

INFORMATION IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE POWER IN THE XXI CENTURY

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Abstract. Discussing the nature and transformation of power in the XXI century, the famous American futurologist Alvin Toffler concludes that as we enter the "information age" knowledge becomes "the most versatile and fundamental instrument of power" and "gives its owner the most effective power". In this article, the author will examine Alvin Toffler's theory and try to find out if the futurologist correctly predicted the future. There will also be an analogy between Toffler's predictions and the types of power of the 21st century.

Key words. Power, waves, future, wealth, violence, knowledge, information, agricultural, industrial, post-industrial, revolution.

MAIN BODY

More than twenty years ago, in 1990, writer and futurist Alvin Toffler (October 4, 1928 - June 27, 2016), the author of such works as "Future Shock", "The third wave" wrote the book "Powershift : Knowledge, Wealth, and Violence at the Edge of the 21st Century" is a book about how social, political and economic power structures are An important contribution to the development of ideas of post-industrialism and the information society was made by the concept of the American writer, businessman and futurist Alvin Toffler, set out in his works "Shock of the future" (1971), "Third wave" (1980) and other works. In 1990, the author's third book, " Powershift: Knowledge, Wealth, and Violence at the Edge of the 21st Century", was published, a book about how social, political, and economic power structures are changing at the beginning of the information age, foreshadowing many of today's cultural idioms and addressing other relevant topics such as network knowledge, the role of intuition, and the value of adding context. According to Toffler, all three books explore one period of time - from the mid-1950s to 75 years later - in 2025.

All parts of the trilogy focus on the same period of time, but each of them uses different tools to look beyond the facade of routine. "Future Shock" looks at the process of change, its impact on people and organisations. "The Third Wave" looks at the directions of change that affect society. The "Powershift" deals with the problem of governance: who shapes the changes that take place and how [1].

Future Shock provides evidence that accelerating the course of history has consequences in itself, regardless of the direction of transformation. Accelerating the pace of

events and shortening the time of reaction to them because certain consequences, not related to how these changes are perceived - positively or negatively.

After its first publication in 1970, the book suddenly became an international bestseller and attracted many comments. According to the Institute for Scientific Information in the United States, it has become one of the most cited works in sociology. The phrases "Futuroshock" has become part of everyday vocabulary and have appeared in many dictionaries and periodicals [1].

The book "Third wave", published in 1980, considered the "waves" of changes in the historical perspective and indicated the period of the middle of XX century, as the beginning of a new post-industrial civilization - or "Third wave" of changes. Among other things, this work noted the emergence in the near future of new industries based on the use of computers, electronics, information, biotechnology, etc. It also predicted the expansion of flexible production, the spread of vulnerable employment and the demasculation of the media.

The next wave means the transition to a super-industrial civilization and is the greatest transformation of society, a comprehensive transformation of all forms of social and individual existence.

The book "The Third Wave" asserts that there is a deep crisis of principles and structures of the Second Wave and the Third Wave rises to replace it, bringing new world views and new scientific and technological advances in the field of computer science, electronics, molecular biology, which allow to go beyond the limited life and philosophical concepts of the industrial period and create the conditions for eliminating its main contradiction - between production and consumption. According to E. Toffler, the turning point can be considered 1955, when in the U.S. for the first time the number of "white-collar" and service workers began to exceed the number of "blue-collar". This was the decade when computers and new technologies began to be introduced to the public [1].

In the third part of his trilogy, "Powershift" A. Toffler investigated the problem of power and its transformation under the influence of impending changes. In the preface to the book, E. Toffler writes that "Metamorphoses of Power" raises issues not touched upon in his previous works and focuses on the decisive change of relations: knowledge is power. The book "presents a new theory of power in society and explores the transformations taking place in business, economy, politics and the world in general" [2]. Toffler explores the triad of power: violence, wealth and knowledge. In doing so, he uses the concept of "quality" of power [1].

