

## ТЕЛЕБАЧЕННЯ І РАДІО

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# The Ukrainian International Broadcasting Channel (UATV English) as a Tool of Promoting State Narratives

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## ABSTRACT

The functional characteristics of international broadcasting are determined by the goals and tasks for which it was created. The specificity of international broadcasting activity forms the following tasks: creation and promotion of a positive image of the state in the international arena; protection of a country's own political and cultural interests; promotion of tourism (in peacetime); fight against negative information influence that affects the perception of events in the country, both by the domestic and international audience; communication of the diaspora with the homeland, learning the language and traditions; promotion of national values norms and guidelines, etc. Based on these tasks, it is appropriate to distinguish five main functions of international broadcasting: protection of national interests, propaganda, counter-propaganda, education and pedagogy, and communication functions.

Basis on data on the activity of the State Enterprise "International Broadcasting Multimedia Platform of Ukraine", the main functions of international broadcasting are highlighted. The results obtained during the research expand and supplement the already known facts about the specifics of the functioning of international broadcasting corporations.

This study analysed the content of the UATV English State International Broadcasting channel in terms of delivering information about the events in Ukraine, protecting its national interests, countering hostile propaganda, and spreading pro-Ukrainian messages among international audiences.

The purpose of this study is to explore, systematise and generalise the basic functions of UATV English Channel in order to improve and evaluate the effectiveness of the "International Broadcasting Multimedia Platform of Ukraine" during the challenging times of information aggression combined with the conventional warfare. Emphasis was placed on researching the peculiarities and effectiveness of the UATV English Channel with the aim of protecting national interests, countering hostile propaganda and spreading pro-Ukrainian messages in the international media space.

The article presents statistics on audience reach and viewership of UATV English content on YouTube and Facebook platforms. As well as monitoring the effectiveness of different approaches to content and SEO-optimization of the materials. In addition, a content analysis of UATV English content on these platforms was conducted. All the video materials have been processed, and their classification according to four functional areas of content was presented. The analysed content was published over a period of six months, starting from February 24 (the date of the start of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine) to August 24, 2022 (The Independence Day of Ukraine).

On average, the UATV English-speaking channel receives 8-12 million views per month on YouTube from all materials produced by the media (except YouTube Shorts and Publications). The audience growth compared to the pre-war period amounted to 3,670% in February and added 367% in March 2022, when the total audience reached almost 60 million. The growth of the audience reach indicator on the UATV English-language Facebook page from February 24, 2022, reached 9,200% and amounted to 14.3 million users. Analysis of the content for the first 6 months of the war showed that the content of the Ukrainian broadcasting was rearranged/redesigned in accordance with the realities of wartime, with several strategic changes in the approach to the content. According to the classification of four functional directions of the content defined earlier, the dominant content is the one related to the protection and promotion of national interests (36.3%), followed by information about the course of the war and events in the country (32.5%), opinion and worldview-based content (22.4%), and counter-information to Russian propaganda (8.8%).

The UATV English-speaking channel performs its functions as an international broadcasting service: spreading pro-Ukrainian narratives in the world and delivering truthful information about the war in Ukraine. UATV English content effectively counters Russian war propaganda.

**KEYWORDS:** YouTube; Ukraine; international broadcasting; media; information aggression.

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## Український канал іномовлення (UATV English) як інструмент просування державних наративів

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### Резюме

Функціональні характеристики міжнародного мовлення визначаються цілями і завданнями, для вирішення яких воно створювалося. Специфіка діяльності міжнародного мовлення формує такі завдання: створення та просування позитивного іміджу держави на міжнародній арені; захист власних політичних і культурних інтересів країни; сприяння розвитку туризму (у мирний час); боротьба з негативним інформаційним впливом на сприйняття подій у країні внутрішньою і міжнародною аудиторією; спілкування діаспори з батьківщиною, вивчення мови та традицій; пропаганда національних ціннісних норм і орієнтирів тощо. Виходячи з цих завдань, доцільно виділити п'ять основних функцій міжнародного мовлення: захист національних інтересів, пропаганда, контрпропаганда, освітньо-педагогічна та комунікаційна функції.

На основі даних про діяльність ДП «Міжнародна телерадіомовна мультимедійна платформа України» виділено основні функції міжнародного мовлення. Отримані в ході дослідження результати розширюють і доповнюють вже відомі факти про специфіку функціонування міжнародних телерадіокомпаній.

У цьому дослідженні проаналізовано контент телеканалу UATV English State International Broadcasting з точки зору донесення інформації про події в Україні, захисту її національ-

них інтересів, протидії ворожій пропаганді та поширення проукраїнських меседжів серед міжнародної аудиторії.

**Метою** цього дослідження є систематизація та узагальнення основних функцій UATV English Channel з метою вдосконалення та оцінки ефективності «Міжнародної телерадіомовної мультимедійної платформи України» у складні часи інформаційної агресії у поєднанні зі звичайною військовою загрозою. Акцент було зроблено на дослідженні особливостей та ефективності UATV English Channel з метою захисту національних інтересів, протидії ворожій пропаганді та поширенню проукраїнських меседжів у світовому медіапросторі.

**Методи.** У статті наведено статистику охоплення аудиторії та переглядів англomовного контенту UATV на платформах YouTube та Facebook. А також моніторинг ефективності різних підходів до контенту та SEO-оптимізації матеріалів. Крім того, проведено контент-аналіз англійського контенту UATV на цих платформах. Опрацьовано всі відеоматеріали, представлено їх класифікацію за чотирма функціональними напрямками змісту. Проаналізований контент публікувався протягом шести місяців, починаючи з 24 лютого (дата початку повномасштабного російського вторгнення в Україну) до 24 серпня 2022 року (День Незалежності України).

**Результати.** У середньому англійський канал UATV отримує 8-12 мільйонів переглядів на YouTube на місяць з усіх матеріалів, створених ЗМІ (крім YouTube Shorts і Publications). Приріст аудиторії порівняно з довоєнним періодом склав 3670% у лютому та додав 367% у березні 2022 року, коли загальна аудиторія досягла майже 60 мільйонів. Зростання показника охоплення аудиторії на сторінці UATV English у Facebook з 24 лютого 2022 року досягло 9200% і склало 14,3 млн користувачів. Аналіз контенту за перші 6 місяців війни показав, що контент українського мовлення було переформатовано відповідно до реалій воєнного часу, з кількома стратегічними змінами підходу до контенту. Згідно з визначеною раніше класифікацією чотирьох функціональних напрямків контенту, домінуючим є контент, пов'язаний із захистом і просуванням національних інтересів (36,3%), на другому місці – інформація про хід війни та події в країні (32,5%), світоглядний контент (22,4 %) та контрінформація російській пропаганді (8,8 %).

