

REVIEW
OF AN ACADEMIC PAPER FOR ACQUIRING
THE ACADEMIC DEGREE "DOCTOR"

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Professional Field 8.4. *Theatre and Film Arts*

Thesis topic: Contemporary Forms of Supply of Screen Products and Generating Revenue
in Professional Field 8.4. *Theatre and Film Arts*

PhD student: Igor Sebishki
Academic Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Elizaveta Boeva, PhD

1. Academic and Practical Significance of the Research Topic

The dissertation presented amounts to 120 pages of text, structured in an introduction, 6 chapters and a conclusion. Within the framework of the paper, the contributions and the sources of information used are presented separately. There are no Appendices. In terms of structure, the work of the doctoral student follows a logical and consistent order. The topic itself is undoubtedly up-to-date and significant in two aspects:

- In terms of academic research, the topic is not commonly studied and there is little detailed academic research devoted to modern screen and media products, their prospects, and their development as a commercial product. In this respect, the topic deserves attention and is definitely a challenge for every researcher.
- In terms of practical applicability, the topic takes on even greater importance: the turbulent revolution of technology in the last 20 years, the development of streaming services and the change in generations have led to a new way of perceiving and interacting with screen art. Consumers are becoming media, and the power of a personal social media profile can be significantly greater than that of a traditional media. It is precisely the focus on revenue

generation that makes the topic important – not only in the context of generating profits and making screen art a profitable model, but also with a view to self-financing various products that aim to reach an audience and realize independent audio-visual products. Even in a local context, such a challenge is faced by a number of independent journalists, artists, bloggers, etc.

Here I would like to make a point: it is appropriate to clarify the definition of "screen products" in the introduction of the work, and in particular which of them are in focus in the work and especially in the part for generating revenue.

2. Precisely formulated goals and objectives of the dissertation

In the introduction to his work, doctoral student Igor Sebishki sets out 2 goals for the research problem – "what are the modern forms of offering screen products and what strategies can be applied to generate revenue on the Internet". The first has a rather generalizing character, the second has the genesis of an analytical approach that can bring out useful and important models, both in academic research and in applied science. The tasks are relatively clearly formulated and follow the logic of the set goals.

3. Degree of knowledge of the state of the problem and compliance of the literature used.

As can be seen from the information provided, as well as from my meetings with the doctoral student during the internal defense, as well as in other discussions and forums, Igor Sebishki is a film and television producer who has realized a significant number of television projects, over 20 documentaries, numerous advertising campaigns and music videos. His work on the development of visual solutions and scenography projects includes 3D animation and are impressive. Here I would also distinguish the creation of virtual studios for TV shows. This relatively wide scope of practical activity allows the doctoral student to know the problem well and from a practical point of view to have knowledge and skills that make him a good professional.

Regarding the literature used, I believe that the bibliography is relatively poor – on the one hand, the literature on the topic is relatively scarce, but on the other hand, the field of the literary review should cover a number of areas and apply an interdisciplinary approach that covers the screen arts, technology, economic and legal aspects. It makes a bad impression that there are no titles in the bibliography after 2018, and given the dynamics in the field studied, this is more than puzzling. For example, on page 55 to illustrate and clarify the concept of "integrated marketing communications", literature from 2012 is used, but both in theory and in practice, for the last 11 years in this area there have been a number of new techniques and attitudes, and I think it is right for the author to analyze and summarize them.

Electronic sources are also not in sufficient volume for this type of academic work. I believe that the doctoral student was misled by his relatively rich experience and relied mainly on his own knowledge of technology, his personal experience in interacting with new media and what he learned over the years of professional practice. However, I believe that the nature of the dissertation sets much higher requirements and Igor Sebishki should have compiled a much more detailed review of the academic research.

4. Degree of accuracy in quoting a representative number of authors.

Within the dissertation there are used data and citations of different authors who have researched different areas of importance for the topic. I believe that in view of the current significance of the topic, a separate section dedicated to the literary review could be distinguished, especially given that the development of social media, their commercialization and the change in the generation imply a wide debate and many different points of view are found in the academic literature.

Additional criticism can be made with regard to the fact that in many places Igor Sebishki makes claims that he does not support with the necessary facts and data (without disputing his claims, but in order to correctly present scientific data, it is appropriate to support each statement by the relevant facts), for example on p. 8, there is a statement reading: *"YouTube is the most viewed*

site on the Internet for video content. ", "On a daily basis, we observe a shift of the traditional TV audience from the living room to the open spaces, from the TV to the tablet and the smartphone.", on p. 48, we read: "Among the many types of online ads, the oldest and most common are banner ads that are bought and programmed with standard pixel sizes." – for example, IAB data could be displayed here, specific data on "premium" (CPM, banner advertising) and "performance" ads (Facebook, Google) could be compared, and whether this is a trend worldwide or in specific markets, etc. This would render the research and the specific theses Igor Sebishki proposes much more complete, representative, and justified.

5. Is a justified and completely developed theoretical model of the study presented?

Igor Sebishki's dissertation covers various aspects of the development of screen products and the generation of revenues from them: from the development of the Internet and technological devices, through the development of social networks to strategic approaches and principles of marketing and, of course, issues related to copyright, piracy and combating illegal copying and downloads. It can be said that structurally these questions logically follow the topic of the dissertation and cover the different perspectives on the research problem. On the other hand, however, criticism should be made that in many places the author, Igor Sebishki, makes summaries of data and materials, which are already available, rather than developing new models or making a vivid enough attempt to critically review existing practices.

