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## **DIGITAL PLATFORMS AS A TOOL FOR FORMING A STATE BRAND**

**Iryna Levchenko**

PhD, Docent, Associate Professor at the Department of International Economic Relations and Tourism

National University «Yuri Kondratyuk Poltava Polytechnic»

**ORCID:** <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7068-8320>

**Myroshnychenko Alina**

Candidate of Science in Public Administration,  
Associate Professor at the Department of Public Administration and Law  
National University «Yuri Kondratyuk Poltava Polytechnic»

**ORCID:** <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-5984-4731>

The article explores the role of a digital platforms like a tool for building a state brand in the modern information society. It can show us the evolution of the concept “state brand” is from the classical idea of a national image to a complex reputational structure which was created in the digital environment. The scientific analyzes approaches to digital diplomacy, public relations, and intercultural communication in the state branding`s context. The most important attention is paid to the role of social networks as key channels of international communication which can allow direct interaction between state institutions, citizens, and the global audience.

Based on content analysis of digital communication strategies of Ukraine, Estonia, and South Korea are the main mechanisms and how social platforms influence the sensation of the state are identified: visualization of national identity, involvement of citizens in creating positive content, crisis communication, and algorithmic targeting. The article also consist of some risks. There are information manipulation, personalization of the state image, and the needs to ensure the authenticity of communication.

The results show that in nowadays digital platforms are not just media channels but also a part of public policy in the field of public diplomacy. Their effective use determines the ability of the state to build trust, increase international

recognition, and maintain a positive digital reputation in the conditions of global competition for the attention of the world audience.

**Keywords:** brand, branding, state brand, digital platforms, social networks, digital diplomacy, public diplomacy, international image.

## **ЦИФРОВІ ПЛАТФОРМИ ЯК ІНСТРУМЕНТ ФОРМУВАННЯ БРЕНДУ ДЕРЖАВИ**

**Левченко Ірина Василівна,**

доктор філософії, доцент, доцент кафедри міжнародних економічних відносин та туризму,

Національний університет «Полтавська політехніка імені Юрія Кондратюка»

**ORCID:** <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7068-8320>

**Мирошніченко Аліна Іванівна,**

кандидат наук з державного управління, доцент кафедри публічного управління, адміністрування та права

Національний університет «Полтавська політехніка імені Юрія Кондратюка»

**ORCID:** <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-5984-4731>

У статті досліджено роль цифрових платформ як інструменту формування бренду держави в умовах сучасного інформаційного суспільства. Розкрито еволюцію поняття «бренд держави» – від класичного уявлення про національний імідж до комплексної репутаційної конструкції, що формується у цифровому середовищі. Здійснено аналіз наукових підходів до розуміння цифрової дипломатії, іміджу та міжкультурних комунікацій у контексті державного брендингу. Особливу увагу приділено ролі соціальних мереж як ключових каналів міжнародної комунікації, здатних забезпечити пряму взаємодію між державними інституціями, громадянами та світовою аудиторією.

На основі контент-аналізу цифрових комунікаційних стратегій України, Естонії та Південної Кореї визначено основні механізми впливу соціальних платформ на сприйняття держави: візуалізацію національної ідентичності,

залучення громадян до створення позитивного контенту, кризову комунікацію та алгоритмічне таргетування. У роботі також виявлено низку ризиків – інформаційні маніпуляції, персоніфікацію державного іміджу та потребу в забезпеченні автентичності комунікацій.

Отримані результати свідчать, що цифрові платформи сьогодні стають не просто медіа-каналами, а складовою державної політики у сфері публічної дипломатії. Їх ефективне використання визначає здатність держави формувати довіру, підвищувати міжнародну впізнаваність і підтримувати позитивну цифрову репутацію в умовах глобальної конкуренції за увагу світової аудиторії.

**Ключові слова:** бренд, брендинг, бренд держави, цифрові платформи, соціальні мережі, цифрова дипломатія, публічна дипломатія, міжнародний імідж.