Англomовний канал UATV виконує функції міжнародного мовлення: поширює проукраїнські наративи у світі та доносить правдиву інформацію про війну в Україні. Англomовний контент UATV ефективно протидіє російській військовій пропаганді

**Ключові слова:** YouTube; Україна; міжнародне мовлення; ЗМІ; інформаційна агресія.

## 1. Introduction

### Background/rationale

In 2022, as a result of Russia's military aggression, Ukraine engaged into global informational and ideological struggle. In addition to the military, contemporary armed conflicts have a powerful informational component. And international broadcasting stands in the first line of the information war in the international dimension. Therefore, this research is devoted to the theory and practice of international broadcasting in Ukraine, the nature and transformation of its functions in war conditions, its relevancy and how it meets the public need for effective state-run media.

The definition of international broadcasting has certain distinctions – it is characterised as “a specific form of activity consisting in the preparation and release of radio broadcasts intended for listeners of other countries with the aim of exerting a certain political and ideological influence on them”, “advertising of information about the life of the broadcasting country, reflection of the objective picture of international events” (Bezzub, 2015).

The Law on the International Broadcasting System of Ukraine (2016) provides the following definition of the term “international broadcasting”: state international broadcasting of Ukraine is broadcasting aimed at informing about events in Ukraine, which is carried out in the form of information messages, news, TV programmes using technical means of television and radio communications, as well as other forms of activity provided for by this Law.

Also the “International Broadcasting Multimedia Platform of Ukraine” is mentioned as the public audiovisual media of Ukraine according to the Law of Ukraine on the Media. American researchers Monroe Price, Susan Haas and Drew Margolin in their joint work “New Technologies and International Broadcasting: Reflections on Adaptations and Transformations” give their definition of the term. Thus, international broadcasting has become a sophisticated term “for the complex combination of state-sponsored news, information and entertainment aimed at audiences beyond the borders of the sponsoring state. It largely meant the use of electronic media by one society to shape the opinion of the people and leaders of another” (Price, Haas, and Margolin 2008, 6).

Viktoriya Konakh in the article “The Evolution of International Broadcasting in the Foreign Countries: the Experience for Ukraine” defines international broadcasting as a specific form of activity, directed primarily at citizens of other countries, with the aim of exerting a certain informational and psychological influence on them, which consists in the preparation and broadcasting of informational messages, news, various programmes, etc. Since its inception, international broadcasting has been used as an important tool not only for promoting the spread of ideological, cultural and other values of the broadcaster in the world, but also for promoting and protecting national interests abroad, forming and maintaining a positive image of one’s own state (Konakh, 2014, p. 12).

International broadcasting depends on the global geopolitical situation, which directly follows from its functional specificity. After all, the emergence of the first international broadcasting media was induced by the confrontation of political regimes, a tense military situation, and international economic confrontation.

The second stage in the development of international broadcasting relates to the start of the “Cold War”. Then its character changed – international broadcasting began to be widely used by the states of the Communist and Western blocs for propaganda and ideological influence on each other’s population. The Dutch researcher Marcel H. Van Herpen writes: “The origins of the Cold War were the unprecedented territorial expansionist greed of Soviet Russia, the undisguised, unfettered imperialism of Stalin’s totalitarian regime that refused to respect the right of national self-determination of its new “brother nations.” For forty years it led to a huge military buildup by the two superpowers. And it ended, quite suddenly and unexpectedly, with the collapse of the Soviet Empire. This collapse was experienced by the Russians as a defeat and by many in the West as a victory (even if, for reasons of expediency, they did not always say so openly)” (Van Herpen, 2014, p. 210-211).

The most influential Western broadcasters of that time include the American “Voice of America”, “Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty”, the British “BBC World Service”, and the German “Deutsche Welle”. In addition to the most powerful countries in the world of that period, countries in Europe, the Middle East and Africa began to develop international broadcasting during the Cold War (Bezzub, 2015).

Iryna Bezzub in the article “Ukraine’s International Broadcasting: the Current State and Prospects of Development” (Bezzub, 2015) notes that the third stage of the formation of international broadcasting coincides with the end of the Cold War and the fall of totalitarian regimes in the countries of the former socialist camp. At this time, the transformation of international broadcasting in Western countries from “alternative” to “integrated” television and radio broadcasting of “young democracies” in the countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe, as well as the

legalisation of international broadcasting in Western countries in Russia and the former republics of the USSR, is taking place. Among the main tasks of international broadcasting services is informing foreign audiences about the political, cultural and economic life of their own countries, clarifying positions on important internal and external issues, for which a significant place was given to news, journalistic programmes and comments on current topics, interviews, reports etc. At the same time, their essential duty remains to protect national interests and maintain a positive image of their own state in the world.

The fourth stage took place at the beginning of the 21st century and was marked by another trend – the arrival of international broadcasting TV and radio stations on the Internet and the emergence of the so-called “hybrid broadcasting”, when their Internet sites become platforms for posting various types of information: text, audio and video (Bezzub, 2015).

The history of Ukrainian international broadcasting originates from the information agency “Ukrinform” – the national information agency of Ukraine, a source of information about political, economic, social, scientific, cultural, social life in Ukraine and abroad. The history of “Ukrinform” began on March 16, 1918. In 1918–1919, during the time of the Ukrainian People’s Republic, it was called UTA, UkTA (Ukrainian Telegraph Agency), later renamed by the communists to BUP (Bureau of the Ukrainian Press) and UkROSTA (Ukrainian-Russian Telegraph Agency).

Since 1921, the name of the agency has been stable – RATAU (Radio-Telegraph Agency of Ukraine) for almost seventy years, until 1990, when the name “Ukrinform” (Ukrainian National Information Agency) first appeared. In 1996, another renaming took place, and the name of the agency was DINAU (State Information Agency) until 2000, when it was returned to the name “Ukrinform” and received the status of the Ukrainian National Information Agency.

