

DIGITAL TRUST IN THE POST-TRUTH ERA: AN ANALYSIS OF INFORMATION, ETHICS, AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

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Abstract: *This article analyzes the philosophical and ethical essence of digital trust in the post-truth era. In a digital society, the acceleration of information flows, the growing influence of social media, artificial intelligence-based algorithms, and disinformation processes are transforming human trust in truth, information sources, and social institutions. The article examines digital trust not only as a matter of technological security but also as a complex philosophical phenomenon connected with moral responsibility, transparency, justice, critical thinking, and social accountability. The study highlights ethical problems that arise when emotions, subjective beliefs, and algorithmic recommendations begin to dominate over objective facts. The article also substantiates the importance of media literacy, platform responsibility, transparency of information sources, and civic consciousness in strengthening digital trust.*

Keywords: *post-truth, digital trust, information ethics, social responsibility, disinformation, media literacy, digital society, algorithmic transparency.*



INTRODUCTION

Access to information, communication, education, participation in political processes, economic activity, and cultural relations are increasingly carried out through the digital environment. Under such conditions, the concept of trust is also acquiring new meaning. While in traditional societies trust was mainly based on personal relationships, social institutions, and direct experience, in digital society it is often formed through algorithms, platforms, information sources, and virtual means of identification [1, 2].

The post-truth era refers to a socio-cultural condition in which emotional influence, personal beliefs, group interests, and manipulative information have a stronger impact than objective facts. In this period, people often consider not the truthfulness of information, but rather its compatibility with their worldview, emotional state, or the interests of their social group. As a result, the boundaries between truth and falsehood, trust and doubt, moral responsibility and manipulation become blurred [3, 4].

METHODOLOGY

Digital trust is one of the central problems of the post-truth era. This is because, in the digital environment, a person cannot always directly verify the source of information. They rely on information spread through social networks, search engines, algorithmic recommendations, bloggers, artificial intelligence, or other users. In such a situation, trust becomes not merely a technical possibility but a moral choice. What a person trusts, why they trust it, and how this trust affects society are questions that require philosophical analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this article is to analyze the ethical essence of digital trust in the post-truth era and to reveal the relationship between information, morality, and social responsibility. The article examines the factors shaping digital trust, the threats that endanger it, and the ethical mechanisms for strengthening it [5, 6].

Table 1. Analysis of literature related to digital trust in the post-truth era.

Source	Main idea of the source	Relevance to the article
UNESCO, Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence, 2021	Emphasizes transparency, fairness, human rights, and responsibility in the use of AI.	Helps explain digital trust as an ethical issue, not only a technological one.
World Economic Forum, Global Risks Report 2025, 2025	Discusses misinformation, disinformation, social division, and digital risks as global challenges.	Supports the idea that false information weakens social trust in the digital age.
Reuters Institute, Digital News Report 2025, 2025	Analyzes digital news consumption, social media influence, and public trust in media.	Shows how digital platforms affect people's trust in information sources.
Floridi, L., The Ethics of Information, 2013	Explains information as an ethical value and stresses responsibility in using information.	Provides a philosophical basis for analyzing information ethics and digital trust.



Wardle & Derakhshan, Information Disorder, 2017	Studies misinformation, disinformation, and manipulation in communication.	Helps reveal how information disorder creates a crisis of trust.
McIntyre, L., Post-Truth, 2018	Explains how emotions and personal beliefs can become stronger than objective facts.	Gives a theoretical foundation for understanding the post-truth condition.
Zuboff, Sh., The Age of Surveillance Capitalism, 2019	Examines digital platforms, user data, privacy, and surveillance capitalism.	Connects digital trust with privacy, data control, and platform responsibility.
Habermas, J., The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere, 1991	Discusses public communication, social dialogue, and the public sphere.	Helps analyze digital platforms as a new space for public debate and trust.
Castells, M., The Rise of the Network Society, 2010	Describes the development of network society and digital communication systems.	Explains how trust moves from traditional institutions to digital networks.
Denniss, E., Social Media and the Spread of Misinformation, 2025	Studies the role of social media in spreading misleading information.	Supports the analysis of misinformation as a threat to digital trust.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

In the post-truth era, the formation of digital trust appears as a complex socio-philosophical process. This is because information spreads extremely rapidly in the digital space, but verifying its truthfulness is not always easy. Information distributed through social networks, messengers, blogs, and other digital platforms directly affects users [7]. In this process, users often do not have enough time to determine the true nature of the information source, who distributed it, and for what purpose it was shared. As a result, trust may be formed not as the outcome of conscious analysis, but under the influence of emotional reaction or the social environment [8, 9].

In post-truth conditions, there is a risk that the value of information is determined not by its correspondence to truth, but by its ability to attract attention, its emotional impact, and its level of mass dissemination. This is a serious problem from the perspective of information ethics. False or inaccurate information not only misleads an individual person, but can also increase distrust, fear, social division, and instability in society. In this sense, working with digital information requires moral responsibility. Every user must be responsible in receiving, evaluating, and sharing information [10, 11].

The ethical essence of digital trust is manifested, first of all, in one's attitude toward truth. If a person accepts information in the digital environment without critical analysis, only because it is pleasant or emotionally influential, they become a passive participant in the post-truth environment. On the contrary, checking the source of information, distinguishing evidence from opinion, comparing different points of view, and approaching conclusions carefully are important signs of digital culture. Therefore, digital trust cannot exist apart from critical thinking [12, 13].

Digital platforms also play an important role in the formation of trust. This is because what information is shown to users, which messages are recommended, and which content becomes widely



distributed are often determined by algorithmic systems. Algorithms shape the information space based on users' interests, previous actions, and behavior. On the one hand, this process creates convenience; on the other hand, it may leave a person within a one-sided information environment. As a result, the user sees only messages that correspond to their own views, while opposing opinions remain outside their information space. This situation creates an "information bubble" and weakens the diversity of opinions in society [14].