**Introduction.** In the contemporary information society, which is characterised by very fast data exchange and intensive communication processes. Forming a nation is shaped not solely through conventional tools of foreign policy, diplomacy, or cultural representations, but also via active digital presence in the global communication sphere/space.

The state brand in this context should be viewed as a complex communicative system that goes beyond national symbols, stereotypes, or cultural associations. It explores a strategically built reputation that is shaped through interaction between government institutions, citizens, and the international community in the digital environment.

Digital platforms is a social networks, online media, mobile applications, and interactive virtual services – play the role of key communication tools for modern states. They provide new opportunities to promote national values, innovations, cultural potential, and the political image of a country at the global level.

Recently, Ukrainian researchers such as Antonyuk O. [1], Blinova Ye. [2],

Ilnytska U.V. [3], Maksymova I., Purii H., Padalka O., Kulishov V. [4], Nahorniak T.L. [5], and Tkach Ye.V. [6-7] have been analysed the part of the state model in international communication. In this article, we examine digital platforms are considered as a key tools for state branding.

**Materials and Methods.** The methodological basis of the enquiry is a systematic and interdisciplinary perspective to analyzing how a state brand is established in the digital environment. The study is based on theories of communication, branding, digital diplomacy, sociology of the information age, and public relations.

To achieve the goal of the research, the next following methods were used: the analytical method is to examine; the theoretical basis of the state brand, digital communication, and diplomacy; comparative analysis – to contrast the experience of different countries in using digital platforms for branding; content analysis use to examine social media publications and official communication channels, and to identify key narratives, visual images, and communication strategies.

**Results.** The concept of a state brand appeared in academic research at the end of the 20th century and was further developed by the British scholar Simon Anholt (2007) [8]. Simon Anholt suggested that a state brand should be seen as an integrated indicator of political, economic, cultural, and social potential that shows the country's place in the world system of communication and cooperation.

In contrast to the traditional understanding of a country's visual, a state brand has more complex concept. It is a non-material asset that combines together rational and emotional elements of how a country is viewed internationally. Developing such a brand requires coordinated work in several key areas [1-8]:

- public diplomacy is targeted communication to influence international audiences;
- Mediarepresentation – ensuring visibility of the country in the information space;
- Cultural diplomacy – promoting national values through art, education, and humanitarian initiatives;

– Digital reputation – formed through the country’s online presence and audience reactions.

The modern stage of communication development is marked by the transition to Web 2.0 and Web 3.0, where online interaction becomes two-way and often collective. In these conditions, the audience is no longer a passive receiver of information but becomes an active co-creator or prosumer, influencing how a state is perceived through comments, reactions, memes, and online initiatives [9].

As a result, digital environments have changed the logic of building a national brand: from a vertical model of one-way government communication to horizontal interaction, where the reputation of a country is formed through dialogue between official institutions, citizens, and the global community.

In today’s communication space, social networks play a central role in forming and maintaining the state brand. Their uniqueness lies in combining wide reach with interactive communication, allowing government institutions, embassies, and public organisations to interact effectively with the global audience in real time [1-9; 12-14].

Social networks have become new public arenas where ideas about the political, cultural, and economic attractiveness of a country are formed. In contrast traditional media, communication in social networks have decentralised character: official statements coexist with user-generated content, journalists, experts, and citizens, who take part in forming the national image.

In this context, the state brand appears as an open communication structure that is constantly updated through feedback between the government and society. The very nature of dialogue in social networks helps increase trust in government communication.