6. Consistency of the chosen research methodology and approaches with the stated purpose and tasks of the dissertation.

The problems posed in the dissertation are consistently addressed within the six chapters. Through the prism of personal experience and analysis, the author solves the tasks set to fulfill the goals of the work.

The first chapter analyzes the development of the Internet and the so-called media devices over the past 25 years. This part of the work is dominated by technical information, this is also visible from the graphs supplied.

Chapter Two is dedicated to Internet distribution, downloading and on-demand streaming. This part of the work examines circumstances that set the beginning of the digital revolution and are a prerequisite for the development of new media and new ways of distribution. Concepts related to interactivity, targeting, customization, metrics, and efficiency have been introduced – from a marketing perspective, important prerequisites for viewing the screen product as a business whose success can be planned and monitored according to specific sales-related indicators.

Chapter 3 is titled “A Common Strategy for Social Media Marketing”. I would make a recommendation to define the title more precisely, as it is not clear what is meant by a "common strategy" – common for all social networks or something else? During his defense, it would be good for the doctoral student to clarify his understanding of the concept of "marketing strategy" – what he believes it should cover, how to apply it, what challenges are ahead of their implementation, etc. I would ask the same question about the concept of "creative strategy" – in fact, in this part the doctoral student summarizes the profile of different social networks.

Chapter Four is dedicated to the types of video marketing on YouTube, looking at ways to monetize the platform.

Chapter Five is titled "Additional Revenue" and is only 3 pages long. I believe that this information could have been presented in one of the other parts of the paper.

Chapter 6 is related to the content protection – copyright, piracy, combating illegal copying and downloading.

Thus shaped, the chapters of the dissertation text follow the logic of developing the tasks and achieving the set goal, but there often is a lack of a real research approach, which is replaced by a description of already existing concepts and facts, without a critical reading or even an attempt to bring new theses. I believe that in view of the practical experience of the doctoral student, this would be a contribution.

7. Existence of personal contribution in the collection and analysis of empirical data.

I believe that in many respects Igor Sebishki approaches his reflections from personal experience. The practical experience accumulated over the years allows him to make various generalizations, to deal with facts, to share his own observations.

8. Evaluation of the contributions.

I agree that the contributions to the dissertation are of practical nature. I believe that in scientific terms they would be useful in presenting more points of view and conducting a more in-depth analysis. The mentioned Contribution Three, namely: "In the present study, I point out possible inaccuracies, errors, incorrect strategies in the creation of creative content online and its monetization" I consider this part important, as the field of social networks is still a very unexplored area in which the "trial and error" method is often used in real practice.

Separately, the "practical contributions" are rather a summary of the biography of the doctoral student and at least in the presented text it is not clear how they are related (both chronologically and in substance) to the dissertation text.

9. Impacts of the dissertation on the external environment.

The submitted materials (dissertation, abstract, materials on digital medium) lack information about publications on the dissertation, but creative products are also presented, although without a specific description of the objectives, the applied techniques, and specific contributions as a result of their realization. I believe that the realization of such creative products would have a significant impact on the development of audiovisual productions realized by modern media and would give a wide range of opportunities to content producers. It would be good for each of these products to be presented and analyzed in the context of the dissertation itself – at the moment they are rather an addition to the description of the activities of the doctoral student, rather than an inextricably linked part of his work.

10. Personal qualities of the author (if the reviewer knows him).

I do not know the author of the dissertation well enough, but I have vague impressions of his work, which I have acquired during the internal defense, as well as of other appearances within the Department of Cinema, Advertising and Show Business at NBU. In his personal contacts and appearances in various forums, Igor Sebishki leaves the impression of a competent professional, knowledgeable about the modern media environment, audio-visual techniques, and approaches to marketing in a digital environment. I consider this important because it also predetermines his interests in the development of academic work and the development of academic research. I believe that for the modern science to develop, good practitioners with potential to develop and enrich science, are needed to improve and develop science further. Of course, this requires a lot of effort and dedication.

11. Opinions, recommendations, and notes.

In the previous points of the review, I have highlighted a number of notes to the doctoral student's work. I know the path he took in his dissertation, the efforts Igor Sebishki made in working with various scientific supervisors on circumstances beyond his control and in real life, and I have seen and appreciated the difficulties overcome in his work in a language that is not his mother tongue. These difficulties did not deter Igor Sebishki from developing a dissertation and overcoming all these challenges. I would have liked it, of course, if he had made more efforts to improve his dissertation in order to overcome these remarks.

Some criticism should also be made regarding the style of the text, the editorial reading and other details that make the work difficult to read in places and it does not meet the high requirements for such academic papers (even the numbering of sub-items in the contents is a strange combination of Roman and Arabic numerals). I understand, but I do not fully justify the reasons for this, related to the poor knowledge of the language in which the dissertation was written. This remark is also applicable about the insufficiently formulated terminological apparatus.

I would love for the PhD student to answer two questions during the defense:

- On page five the doctoral student points out that "a successful strategy in social networks is a social strategy". Can Igor Sebishki develop this thesis and give a definition of a "social strategy"?
- Can Igor Sebishki provide data (statistics) on the degree of use of a phone, tablet, or computer, while watching TV – i.e., the presence of a second screen in front of the user during the television broadcast. How can this data be commented on?

In conclusion, I can summarize that I have a number of notes on the work of the doctoral student, correctly described and justified above. At the same time, I do not underestimate his efforts and the importance of such research. I vote "Yes" for the awarding the academic degree "Doctor".

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