Today, “Ukrinform” has the largest network of regional and international offices. The agency’s correspondents work in every region of Ukraine and in 10 countries around the world: The USA, Canada, Germany, France, Austria, Belgium, Netherlands, Poland, Latvia, Turkey. News is published in Ukrainian, Russian, English, German, Spanish, French, Japanese, and Polish.

“Ukrinform” provides its readers with a complete and objective picture of events daily: more than 300 news articles are published per day, including exclusive comments and interviews, photo reports, infographics (Ukrinform, 2022).

However, the beginning of the history of Ukrainian radio international broadcasting is considered to be the creation of the first international broadcasting editorial office – “Radio Kyiv”. It started broadcasting after WW2, in 1950. The main goal of “Radio Kyiv” was broadcasting for the diaspora. In 1952, the radio station began broadcasting in English, in 1966 – in German, and in 1970 – in Romanian (“Ukrainian Radio”, 2014).

Thus, the development of international broadcasting, its functions has always depended on the need for informational influence or propaganda of one country on another and on the effectiveness of this influence. One of the main tasks of international broadcasting companies is to inform international audiences about the political, cultural and economic life of their host countries, and clarify positions on important internal and external issues. Also, protection of national interests and support of the state’s positive image in the world is an integral duty of international exchange.

Candidate of political sciences, chief consultant of the department of information strategies and problems of the information society of the National Institute of Strategic Studies of Ukraine Viktoria Konakh in her article “The Evolution of International Broadcasting in the Foreign Countries: the Experience for Ukraine” draws attention to the great importance of international broadcasting in the formation of the country both in the information space and on the geopolitical map of the world. The author states such main functions of international broadcasting as educational, propagandistic and protective (Price, Haas, and Margolin, 2008).

In this work, the author also examines both the historical stages of the development of international broadcasting (worldwide and in Ukraine), as well as the latest trends of world-famous international broadcasting media corporations. At the current stage, foreign speakers use a combination of various platforms to reach their audience: long-, medium-, and short-wave radio, satellite broadcasting, and increasingly the Internet. The trend of the last few years is the merging of international broadcasting services into media holdings. Thus, in France, the main mass media of the country that broadcast abroad: the TV5 MONDE and France 24 channels, as well as the International French Radio (Radio France internationale – RFI) function within the state holding AEF Médias Monde (until June 27, 2013 – Audiovisuel Extérieur de la France), which was formed in 2008 by the decision of the previous president of France, Nicolas Sarkozy. In the People's Republic of China, the China Global Television Network (CGTN) was established specifically for international broadcasting. In Japan, such international-broadcasting TV channels as NHK World TV, NHK World Premium and the radio channel NHK World Radio Japan (known in Europe as the JSTV channel and in the USA as TV Japan) are also united in the broadcasting corporation – NHK, however, unlike the aforementioned media holdings, they have been part of it since its foundation (Price, Haas, and Margolin, 2008, p. 15-16).

The dissertation of Alina Kostrubitska, Candidate of Sciences in Public Administration is devoted to the legal aspects of international broadcasting. “Special Features of State Regulation of the Internet Mass Media in the European Union” (Kostrubitska, 2016).

The researcher studies regulatory policy based on data from the most powerful EU international broadcasters: the British BBC World News, the German Deutsche Welle and the French France24.

“Deutsche Welle” worked as a public broadcaster for almost half a century. And only in 1992, the service reached the international level. Thus, international broadcasting is created on the basis of public broadcasting and is part of it, but it is financed by the state directly. In 2003, the German parliament passed a law that created a three-unit media system, uniting radio, television and the Deutsche Welle internet portal.

The regional approach consists in diversifying online content for each region and broadcasting in more than four languages. Here it is worth noting a significant feature in the state regulation, namely: unlike the domestic public broadcaster (the ARD channel), “Deutsche Welle” is allowed not to coordinate its online services with television programmes. A. Kostrubitska also analyses the provisions of the special law from 2003 – the Deutsche Welle Act. The task of the service is to present Germany as a country developed in European traditions and a democratic constitutional country, as well as to popularise the German language (Deutsche Welle, 2018).

Sponsors cannot influence the editorial policy of the BBC. News and political programmes cannot be sponsored, presenters cannot participate in projects about the current political situation on commercial television. Instead, the BBC's British service was created as, and essentially remains, public service television for Britain. However, for Europe and the rest of the world, the BBC has long become a source of information covering not only the internal news of Great Britain, but also news from other regions of the world.

In its activities, the service uses the government document “A public service for all: the BBC in the digital age”, the so-called White Paper, from March 2006, which emphasises the importance of using information technologies, including social networks. The revision of the document was valid until December 31, 2016. It mainly outlines the main principles of the service, in particular, support for citizens and civil society, popularisation of education, stimulation of cultural development and creativity, including through films, taking into account the position of the British nation, regions and communities, informing Britain about the world and the world about Britain, creating the so-called “digital Britain” (BBC, 2006).

As for the historical aspect of international broadcasting, it is described in detail in the work of James Wood, "History of International Broadcasting" (Wood, 2000), where the author describes in detail the formation of the largest international-language corporations and, in general, international broadcasting in different countries.

Therefore, the question of defining the term 'international broadcasting' is popular both in Ukrainian and international journalism studies. Many scientists gave their definitions of the term in scientific articles and dissertations: Viktoria Konakh, Alina Kostrubitska, Susan Haas, Monroe Price, Drew Margolin, and others.

And although all definitions of the term "international broadcasting" are formulated differently, the basic idea is the same: international broadcasting is the dissemination of information beyond the borders of the country from which the broadcast is conducted to a international audience, aimed at informing about events in the country from which the broadcast is conducted, with the aim of exerting a certain political and ideological influence on them.

The development of international broadcasting and its functions has always depended on the need for informational influence or propaganda of one country on another and on the effectiveness of this influence. One of the main tasks of international broadcasting services is to inform international audiences about the political, cultural and economic life of their home countries, and to clarify positions on important internal and external issues. At the same time, the protection of national interests and support of the state's positive image in the world is an integral duty of international broadcasting.

Russia's current invasion of Ukraine is the largest war in Europe since World War II. In the modern world, any military aggression is not limited to armed confrontation, but has ideological, propaganda, diplomatic, economic, and informational components.

The full-scale Russian war against Ukraine has been going on for 17 months as of the end of July 2023, but the origins of Russian aggression can be traced to Russian "eternal" imperialism as described by a Dutch researcher Marcel H. Van Herpen.