From an ethical point of view, algorithmic transparency is one of the main conditions of digital trust. Users should have the opportunity to understand why certain information is being presented to them. If platforms secretly influence the consciousness of users, their freedom of choice and ability to think independently become limited. Therefore, digital trust depends not only on the moral culture of users, but also on the social responsibility of technology companies and digital platforms.

Another important aspect of digital trust is connected with personal responsibility. In digital society, every person is not only a consumer of information, but also a distributor of information. A message shared by an ordinary user can reach a wide audience in a short period of time. Therefore, every act of "sharing," "liking," or "commenting" affects the digital information environment to a certain extent. This requires ethical caution from users. Spreading unverified messages, popularizing misleading information, or distorting information for personal interests contradicts the principles of digital ethics.

In the post-truth era, disinformation is one of the strongest threats to digital trust. Disinformation influences people's views and decisions through the deliberate spread of false or misleading information. This process may lead to various negative consequences in political, economic, cultural, and social spheres. Especially on social networks, the rapid spread of false information lowers the general level of trust in society. People begin to distrust not only separate sources of information, but the entire digital environment. This harms social solidarity and open communication [15].

Media literacy is of particular importance in strengthening digital trust. A media-literate person does not accept information blindly, but analyzes it, checks its source, distinguishes facts from assumptions, and understands manipulative methods. In the post-truth era, such a skill not only ensures a person's information security, but also strengthens their moral and civic responsibility. Therefore, special attention should be paid to media literacy and digital ethics in the education system.

The philosophical meaning of digital trust is also reflected in the relationship between humans and technology. Technology itself is neither good nor bad; its social and ethical value depends on the purpose for which it is used by humans. If digital technologies are used to search for truth, exchange knowledge, develop social communication, and serve human interests, they become a means of strengthening trust. However, if they are used for manipulation, control, spreading false information, or secretly influencing users' consciousness, digital trust falls into crisis.

Table 2. Analysis of information, ethics and social responsibility in the post-truth era.

Condition / criterion	Analysis from the information perspective	Analysis from the ethical perspective	Analysis from the social responsibility perspective
Truthfulness of information	Information shared in the digital environment should correspond to reality. However, in the post-truth era,	Distorting the truth or spreading false and misleading information contradicts ethical	Every user has a responsibility to check the accuracy of information before sharing it with



	information is often based not on facts but on emotional influence.	norms.	society.
Reliability of the information source	The source of information is very important. Unknown or suspicious sources increase distrust.	Drawing conclusions based on unreliable sources shows ethical carelessness.	To prevent the spread of false views in society, it is necessary to rely on official, scientific and trustworthy sources.
Critical thinking	Users should not accept information immediately; they should analyze it, compare it and evaluate it based on evidence.	Critical thinking is an important sign of ethical awareness and protects people from manipulation.	A society with critical thinking is less likely to be influenced by false information, propaganda and disinformation.
Algorithmic transparency	Digital platforms often determine what information is shown to users through algorithms. This process should be open and understandable.	Hidden algorithmic influence may limit a person's freedom of choice and independent thinking.	Technology companies should follow honest, transparent and responsible policies toward users.
Media literacy	Media literacy develops the ability to search for, analyze, evaluate and use information correctly.	Receiving information consciously and sharing it without harming others reflects ethical culture.	Developing media literacy in the education system strengthens society's information security.
Combating disinformation	Disinformation influences people's opinions and decisions through false or misleading information.	Deliberately spreading false information violates ethical responsibility.	Combating disinformation is a common duty of the state, educational institutions, mass media, digital platforms and citizens.
Personal responsibility	In the digital space, every user is not only a consumer of information but also a distributor of information.	Sharing unverified messages, popularizing wrong ideas or misleading others is an ethical mistake.	Every "share," "like," or "comment" affects the information environment of society. Therefore, users must act



			responsibly.
Social solidarity and trust	Accurate and reliable information ensures open communication and healthy exchange of ideas in society.	Ethical communication is based on respect, honesty, justice and responsibility.	Digital trust strengthens unity, cooperation and stability in society. Distrust, on the other hand, increases division and conflict.

The table shows that in the post-truth era, digital trust is not only a technological issue, but also a process closely connected with information culture, ethical awareness and social responsibility. Truthfulness of information, reliability of sources, critical thinking, algorithmic transparency and media literacy are the main factors that shape digital trust. Therefore, every user should act responsibly in the digital space, avoid spreading unverified information and approach information consciously.

CONCLUSION

In the post-truth era, digital trust is emerging as one of the most important philosophical and ethical issues of modern society. In the digital information space, people are faced with a large amount of information; however, not all of this information is truthful, objective, and reliable. Therefore, the issue of trust in digital society should be studied not only within the framework of technical protection or information security, but also in connection with ethical consciousness, critical thinking, social responsibility, and human values.

The analysis conducted in this article shows that, under post-truth conditions, the weakening of trust may intensify disinformation, manipulation, indifference toward information, and social divisions in society. To prevent such risks, users must consciously receive information, verify it, and act responsibly when sharing it. At the same time, digital platforms, technology companies, educational institutions, and state institutions must also fulfill their social duties in strengthening digital trust.

The ethical essence of digital trust is reflected in the principles of commitment to truth, transparency, honesty, justice, critical thinking, and social responsibility. In the post-truth era, every action of an individual in the digital environment influences information culture. Therefore, in order to restore and strengthen trust in digital society, it is important to develop not only technological solutions, but also ethical education, media literacy, and civic awareness. Only through such an approach is it possible to ensure a balance between truth, responsibility, and trust in the digital information space.

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