The main topic of work is the problems of power and management. According to Toffler, a global battle for power awaits us. And if in the period of the first wave the basis of

power was violence, in the period of the second wave - money and financial power, then in the period of the third wave, this basis is knowledge.

The main drawback of violence is its inflexibility. Violence can only be used as a punishment, so it can be classified as a low quality power. Wealth is a more convenient instrument of power; its power is more versatile. Wealth can be used both in positive and negative terms, i.e. it is much more flexible than power. Toffler regards wealth as a medium quality power. The highest quality power, according to Toffler, is the application of knowledge. It is knowledge that is the most versatile of the three main sources of governance in the society. Knowledge can also serve to increase wealth and power. Knowledge itself is not only the source of the highest quality power, but also the most important component of power and wealth. Knowledge is no longer the application of money and power to power - knowledge has become their essence. It, according to Toffler, is their ultimate amplifier, which is the key to understanding the coming metamorphoses of power, and this explains why the battle for control over knowledge and means of communication is raging all over the world [1].

In Chapter 2, titled “Muscle, Money, and Mind,” Toffler lays the foundation of his core argument — the idea that knowledge is becoming the key currency of a new super-symbolic economy, leaving behind the materiality of the industrial age:

“Knowledge itself ... turns out to be not only the source of the highest-quality power, but also the most important ingredient of force and wealth. Put differently, knowledge has gone from being an adjunct of money power and muscle power, to being their very essence. It is, in fact, the ultimate amplifier. This is the key to the powershift that lies ahead, and it explains why the battle for control of knowledge and the means of communication is heating up all over the world” [2].

Toffler emphasizes that any of the elements of power can be transformed from one to another in such a way that an individual has the Trinity wherever he or she begins. For example, the Power can be used to obtain Knowledge (information) or Wealth. Wealth can be used to gain Power or Knowledge. But, Knowledge stands out as the most effective way to begin. Knowledge can be used to gain Power and Wealth with the least amount of loss. Knowledge is now widely available, and people can get as much information as they want just by opening a browser or even just visiting a library.

Toffler stresses that of the triad of power, the use of wealth and power is available to the rich and strong, but knowledge is available even to the weak and poor. What is interesting about Knowledge is that it can be generated endlessly, as we all try to reach an understanding of the "Truth", if it exists. According to Toffler, "Knowledge is the most democratic source of power."

Toffler argued that people in the 21st century are creating new networks of knowledge by strikingly linking concepts with each other, building amazing hierarchies of inferences, generating new theories, hypotheses and images based on new assumptions, new languages, codes and logic:

“Today we are living through one of those exclamation points in history when the entire structure of human knowledge is once again trembling with change as old barriers fall. We are not just accumulating more ‘facts’ — whatever they may be. Just as we are now restructuring companies and whole economies, we are totally reorganizing the production and distribution of knowledge and the symbols used to communicate it” [2].

Businesses, governments and individuals collect and store more data than any previous generation in history. But more importantly, people link data in different ways, giving them context and thus shaping them into information; and these 'pieces of information' are collected into larger models of knowledge.

But not all this "new knowledge" is factual or even explicit. Many knowledge is unspoken, consisting of assumptions based on fragmented models, of unnoticed analogies, and includes not only logical but also value products of passion and emotion, not to mention imagination and intuition.

Not all this new knowledge is factual or even explicit. Much knowledge, as the term is used here, is unspoken, consisting of assumptions piled atop assumptions, of fragmentary models, of unnoticed analogies, and it includes not simply logical and seemingly unemotional information data, but values, the products of passion and emotion, not to mention imagination and intuition [3].

He predicted a knowledge society – a society, where power belongs to the one who possesses knowledge, the one who produces that knowledge. So the centers of power must move to universities and academies. However, I think that things changed in a different way. Instead of knowledge society, we have an information society. Instead of the power of reason, we have the power of communication. The centers of power are not universities and laboratories, but media corporations.

The society is run not by Knowledge, but by those who have information (mass media).

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