"This "eternal" Russian imperialism has four origins:

1. Russia's geographical position
2. Russia's economic system
3. Russia's expansionist tradition

4. A deliberate expansionist policy conducted by the Russian ruling elite" (Van Herpen, 2014, p. 24).

The Hungarian-American researchers Iván Szelényi and Péter Mihályi state in their paper "Varieties of Post-Communist Capitalism": "Putin's policies represent a new, if you want a fourth type of domination, a way of post-communist transformation into an illiberal, prebendal system" (Szelényi and Mihályi, 2019, p. 3).

"Putin began to build his ideological image already when he became Prime Minister. He published his Turn of the Millennium manifesto, which was the first step to get rid of his KGB past and to create himself a new political and ideological identity [...]. Already at the turn of the Millennium, Putin laid down the principles of his future governance. These were patriotism, order and effective governance (he was, of course, reluctant to call it autocracy)". (Szelényi and Mihályi 2019, 8). The analyses by both Van Herpen and Szelényi/Mihályi of Russia being an autocratic (nowadays rather authoritarian) regime explain why there is Russian imperialism and Putinism. Russia has committed numerous acts of aggression against other sovereign states that have once been "theirs" (Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine). The narrative word "ours" and "our guys" are key to understanding the behavioural imperialistic patterns of Russia's population that support Putinism and imperialism, consequently supporting the acts of aggression committed by their state.

As the researcher Christian Fuchs sites in his work "Donald Trump: A Critical Theory-Perspective on Authoritarian Capitalism":



“Contemporary politics is shaped by authoritarian populists such as Rodrigo Duterte (Philippines), Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (Turkey), Nigel Farage (UK), Jarosław Kaczyński and Beata Szydło (Poland), Marine Le Pen (France), Narendra Modi (India), Viktor Orbán (Hungary), Vladimir Putin (Russia), Heinz Christian Strache (Austria), Geert Wilders (Netherlands). Donald Trump’s presidency is the most powerful expression of the rise of right-wing populism. The key question in respect to state institutions and civil liberties is whether Trump’s presidency may result in an authoritarian form of US capitalism. In the age of Trump, we should think about how to understand authoritarian capitalism” (Fuchs, 2017, p. 29).

But as we can see, Trump’s presidency didn’t lead to the decline of democracy in the US, but Putin’s rule has created an authoritarian near-fascist in its expressions regime, which generates and uses hate towards other nations and democratic regimes at all. Atlantic Council author Taras Kuzio writes about the current Russian-Ukrainian war: “Moscow’s efforts to portray the war in Ukraine as a battle against Nazism have been widely mocked and comprehensively rejected by the international community. These anti-fascist pretensions are rendered even more ridiculous by the country’s own steady descent under Putin into full-blown fascism. Indeed, the current war in Ukraine has led many to conclude that modern Russia is following in the footsteps of the fascist dictatorships it claims to oppose” (Kuzio, 2022).

The goal of Ukrainian international broadcasting is to counter the Russian neo-imperialist propaganda, produced by the Russian state media corporations such as RT, TASS, Ria Novosti etc. Van Herpen writes in this context:

“Although the British perception that their empire was created in “a fit of absence of mind” may be exaggerated, it is not an exaggeration to say that from its early beginnings the Russian empire has been conceived as a deliberate project. The twin objectives of territorial expansion and the subjugation of other peoples were consciously and purposefully pursued by Russia’s political elite. An exemplification for this mindset is tsarina Catherine the Great’s famous dictum: “I have no way to defend my borders but to extend them.” It was not only a supposed fragility of the Russian state that was at the root of its continuous expansion. “The fact that, unlike Western Europe, the formation of the empire does not succeed the construction of the state, but accompanies it, has also blurred the dividing lines. The concept of the nation and imperial ambition merge as soon as Moscow, the first centre of the modern state, gains the upper hand over rival Russian principalities and, then, over the weakened mongol overlord.” The fact that in Russia empire building was a constitutive part of the process of state formation indicates a fundamental difference with empire building by the Western European states, which only began after the national states had been consolidated. While Russia was a “product of empire”, this was not the case here” (Van Herpen, 2014, p. 26).

In Ukraine, Heorhii Pocheptsov studies the problems of informational influences as a component of state policy. In his article “Information Policy and Security of Modern States” (Pocheptsov 2011), Heorhii Pocheptsov made a detailed analysis of the information policy and security of the world’s leading countries. World experience shows the effectiveness of such tools of modern politics as “informational influences”, “social propaganda”, and “war of ideologies”. “The significant strengthening of information weapons forces us to review the types of threats, because the time has come for the weapon of peacetime – information. Perestroika and the Velvet revolutions, the Colour Revolutions, including the Arab ones, were all based on the intensive use of the informational component, with the help of which all other options of forces were defeated” (Pocheptsov, 2011). Pocheptsov calls Russia’s information policy regarding Ukraine “the first semantic war in the world”, referring to the events in the East of Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea in 2014 (Pocheptsov, 2014).

Another weapon of information influence are internet trolls. Their goal is not to convince the audience that something is true but rather to spread doubt if the truth is even told by anyone.

That makes the audience more vulnerable to the influence of propaganda. As described by Ulises Mejias and Nikolai Vokuev in their research “Disinformation and the media: the case of Russia and Ukraine”:

“Under these circumstances, it is difficult to separate fact from fiction, and nearly impossible to ascertain who is behind a particular disinformation campaign. Even the comments posted in response to fake news articles might themselves be fake. The existence of Russian armies of paid pro-government Internet trolls is roundly denied, but thoroughly documented (an Internet troll is a person who posts incendiary comments and expresses disagreement through insults). The British newspaper *The Guardian*, for example, has reported concerted attacks on some of its articles about Russia and Ukraine of up to 40,000 comments per day. The existence of a “troll factory” situated in Olgino, outside St. Petersburg, was reported in 2013. Journalists from the Russian newspapers *Novaya Gazeta* and *Moi Raion* even infiltrated it, posing as job seekers. They found that the factory was referred to as the Internet Research Agency and was supposedly started by Putin’s friend Evgeny Prigozhin. There, hundreds of paid bloggers worked hard every day under fake identities, apparently without an employment contract. Their job was to praise Putin and denounce the opposition in forums, social networks and the comment boards of national and international media” (Mejias, Vokuev, 2017, pp. 1027–1042).

