomous systems may internalize moral commitments that are both durable and democratically legitimated is the larger value-alignment problem in artificial intelligence. Technical limitations that incorporate ethical guardrails or the use of participatory algorithm design, which incorporates stakeholders in model building, are some of the suggested remedies. Scaling participatory techniques, however, presents issues with global variation in value hierarchies, representation, and expertise.

Although a lot of research comes from Euro-Atlantic settings, the reformatting of values varies greatly between geopolitical locations. For example, powerful state narratives about digital modernization and national identity are intertwined with mobile-first internet uptake in Central Asia. In the name of cultural values, government-backed safe internet initiatives defend broad content filtering, demonstrating how the post-truth environment may be used to further digital authoritarianism. At the same time, diasporic groups use social media to challenge official narratives and uphold trans-border solidarity, creating hybrid value ecologies that combine networked activism with collectivist traditions.

One first reaction is represented by “regulatory architectures.” A move from self-regulation to co-regulation is indicated by the European Union’s Digital Services Act (DSA) and the upcoming AI Act, which incorporate due diligence requirements, risk-assessment procedures, and transparency dashboards. Human agency, inclusivity, and ecological sustainability are three concepts that UNESCO’s Recommendation on the Ethics of AI outlines at the international level and encourages member states to include into their national laws [23]. However, trans-jurisdictional enforcement is still difficult, especially in cases where state-centric and market-liberal types of governance vary.

Socio-technical alternatives such platform cooperativism, where user collectives rather than venture capital control and regulate digital services, are a good complement to top-down regulation. By aligning incentives with the public interest rather than corporate gain, data-trust frameworks also advocate for fiduciary care of personal information.

Interventions at the design level focus on the “choice architectures” that influence user behavior. “Slow media” movements support frictional interfaces that encourage introspection and reduce obsessive refresh cycles, such as content expiry, default time-outs, and intentional pacing [24]. In order to regain agency at the interaction layer, critical design labs experiment with adversarial interoperability, which allows users to change attention metrics or anonymize engagement patterns.

Lastly, digital literacy has to evolve from a remedial add-on to a lifelong civic competency that spans professional training, elder education, and early schooling. Pedagogies that incorporate epistemic humility, lateral reading strategies, and cross-cultural communication have demonstrated potential in lowering receptivity to false information. Crucially, literacy programs should focus on developing collective intelligence-networks of reliable peers who can quickly validate assertions, contextualize sources, and reduce emotional contagion rather than purely teaching individual skills.

Together, these results show a multifaceted restructuring of value landscapes: autonomy as self-possession to autonomy as calibrated participation in opaque systems; trust based on institutions to trust negotiated through metrics and affect; and truth as correspondence to truth as engagement. Therefore, a multifaceted approach that incorporates legislative protections, economic restructuring, technological innovation,

and educational revitalization is necessary for any successful reaction. Societies can only improve civic virtues, stabilize democratic debate, and focus digital innovation on the common good by implementing such an integrated approach.

Conclusion

According to the aforementioned perspective, digital technologies are not just neutral means for communication; rather, they are potent value-forming tools that alter how modern societies see autonomy, privacy, truth, authority, and even the boundaries of public reason. Scholars in media studies and philosophy have identified the post-truth state as a result of algorithmically curated platforms that prioritize immediacy, emotion, and calculability over consideration, reciprocity, and proof.

A number of interrelated layers were examined in the results section, including the perceptual (synthetic plenitude and epistemic vertigo), the institutional (influencer epistemology and eroding trust), the procedural (algorithmic governance and contested fairness metrics), the ethical (data colonialism and surveillance capitalism), and the geopolitical (regional bricolages of digital authoritarianism and grassroots verification). Value change is a structural outcome of sociotechnical design decisions rooted in profit-driven attention economies, as each layer makes clear.

The viability of democratic life is at risk. The deliberative commons breaks apart into echoic micro-publics with no motivation to agree on common evidence when facts are perceived as interchangeable with persuasive fictions and when epistemic authority is bargained through popularity measurements. Such fragmentation threatens both the slow-moving intellectual effort of research and election integrity by intensifying divisiveness and increasing vulnerability to concerted manipulation. However, the situation is not one of irreversible deterioration. Disinformation is made possible by the same networked infrastructures that also make it possible for new kinds of cross-border solidarity, rich archives of lived experience, and quick civic mobilization. In order to achieve the epistemic virtues of accuracy, reflexivity, and inclusivity, digital infrastructures must be recalibrated without compromising the participatory affordances that have expanded the public realm.

From diagnosis to recommendation, the results point to a multifaceted course of action. In order to ensure that ranking algorithms are auditable for systemic bias, amplification dynamics, and mental-health implications, regulatory harmonization must first combine transparency demands with legally binding duty-of-care norms. Second, design logics should move away from surveillance-based monetization and towards value by design, or infraethics as Floridi refers to it. This includes provenance-rich information that embeds context, friction-positive interfaces that impede virality, and participatory governance boards that provide impacted communities the ability to veto significant platform modifications.