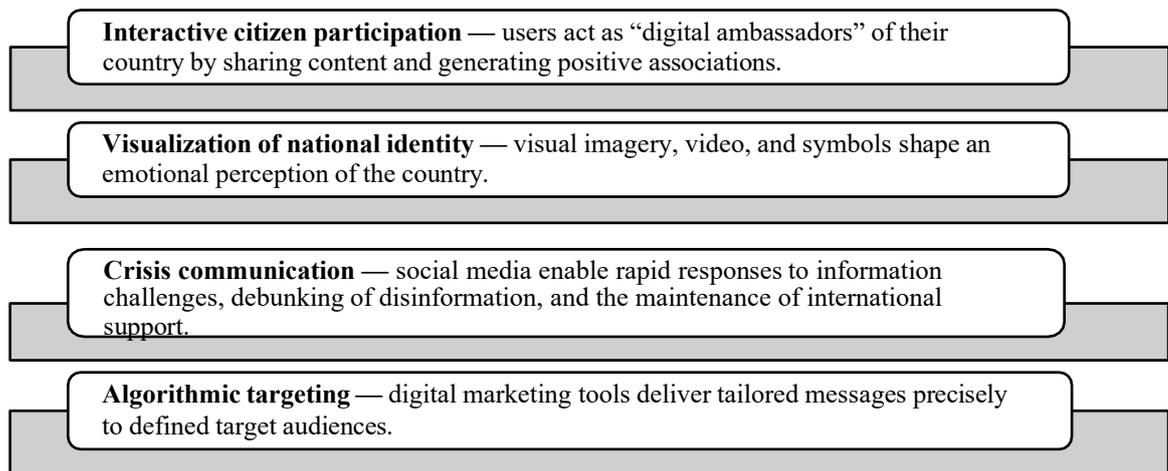
Digital diplomacy has become an important part of international relations. Through official accounts on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, LinkedIn and the most important thing that government institutions aren’t only share information but also communicate in a more emotional and human way, making the state appear more open and approachable [8-14].

For example, Estonia uses social platforms to highlight innovation and technological progress. The e-Estonia project positions the country like a global leader in digital governance, emphasizing efficiency, transparency, and digital trust as core elements of brand [10].

South Korea combines government communication with cultural diplomacy through K-pop and cinema, using YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok to promote modern Korean culture and strengthen its image as an innovative and creative nation [11].

Ukraine’s experience is remarkable too. Since 2022, official pages of Ukrainian institutions – especially the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Office of the President, and the Ministry of Digital Transformation – have actively used Twitter, Telegram, and TikTok for public diplomacy. Through short videos, infographics, memes, and hashtags such as #StandWithUkraine and #BraveUkraine, Ukraine presents as a nation of freedom, technology, and resilience [1-7; 12-14].

Social media influence the nation brand through several interrelated mechanisms (see Figure 1).



Picture 1. Mechanisms of social media influence on the nation brand

Thanks to these mechanisms, countries can build more flexible, adaptive, and personal communication strategies that fit the fast-changing global digital environment. Despite advantages, the use of social networks in promoting the state brand also brings some troubles [1-14].

Firstly, there is a risk of information manipulation and spreading fake news, which can negatively affect the international reputation of a country.

Secondly, the personalization of digital communication can make the country's image depend too much on certain political leaders.

Third, there is a growing need for transparency and honesty, because social media users react strongly to any signs of manipulation or propaganda.

Therefore, today social networks are not just an additional channel of government communication, but an important tool of public diplomacy that shapes the image of the country in the eyes of the world. How wisely and ethically a country uses this tool determines its ability to keep a positive digital reputation based on trust, openness, and consistent of communication.

**Conclusion.** As a result of the research, it was found that the state brand in the digital age is not a static image but a dynamic system of communication. It is formed through interaction between the government, citizens, and the global community. Digital platforms, especially social networks, make it possible to have direct dialogue, feedback, and quick responses, which makes them an important tool of modern public diplomacy.

It was found that such countries as Ukraine, Estonia, and South Korea show us different models of using digital communication in state branding – from focusing on political independence and stability (Ukraine) to innovation (Estonia) and cultural influence (South Korea). This proves the universal potential of digital platforms in forming a state's reputation and shows the need to adapt communication strategies to the national context.

It was proven that effective use of social networks helps to visualise national identity, increase international trust, and strengthen a positive image of the country. At the same time, the digital space can bring some challenges or troubles as spreading false information, risks of manipulation, and the need to keep communication honest and transparent.

As a result, forming a state brand in the digital's day requires a systematic approach that combines technology, cultural diplomacy, and strategic

communication management. Future research might focus on creating ways to measure the effectiveness of digital branding and studying how artificial intelligence and algorithms affect the international reputation of country.

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