It is also important to understand the role of journalism in a democratic country and in a country with an authoritarian regime. The researcher John V. Pavlik writes in his work “The Russian War in Ukraine and the Implications for the News Media”:

“Yet the role of journalism in democratic versus authoritarian states is dramatically different. In a democracy, independent journalism acts as the Fourth Estate, essentially a check on government. This is a vital role during war when lives are at stake. But in an authoritarian or totalitarian state such as Russia, the role of the media is far from a Fourth Estate or government watch dog. During the war in Ukraine, the Russian media have been reduced to the role of government lapdog and act as a propaganda mechanism for the Putin regime. The result is increasingly a society living in an alternate, untruthful reality. Moreover, Russia has weaponized its state media propaganda. In April 2022 Russian television’s *Rossiya-1* news channel threatened Britain with nuclear annihilation by airing a simulation of nuclear strikes by air and by sea destroying Britain and Ireland” (Pavlik, 2022).

An in-depth analysis of the theory of the origin and development of information wars in the modern world was made by the American journalist Philip Taylor in the book *Global Communications, International Relations and the Mass Media since 1945* (Taylor, 1997). Taylor proves that the rapid development of civilization and new mass communication technologies has a fundamental impact on the development of international relations in the modern world. Taylor analyses in detail the influence of mass media on the development of international events during the so-called “Cold War”, the war in Vietnam, and the war in the Persian Gulf. It is the revolution in communications technology that has a powerful impact on international relations. You can cite many examples of Russia’s informational aggression against Ukraine from recent history. And it is precisely these influences that must be effectively countered by Ukraine’s counter measures.

Despite the fact that Ukrainian international broadcasting has a history of almost 70 years, from the creation of “Radio Kyiv” to the State Enterprise “The International Broadcasting Multimedia Platform of Ukraine”, the modern Ukrainian international broadcasting system requires an analysis of the effectiveness of its activities, further development and improvement.

Therefore, with the aim of protecting national interests, minimising the propaganda activities of aggressive foreign broadcasters (mostly Russian international broadcasting services), exposing disinformation, as well as presenting truthful information and forming a positive image of Ukraine in the world, the Verkhovna Rada adopted the Law of Ukraine “On the International Broadcasting System of Ukraine” passed in 2016, No. 856, VIII. According to this law, a power-

ful international broadcasting system is needed with the aim to provide a complete information picture of events in Ukraine for foreigners and Ukrainians living outside the country.

According to the current legislation, the system of Ukraine's international broadcasting consists of the Ukrainian National Information Agency "Ukrinform" and the State Enterprise "The International Broadcasting Multimedia Platform of Ukraine" (2016). On October 1, 2015, the Ukrainian international broadcasting TV channel UATV started its work – it was a 24-hour international broadcasting TV channel addressed to a wide international audience. Under the conditions of military aggression, the information and counter-power functions of the Ukrainian international broadcasting service come to the fore. As of 2023 the International Broadcasting of Ukraine exists in the form of 3 international broadcasting channels: FREEДOM (broadcasts in Russian), UATV English, UATV Arabic and Digital Platform The Gaze (2023).

It is also important to comprehensively inform international audiences about the course of the war and its impact on the situation in Ukraine, as a component of the communicative function, and the protection of Ukraine's interests in the global information space. These functions have the purpose of strengthening the so-called "soft power" or "diplomacy of influence", which means achieving political goal not by militaristic means, but by psychological and informational means, including the use of the mass media. With the beginning of the 2022 war, the The International broadcasting multimedia platform of Ukraine implemented a complex media campaign, the purpose of which was to spread pro-Ukrainian narratives abroad, to ensure truthful coverage of the events of the war in Ukraine, its causes, and consequences for the countries of Europe and the whole world. In the context of counter-information, the goal was to counter the attempts of Russian propaganda to distort the real events in Ukraine and present the aggression of the Russian Federation as justified. One of the central goals of the media campaign is to show that Ukrainians and peoples of other democratic countries have common values and that Ukraine's defence is primarily aimed at the freedom of the Ukrainian people, democracy, and the rule of law. Also, the purpose of the media campaign is to justify military, political, informational, and humanitarian aid to Ukraine and other ways of supporting the country during the ongoing war.

The media campaign consists of a flexible media information strategy aimed at maximum audience reach. During the first months of the war, most TV channels in Ukraine joined the information telethon "Joint News" (broadcast in Ukraine) and the "FREEДOM" International Broadcasting Marathon. Freedom Marathon is a product of Ukraine's international broadcasting. The broadcast is primarily in Russian, English, and Arabic. The project is multimedia, which is why the content of the UATV English Channel, created by the editors of the International Information Department, is in English and is distributed using Internet media services. Social media platforms are used, namely YouTube and Facebook. The forms of content are reports, talking videos, podcasts, and special reports. English-speaking special correspondents work at international events, meetings, and press conferences. Thus, Ukrainian international broadcasting journalists worked in Poland at the press conference of US President Joe Biden when he visited Poland in the Spring of 2022. They filmed protests in the streets of Paris after the presidential election, and worked at press conferences of NATO leaders. Correspondents of the editorial newsroom in Kyiv record comments from expert speakers: people's deputies, high-ranking officials, representatives of the Office of the President of Ukraine, partner states of Ukraine, and media and opposition figures from the Russian Federation. Among the international activities, it is worth noting the work at the press meetings of European and world organisations, in particular at the meetings of the OSCE. The information agenda of the Ukrainian international broadcasting service is formed from these sources. The result of the media campaign was a significant increase in the audience size and audience reach of Ukraine's international broadcaster, namely the YouTube channel UATV English.

As of 2022, the UATV channel has been transformed into two broadcasters: the **ВІСЬМОТ** TV channel (that has existed since March 10, 2022) – a satellite TV channel present on social networks that is aimed at the international audience, as well as the **ДОМ** TV channel (started broadcasting on March 1, 2020) – a satellite TV channel present in social networks that is aimed at the Ukrainian audience of the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. **ДОМ** TV has broadcast in Ukrainian since September 2022.

Within the structure of the State Enterprise ‘International Broadcasting Multimedia Platform of Ukraine’ there are two communication channels on the YouTube service and the Facebook social network: UATV English and UATV Arabic – in fact, these are social media for the English-speaking and Arabic-speaking audiences of the world.

