

## **EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PUBLIC AUTHORITIES AND THE PUBLIC IN A FULL-SCALE WAR: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

**Kateryna Domashevska<sup>1</sup>**

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30525/978-9934-26-630-0-12>

The war in Ukraine has shown that information can be not only a management tool, but also a powerful weapon. That is why the development of strategic communications in the public administration system is an important stage, but unfortunately, this issue is currently insufficiently regulated at the institutional and legislative level. The reason is the lack of a unified vision of an effective model of strategic communications in the public administration system.

At the same time, experts in the field of public administration emphasise the need to develop anti-crisis communication strategies that should include not only a plan for responding to any crisis situation, the main communication channels, and response teams, but also meet high requirements for innovation and efficiency [2]. It should take into account not only the needs of citizens, but also the algorithm for countering information security threats.

Now government authorities are trying to promptly inform the public about current events and refute fakes, thereby maintaining stability and shaping the country's positive image on the international level.

The goal of our report is to analyse the main challenges faced by public authorities in the field of communications in the context of war, to outline the existing opportunities for improving communication processes, and to offer practical recommendations for increasing their effectiveness.

One of the main challenges for Ukraine in the context of the armed conflict is the large-scale information war waged by Russia in parallel with military aggression. Ukrainians face enemy disinformation campaigns, fake news and psychological pressure on a daily basis. This requires the state to create sustainable and reliable mechanisms for filtering information and combating fakes.

Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, citizens' attitudes towards the authorities have been improving markedly due to the continuous development of media literacy as the ability to understand and analyse the role of media in society and its impact. After all Ukrainian people especially in times of crisis need to improve their critical thinking skills and analyse information flows.

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<sup>1</sup> Odesa Polytechnic National University, Ukraine

Despite all the difficulties, Ukraine has been quite successful in overcoming the challenges of the war, in particular, day after day, bravely resisting the enemy's information attacks, demonstrating to the world community a model of resilience and cohesion [1].

From the first days of the full-scale invasion at the initiative of the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine, Ukrainian TV channels launched a joint news marathon called United News to provide citizens with verified, transparent and reliable information.

One of the most successful communication tools during the war is the Diia app, which was developed during the Covid-19 pandemic. Now, in addition to receiving administrative services online, Diia has functions to help the army through the Come Back Alive charity fund and the eVorog chatbot. Currently, it is also possible to apply for damaged property, IDP benefits, and business start-ups, including registration of an individual entrepreneur and registration of a limited liability company.

In Diia, you can also find out about enforcement proceedings and, if necessary, even take a survey, the results of which will be taken into account when making certain management decisions.

Due to the proliferation of information and cybersecurity threats, Ukrainians are urged to trust only official sources of information and to carefully check the accuracy of data before sharing it with others. Nevertheless, the citizens are actively seeking 'insider' information, often turning to Telegram channels. Some of them now not only provide information about current events, but also signal information resources engaged in hostile propaganda and spreading fakes.

One of the most striking examples of Ukraine's resilience in the face of the challenges of war was the international information campaign 'Be Brave Like Ukraine', which was launched almost immediately after 24 February 2022. The initiative was successfully implemented at the request of the Ukrainian government.

The international information campaign combined graphic design, social media and public diplomacy to boost the morale of Ukrainians and the external image of our country. Billboards with the slogan 'Be brave like Ukraine' [3] were placed in various countries around the world – in central squares, near metro stations and at public transport stops. So the information campaign 'Be brave like Ukraine' served as a reminder to the world of what was really happening in Ukraine.

Another powerful response of Ukraine to the enemy's armed aggression was the media support of the Armed Forces of Ukraine's operations called 'Spiderweb', which actively used first-person video from Ukrainian drones.

For example, on June 1th 2025 the Security Service of Ukraine carried out the final stage of Operation Spider's Web to defeat Russian strategic aviation, which was the most successful attack by Ukrainians on Russian aviation during the war.

The war has opened up some new opportunities for Ukraine, including the digital transformation of government communications, raising the level of media literacy, raising public awareness of information security, countering disinformation and fakes, and building trust through consistent and transparent communication.

The next steps to strengthen and improve the communication component during the full-scale invasion should be the gradual decentralization of information policy, further development and implementation of digitalization tools aimed at improving the dialogue between public authorities and the public, as well as active cooperation with international organizations and partners to obtain support and coordinate actions, which involves the exchange of information and joint statements.

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