

# REVIEW

*by Prof. Kristian Bankov, PhD*

The dissertation of Teodora Todorova Petkova presented for public defense in professional field 3.5. Public communications and information sciences (Media and communications – Public Relations), on "Digital marketing communications - aspects of marketing through content" (under the tutorship of Professor Hristo Kaftandjiev)

Teodora Petkova has submitted for evaluation a dissertation of 343 pages, divided into three chapters, introduction, conclusion, bibliography (290). The work is well formed, it is written in good Bulgarian, but of course it is not easy to read given the professional terminology interspersed with neologisms. Graphic examples and web images are quite heterogeneous, and this makes the prepress layout difficult.

## **1. Importance of the research problem in scientific and applicative terms.**

The dissertation of Teodora Petkova is dedicated to an extremely topical problem, namely the increasingly important role that content marketing plays in managing the brands of large companies today. After the rise of social media, when the global network began to be dominated by user-generated content, the task of this type of research became considerably more complex, and this reflected a visible reflection of the general layout of the dissertation work. The contributions are focused on the broad concept of dialogue marketing communications and there is no doubt that the marketing of the future is digital marketing that takes seriously the possibilities of digital interactivity.

## **2. Evaluation of the objectives and tasks in the dissertation work.**

Among the main objectives of the work is to discover what the transition from traditional to digital marketing is in practice and what would facilitate this transition from the traditional marketing mix (product, price, place, promotion) to the conceptualization and practical application of marketing and marketing communications as a sum of practices of dialogue and exchange of knowledge. The rationale is convincing and gives rise to the division of the topics of the following chapters as follows: from the

theoretical overview of digital marketing communications in Part I, through deepening the topic of semantic networks in Part II and concrete studies of the web content of large companies in Part III.

### **3. Consistency between the chosen research methodology and the purpose and tasks of the dissertation.**

The complexity of the problem and the innovative nature of digital technologies do not imply a unified research method and the author of the work makes some effort to justify such eclecticism. The overview of the topic of dialogue from critical philosophy, semiotics and hermeneutics is original, showing some continuity between past and present. The methods selected include comparative analysis, modelling, typology and empirical research through the presented two-module framework. The methodological deficiency is justified by the huge amount of literature cited, where well-established research methodologies cannot also be identified.

### **4. Scientific and applied contributions of the dissertation work (description and evaluation), including the presence of an original contribution to science.**

The dissertation is distinguished by a series of author's contributions, among which the creation of a model of the user's communication with the content on the Network; clarification of the expression "content marketing", suggestion to introduce the definition of "web content", the creation and application of an interdisciplinary framework for analysis in mixed criteria of marketing content on the Web with a view to its dialogical and semantic (in the sense of machine-readable aspects), and preparing a proposal (conceptualization) for a knowledge graph to serve for the dialogue communication during marketing communication on the Internet; the collection and analysis of empirical data on the use of schema.org by the top ten companies in the S&P 500 ESG index.

While the whole sector is in an extremely dynamic phase of development, it can be assumed that these contributions are well founded and would have an application for similar research.

### **5. Assessment of the publications in the field of the dissertation: number, nature of the publications in which they are published. Citation by other authors.**

These publications on the subject are 7 and thematically cover the dissertation work well, but in fact none of them is in an indexed or at least prestigious scientific journal. In support of the author, I would note that there is generally little choice on this topic, and citation rates are difficult to ascertain.

### **6. Opinions, recommendations and notes.**

As a remark, I would mainly point to the lack of a chapter on social media intelligence, which is already an integral part of content-oriented digital marketing.

**7. Conclusion with a clearly worded positive or negative assessment of the dissertation work.**

On the basis of what has been said so far, I strongly recommend to the scientific jury to award an educational and scientific degree "PhD" to Teodora Petkova.

Sofia, 27 February 2022

K. Bankov.....