### **Objectives**

The purpose of this study was to obtain new knowledge about the interest of the international audience in the work of Ukrainian international broadcasting during the Russian-Ukrainian war. This study allows specialists in the field of strategic communications and media to study the content of Ukrainian international broadcasting (UATV English-speaking channel), which is aimed at protecting national interests, countering hostile propaganda and spreading pro-Ukrainian messages in the information war with Russia.

## **2. Methods**

The method of quantitative analysis, comparison of statistical data on media content consumption by the audience for a period of 6 months (24.02.2022–24.08.2022) was used in the study, as well as the method of interpretation. The indicators starting with January 2022 were taken as the base period. The number of viewers from different countries was measured and compared. Statistical analysis was focused on the metrics for audience reach and involvement, and on the location data. Also, the methods of comparative analysis, data analysis, generalisation, interpretation and historical methods were used.

### **Data sources/measurement**

Data from YouTube and Facebook platforms were provided by the State Enterprise “International Broadcasting Multimedia Platform of Ukraine”. The authors of this publication express gratitude for the provided materials that made this research possible.

### **Content analysis of UATV English materials**

Materials of UATV English from YouTube and Facebook platforms in the period 24.02.2022 – 24.08.2022, which is 793 videos, were reviewed and classified according to 4 functions of Ukraine’s International Broadcasting Service, namely the protection and promotion of the national interest, responsible highlighting of important information about the course of the war and events in the country, information and counteraction to Russian propaganda.

## **3. Results**

The most important key indicator is the number of views (132.3 million). This is the total number of views of all UATV English materials published during the period of 24.02.2022 – 24.08.2022.

The second no less important indicator is the “watch time” (4.4 million hours). It is the total time spent by network users viewing UATV English materials over the course of 6 months.

There were 270 000 new subscriptions to the channel. This indicator shows the growth of the most loyal audience during the selected period. Such users are more likely to view new content and follow updates provided by the analysed media.

Audience reach (1044 million users) is the total number of users who saw or interacted with UATV English video icons across all platforms and in watch recommendations.

Considering the dynamics of key indicators, it can be stated that State Enterprise “The International Broadcasting Multimedia Platform of Ukraine” managed to significantly increase the audience and keep it engaged in the long run after the first wave of interest about the situation in Ukraine in February and early March 2022. UATV English has become an influential media and a reliable source of information for hundreds of thousands of users around the world. Table 1 shows UATV English’s audience data for the analysed period.

**Statistics and content analysis**  
**Data from UATV English YouTube channel**

Period	Total number of views	Watch time (in hours)	New channel subscriptions	Audience reach
January 2022	345 409	17 976,4	1 409	3 152 827
24.02.2022 – 24.03.2022	12 677 247 +3670%	495 132,9 +2654%	45 334 +3117%	90 517 804 +2771%
24.03.2022 – 24.04.2022	59 196 165 +367%	1 789 450,3 +261%	140 230 +209%	475 554 402 +425%
24.04.2022 – 24.05.2022	28 805 349 -51%	1 045 737,5 -42%	48 306 -66%	224 017 551 -53%
24.05.2022 – 24.06.2022	8 042 170 -72%	325 883,8 -69%	10 683 -78%	70 401 701 -69%
24.06.2022 – 24.07.2022	12 411 481 +54%	441 262,1 +35%	19 906 +86%	91 536 561 +30%
24.07.2022 – 24.08.2022	8 186 492 -34%	325 155,6 -26%	7 241 -64%	65 924 095 -28%
24.02.2022– 24.08.2022	132 303 501	4 481 102,2	270 744	1 044 736 166

Table 1. Metrics of the UATV English-speaking channel on the YouTube platform (24.02.2022–24.08.2022); data source: YouTube Studio

Monitoring of the location of those viewing UATV English shows that the content is consumed primarily by audiences from English-speaking countries: the USA, Great Britain, Canada, and Australia (see figure 1). A relatively high rate of views is from countries where English is traditionally studied: Germany, the Philippines. The countries of northern and central-eastern Europe (Sweden, Poland) make up a small part of the audience of UATV English. That is, the content finds its target consumer and is by most part successful among the English-speaking audience.

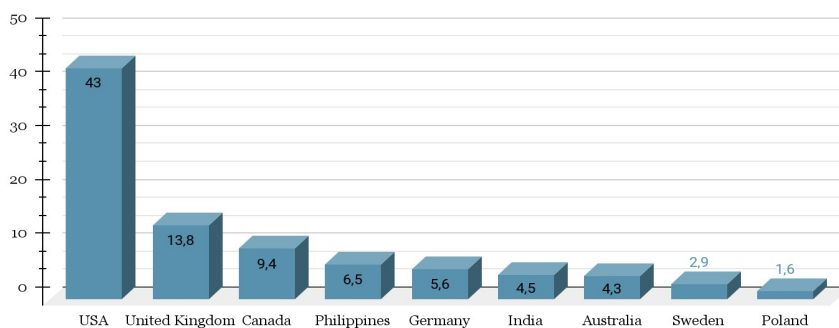


Figure 1. Number of views on the UATV English YouTube channel (in millions) by country (24.02.2022–24.08.2022); data source: YouTube Studio

### Data from the UATV English Facebook page (Meta Business Suite)

Facebook’s research tools allow us to monitor the country of origin of users who have subscribed to the UATV English page on this social network. Asian countries: India, Pakistan, the Philippines, Indonesia dominate in the number of subscribers, the total percentage of subscribers from Asian countries is 16.8%, while the percentage of the audience from English-speaking countries is 15.6%. Content on the Facebook platform has relatively higher popularity among audiences from Asian countries, but still has audiences from English-speaking countries.

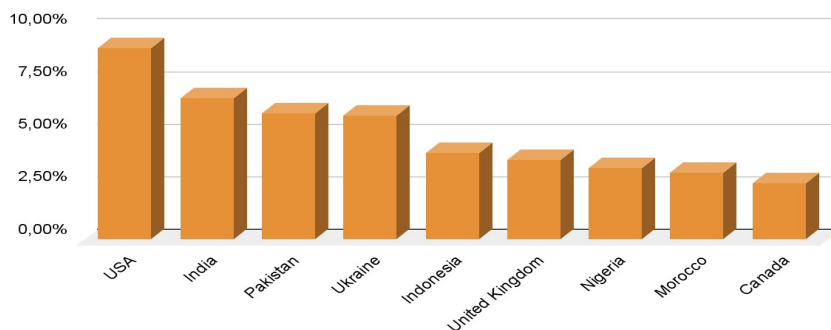


Figure 2. Location of UATV English Facebook page followers by country, percent (24.02.2022–24.08.2022); data source: UATV English Facebook page.