Third, by presenting personal data as a commons held in trust rather than as capital to be mined, cooperative ownership arrangements and data fiduciary models might realign economic incentives. Fourth, in order to prepare users to deal with synthetic media and probabilistic facts, lifelong digital-civic education must regard algorithmic awareness, lateral reading, and epistemic humility as fundamental skills. Lastly, research agendas should focus on experimental assessments of counter-disinformation treatments, longitudinal measurements of algorithmic exposure, and comparative studies of value change across cultures.

All of these actions are based on a normative horizon: the development of a digital humanism that upholds autonomy, dignity, and collective self-determination as unassailable design principles. In order to realize this vision, end users, lawmakers, educators, civil society groups, and technologists must work together consistently. Additionally, it necessitates a broadening of the moral imagination—the capacity to see beyond one's algorithmic bubble and acknowledge that every line of code contains an implicit idea of the good. Societies may guide the unfolding digital revolution towards results that enhance rather than weaken democratic culture by adopting an integrated ethic of accountability, transparency, and caring.

By doing this, they declare that the values that are most important to uphold — truthfulness, fairness, and solidarity — can be re-articulated for the networked era without losing their normative power.

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Цифрлық технологиялар және ақиқаттан кейінгі дәуірдегі құндылықтарды қайта форматтау

Мақалада цифрлық технологияның шындықтан кейінгі дәуірдегі қоғамдық құндылықтарды қалай өзгертетіні сыни тұрғыдан зерделенген. Философия, әлеуметтану, медиа зерттеулер және когнитивтік ғылым идеяларын біріктіре отырып, ол алгоритмдік жекелендіру, эмоционалды қатысу және бақылау капитализмі шындықтың, биліктің, құпиялылықтың және автономияның дәстүрлі ұғымдарын қайта қарастырады. Зерттеу алты негізгі трансформацияны көрсетеді. Олар: дәлелді білімді тұрақсыздандыратын синтетикалық медианың пайда болуы, институционалдық кеңесшілерді алмастыратын әсерге негізделген гносеологиялар және алгоритмдік тиімділік пен әділеттілік арасындағы қатығыстар. Нәтижелер шындықтан нақты дәлдік ретінде шындыққа эмоционалды қатысу ретінде, сондай-ақ автономиядан жеке еркіндік ретінде алгоритмдік жүйелер арқылы автономияға көшуді көрсетеді. Соңғы ұсыныстарға нормативтік-құқықтық базаны үйлестіру, этикалық платформаны әзірлеу, деректерге сену моделі, бірлескен меншік құрылымы және өмір бойы цифрлық сауаттылыққа үйрету кіреді. Сайып келгенде, мақалада нормативтік-құқықтық база және цифрлық инновацияларды демократиялық және этикалық құндылықтарға сәйкестендіру жолдары ұсынылған.

Кілт сөздер: цифрлық технологиялар, пост шындық, алгоритмдік даралау, әсер етуші гносеология, цифрлық гуманизм, демократиялық талқылау, құндылықтар, деректердің отаршылдығы.

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Цифровые технологии и переформатирование ценностей в эпоху постправды

В этой статье критически рассматривается то, как цифровые технологии меняют общественные ценности в эпоху постправды. Объединяя идеи философии, социологии, медиаисследований и когнитивных наук, она рассматривает как алгоритмическая персонализация, эмоциональная вовлеченность и капитализм, который следит за пользователями, которые переосмысливают традиционные понятия правды, власти, конфиденциальности и автономии. В исследовании выделяются шесть ключевых трансформаций: появление синтетических медиа, дестабилизирующих знания, основанные на фактических данных; эпистемологии, основанные на влиянии, заменяющие институциональных привратников; конфликты между алгоритмической эффективностью и справедливостью по существу. Полученные результаты иллюстрируют переход от правды как фактической точности к правде как эмоциональной вовлеченности, а также от автономии как индивидуальной свободы к автономии, опосредованной алгоритмическими системами. Окончательные рекомендации включают гармонизацию нормативно-правовой базы, разработку этической платформы, модели доверия к данным, структуры совместной собственности и обучение цифровой грамотности на протяжении всей жизни. Таким образом, в статье предлагаются нормативная база и способы приведения цифровых инноваций в соответствие с демократическими и этическими ценностями.

Ключевые слова: цифровые технологии, постправда, алгоритмическая персонализация, инфлюенсерская эпистемология, цифровой гуманизм, демократическое обсуждение, ценности, колониализм данных

Information about the authors

Zhakin Samat — Master of Humanities, Senior Lecturer, Department of Philosophy and Theory of Culture, Karaganda Buketov University, Karaganda, Kazakhstan, <http://orcid.org/0009-0000-4644-3788>

Mukan Nurzat — PhD, Senior Lecturer of the Department of Religious and Cultural Studies, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Almaty, Kazakhstan, <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-5133-9942>