Let's compare the audience reach achieved by UATV English on the YouTube video platform (table 1) and on Facebook (figure 3).

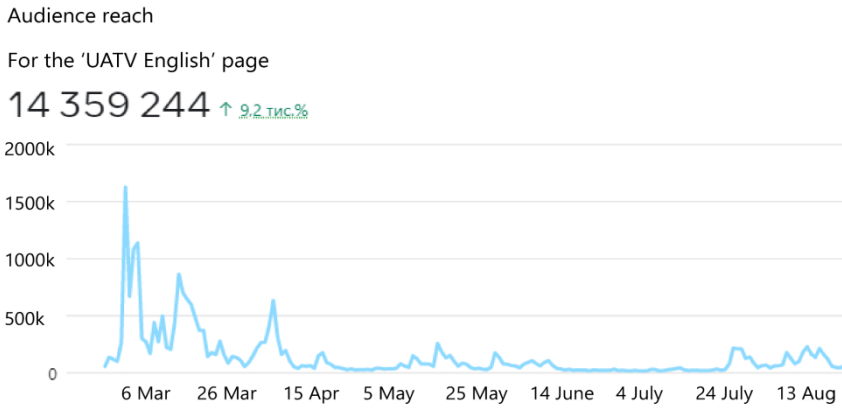


Figure 3. Audience reach for the materials of the UATV English Facebook page, (data source: Meta Business Suite). 24.02.2022–24.08.2022

While the YouTube channel resulted in more than 1 billion users reached, then the Facebook page was able to reach only 14.3 million users during the same measuring period. We can conclude that YouTube is a more effective platform for UATV English media if our goal is to reach more people around the world. The 6-month content analysis (24.02.2022 – 24.08.2022) of the materials of the UATV English YouTube channel allowed us to classify them according to 4 functions of international broadcasting: protection and promotion of national interests (36.3%), responsible information about the course of the war and events in the country (32.5%), propaganda (22.4%), and counter-propaganda (8.8%)

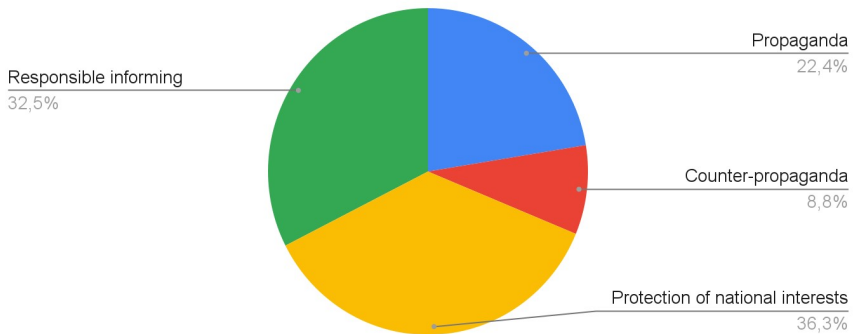


Figure 4. Content analysis of the materials of the YouTube channel UATV English for the (24.02.2022–24.08.2022); data source: UATV English YouTube page

## 4. Discussion

### Key results

According to data provided by the State Enterprise “International Broadcasting Multimedia Platform of Ukraine” During the period from February 24, 2022, to August 24, 2022, the number of views on the UATV English YouTube channel exceeded 132 million, and audience reach exceeded 1 billion users. The largest audience was made up of viewers from the USA, Great Britain, Canada, the Philippines, Germany, Australia, India and Sweden.

From February 24 to August 24, 2022, the audience reach rate on the UATV English Facebook page reached 14 million users, 14,497 users pressed the ‘like’ button and thus subscribed to the page.

Due to the classification according to the four functional directions of the content, the dominant content is the protection and promotion of national interests (36.3%), in the second position – responsible information about the course of the war and events in the country (32.5%), the third and fourth positions are occupied by the propagandistic (22.4%) and counter-propaganda (8.8%) types of content respectively.

**Yet again, the authors of this paper express gratitude to the State Enterprise “International Broadcasting Multimedia Platform of Ukraine”, which provided invaluable data to make this research possible.**















### Interpretation





Based on the analysis of statistical indicators and content analysis of the UATV English YouTube channel, using the method of interpretation, we can conclude: UATV English successfully implements the task of informing the global audience about events in Ukraine, the course of the Russian-Ukrainian war, successfully countering hostile propaganda and broadcasts the main narratives, which originate from the basis of the international information policy of Ukraine. The number of published materials and their views by the audience is consistently high even after the period of stabilisation after the first wave of interest (after February 24) and reaching the median of metrics on the YouTube and Facebook platforms.





Viewers leave thousands of comments below the UATV English videos every day. Many users also write in the comments that they have learned to distinguish Russian propaganda, which for decades has been broadcast in Europe through the state international broadcasting of the Russian Federation. The audience rallied into the community, many people joined in supporting Ukraine in this war for freedom and democracy in Europe by sending humanitarian and financial aid to Ukraine, providing shelter for temporarily displaced people who were evacuated from the zone of active hostilities.




Here are some examples of UATV materials with feedback:



Video description	Weekly briefing by the Adviser to the Head of the Office of the President of Ukraine Serhii Leshchenko about fake news, generated by Russia's propaganda system.
URL	 <p>Russia's Nuclear Threats Do Not Frighten Anyone Anymore. Leshchenko Briefing (UATV English 2023)</p>
Comments	<p> <b>@free2dialogue</b> 7 днів тому Excellent. More of that.</p> <p>It's important to name the truth.</p> <p>Establish a record of their lies, organized by date and person.</p> <p>Показати менше</p> <p> 13   Відповісти</p> <p> <b>@wendyarnold6921</b> 6 днів тому (змінено) I've always found your recordings to be informative, and I learned lots of valuable things about Russian propagand you, thankyou Serhii. Slava Ukraine 🇺🇦</p> <p> 6   Відповісти</p> <p> 1 відповідь</p> <p> <b>@Leshchenko.Ukraine</b> ✓ 1 день тому Thanks for watching the briefings</p> <p> 1   Відповісти</p>

Video description	Special report about Russia's propaganda system and its main agents
URL	 <p><b>SPECIAL REPORT</b></p> <p><b>'SERVANTS OF HELL'</b> <b>RUSSIAN PROPAGANDA:</b> <b>ADDING FUEL INTO THE FIRE OF WAR</b></p> <p>UA English</p> <p><u><a href="#">Servants of Hell: Fanatics of the Regime or Well-paid Liars? Special Report on Russian Propaganda (UATV English 2023)</a></u></p>
Comments	<p> @camdenmcandrews 6 днів тому In addition to constant repetition of lies, there are two easily recognizable techniques to watch for: 1. Accuse your opponent of doing exactly what you are doing. 2. Ridicule what you are planning to do. 👍 98 🗨️ ❤️ Відповісти ⌵ 9 відповідей</p> <p> @anthonywhite7032 7 днів тому These people should be charged with the same as putin 👍 104 🗨️ ❤️ Відповісти ⌵ 2 відповіді</p> <p> @vitornelson.freenature 6 днів тому This is the kind of work that should be shared for the world to realise what is Russia. 👍 69 🗨️ ❤️ Відповісти ⌵ 8 відповідей</p>

Video description	Daily news wrap-up series
URL	 <p><u><a href="#">Russian Deputy Threatened to ‘Conquer’ NATO Countries: Romania and Bulgaria.</a></u> Daily Wrap-up (UATV English 2023)</p>
Comments	<p> <b>@martinarijsbergen4270</b> 11 днів тому There are no words to describe what I feel about that Russian barbaric society I just hope they get their come up once very soon! 👍 43 🗨️ ❤️ Відповісти</p> <p> <b>@3ast3rn3r</b> 10 днів тому As a romanian, I would have been worried 2 years ago. Now, I can only smile and reminisce what happened last time Russia attacked Romania in 1941.. The first Moskva was sunk then.. 😊😊😊 👍 22 🗨️ ❤️ Відповісти ✓ 2 відповіді</p> <p> <b>@JamesLaserpimpWalsh</b> 11 днів тому Russia could end this at any time by taking their stuff and leaving Ukrainian territory and go home to Russia. Very simple. If some country turned up and took over (For example.) Devon and Cornwall here in the UK, we would keep fighting until the enemy leave Devon and Cornwall. No ifs. No buts. Anyone that expects Ukraine to just give up a fifth of the... 👍 41 🗨️ ❤️ Відповісти ✓ 3 відповіді</p>

Video description	Daily address by the President of Ukraine
URL	 <p><u>'Someone in Moscow Wants to Bargain in Human Lives' – Zelenskyy on Russia's Food Terror</u> (UATV English 2023)</p>
Comments	<p> @Spuckebrot1510 10 днів тому President Zelenskyy is doing a great job. I want peace to return so badly. The russians need to get out of Ukraine right now. Slava Ukraini ❤️</p> <p>👍 33 🗨️ ❤️ Відповісти</p> <p> @davidjones6389 10 днів тому Repulsing the invaders is the best way to bargain with russia....</p> <p>👍 26 🗨️ ❤️ Відповісти</p>

A large share of the audience on Facebook comes from Asian countries: India, Pakistan, Indonesia, and Bangladesh. In this way, various social media provide access to audiences from different parts of the world to extremely important information about Ukraine and the Russian-Ukrainian war, how to organise humanitarian aid to our country and protect ourselves from the influence of Russian propaganda media.

### Comparison with previous studies

The previous studies in the field of Ukrainian international broadcasting mostly address fundamental rather than applied issues and do not cover the period of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine.

American researchers Monroe Price, Susan Haas and Drew Margolin in the joint work “New Technologies and International Broadcasting: Reflections on Adaptations and Transformations” define the term “international broadcasting”. Thus, ‘International broadcasting has been the elegant term for a complex combination of state-sponsored news, information and entertainment directed at a population outside the sponsoring state’s boundaries. It has largely meant the use of electronic media by one society to shape the opinion of the people and leaders of another’ (Price, Haas, and Margolin, 2008).

Ukrainian researcher A. Kosturbitska in her work “Features of State Regulation of Mass Communication in the European Union” defines the main functions of international broadcasting:

- promoting a positive image of the owner-state abroad;
- protection of one’s own interests, both cultural and linguistic;
- support of national prestige, promotion of tourism;
- combating negative information created intentionally by other states, or by rebels, separatists (Kosturbitska, 2016).

V. Konakh in his article “The Evolution of International Broadcasting in the Foreign Countries: the Experience for Ukraine” (Konakh, 2014) draws attention to the great importance of international broadcasting in the formation of the country both in the information space and on the geopolitical map of the world. The author singles out such main functions of international broadcasting as educational, propagandistic and protective: “International broadcasting services remain an important tool not only in providing assistance to foreign audiences in getting to know their own country and its people, promoting the spread of ideological, cultural and other values of the broadcaster in the world and supporting cultural, linguistic and other mutual relations with compatriots abroad but also in promoting and protecting national interests abroad, forming and maintaining a positive image of one’s own state in the world” (Konakh, 2014).

The importance of international broadcasting services in the information space cannot be underestimated, because it is a powerful tool in using the concept of so-called “soft power” or “diplomacy of influence” – achieving the goal not by militaristic means, but by psychological and informational means, including the use of media.

Since international broadcasting is a rather specific form of mass communication, it is a scientifically based opinion that it is appropriate to distinguish five main functions of international broadcasting according to Oleh Dzholos in his article “Development and Transformation of International Broadcasting Mass Media in the Modern World”: protection of national interests, propaganda, counter-propaganda, and educational and pedagogical communication (Dzholos, 2019).

## 5. Conclusion

This statistical, historical, comparative, interpretational and content analysis study was aimed to broaden the understanding of how international broadcasting works in a country suffering from external military aggression during ongoing conventional hostilities and/also information warfare. As a result, we can assume that the International Broadcasting of Ukraine has increased and concentrated the interest of overseas audiences, which has grown significantly since the beginning of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, on certain essential aspects that Ukraine wants foreign audiences to know. The UATV English on YouTube is dominated by viewers from Europe and North America, and the UATV English Facebook page is a source of news about Ukraine for many Asian countries. At the same time, the YouTube platform provides up to 10 times better coverage of materials by Internet users. The content of UATV English mostly performs functions related to the protection and promotion of national interests; information about the course of the war and events in the country; countering the propaganda of the aggressor country.

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