

Segmentation and Fragmentation the Case of Telegram Channels

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Abstract. In this paper, the authors examine the concepts of segmentation and fragmentation, the Telegram messenger and Telegram channels. In addition, the authors hypothesize that both concepts are present in the Telegram messenger and are used by various Telegram channels. The relevance of this hypothesis and the extent to which the concepts of fragmentation and segmentation are applicable to Telegram channels are then examined. The empirical basis for this paper is telegram channels and data on telegram channels that we obtained using a telegram channel analytics service called TGStat. The following telegram channels served as examples to support our hypothesis: we considered "Mash" and "Карточный Домик" telegram channels as examples of segmentation, "Meduza" (see the Notes) and "PeachBlossom" channels were analyzed to study fragmentation, and Lenta and "Осторожно" telegram channels served as examples of both audience segmentation and fragmentation. We consider this area promising for further more in-depth research.

1 Introduction

Today's world is changing at an incredible rate. Every month we see new discoveries, and all areas of social life are rapidly evolving. No wonder that in such a situation you have to be constantly ready to adapt to new realities, and we can notice this in the media industry as well. In our article, we will look at how channels in the Telegram messenger are adapting to the new realities and examine how it expresses audience fragmentation and segmentation.

We should start with the messenger itself. Telegram is one of the most popular messaging apps these days. "Vedomosti" with reference to the operators of the Big Four write that at the end of 2022, Telegram for the first time overtook WhatsApp (owned by Meta, recognized as extremist and banned in Russia) in the volume of user traffic, and by early 2023, its share exceeded 60-80% of the total. [1]

Birthday of the messenger - August 14, 2013, that's when the first Telegram client for iOS devices was presented. Telegram channels are one of the messenger's tools, which allow content to be delivered to a large number of users at once. Telegram channels were introduced in September 2015. Telegram channels function according to the subscription model and most closely resemble a news feed with blog elements. The user subscribes to

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the channel to which he wants to receive information on a regular basis. The message that has been sent to the telegram channel comes to the subscribers on behalf of the telegram channel, not on behalf of the author of the publication (the administrator of the telegram channel). The channel can be administered by several people, including anonymously. There are two types of Telegram Channels: public and private. Public channels have a permanent name, address, and can be found by searching within Telegram. In the case of private channels, the situation is somewhat different - they cannot be found via search, such Telegram channels can be accessed via a generated link which can be changed for privacy purposes. Telegram channels are often used by the media. For example, according to Medialogy's 2021 ranking of the most popular Telegram channels, two of the top 10 are media Telegram channels. Medialogy prepared a rating of Telegram channels. [2]

In addition to a brief description of Telegram feeds, we think it is necessary to mention the main distinguishing feature of the Telegram messenger - the absence of an algorithmic feed. In most social networks, the publications that are shown to the user are displayed as a news feed, which automatically adjusts itself to the user's requests/interests using algorithms. In other words, it shows users those publications which, according to the algorithms, are the most interesting for the users. Such a feed can be scrolled endlessly. However, in Telegram, all of the publications are displayed in chronological order. Telegram feeds are designed in the same way as regular chat rooms. When a message is posted in a channel to which a user is subscribed, he will receive a notification about it. This happens except in two cases:

1. In the case when the user has disabled notifications from this channel or turned off notifications in principle.

2. If the author of the publication in the telegram channel has used the "silent mode".

Thanks to this feature, the value of information increases, as users are less likely to subscribe to a channel with low-quality content.

Audiences have closely followed its development since its inception, not least because its creator is Pavel Durov, the creator of the social network Vkontakte. Throughout its history, Telegram has faced blockades, failed projects (including the blockchain network The Open Network), several waves of new users, and so on. All of this has affected the popularity of the messenger, and among smartphone owners, it is hard to find anyone who has not heard of this application. It has not lost its popularity and Runet.

However, we are not interested in Telegram in general, but in one of its functionalities - Telegram channels. This function appeared in the messenger in 2015, and is a mixture of news feeds and blogs.

To receive updates, users need to subscribe to the channel they are interested in, and they are divided into open, available to all users, and closed, which can be accessed only by a special link. In the messenger, you can find channels belonging to the media, celebrities, and even politicians, and they can be used as a supplement to an existing platform or, on the contrary, give rise to new media, as was the case with "Mash" and "Baza", which began their way exactly as telegram channels, and later grew into full-fledged media with their own websites and applications. A.K. Mahort and P.D. Sinenko in their paper "Telegram as a unique platform for the messenger industry" call Telegram "a new turn in the global information field" because it combines a messenger, a browser and a news feed [3].

2 Materials and Methods

In the course of our research we examined the telegram channels "Карточный Домик", "Mash", "PeachBlossom", "Медуза"*, "Осторожно" and "Lenta". During our research we used empirical and theoretical methods of scientific research. From theoretical methods we used methods of analysis, synthesis and induction. From empirical methods we used

comparison and description. Having studied the content of individual channels, we highlighted how segmentation and fragmentation are expressed in them. As examples of segmentation, we looked at the "Mash" and "Карточный Домик" telegram channels, the "Meduza"* and "PeachBlossom" channels were analyzed to study fragmentation, and the "Lenta" and "Осторожно" telegram channels served as examples of both segmentation and fragmentation of the audience. Telegram channels and their descriptions served as empirical data in our case. In order to find the telegram channels that fit our criteria, we used the TGStat.ru service for the analysis of telegram channels. Thanks to the category search on this website, we manually found the telegram feeds that met our criteria. In the politics category, we found "PeachBlossom" Telegram channels, which served as an example of fragmentation. In the category of news and media, we found Telegram channels "Карточный Домик", which we cite as an example of geographic segmentation, Telegram channels "Mash", which are also an example of geographic segmentation, Telegram channels "Meduza"*, which are an example of audience fragmentation, Telegram channels "Lenta", which are an example of both audience fragmentation and segmentation, Telegram channels "Осторожно", which are an example of geographic segmentation.

3 Results and Discussion

Speaking of audience outreach, let's first touch on segmentation. Audience segmentation is the division of users into groups according to their needs. M. E. Zhebit developed a typology of audience segmentation, according to which it is of 4 types:

1. Geographical - the division of the audience occurs on a geographical basis;
2. Demographic - the audience is divided by demographic characteristics, such as gender, age, income, nationality, occupation, marital status, level of education;
3. Psychographic - the audience is divided by social characteristics, such as belonging to a certain class, personal qualities and characteristics, lifestyle;
4. Behavioral - the division occurs depending on the level of knowledge about the product, the nature of its use and reaction to it. [4]

The team of authors of the article titled "Fragmentation, homogenization or segmentation? A diary study into the diversity of news consumption in a high-choice media environment" writes that segmentation implies the existence of relatively homogeneous subgroups of news users based on socio-demographic characteristics, economic status, and needs. At the same time, some researchers emphasize that segmentation can also include the characteristics of fragmentation. [5]

Next, consider audience fragmentation, a process in which mass audiences are distributed across different channels of information dissemination. In the article "Audience Fragmentation and Content Aggregation, or All for Sale," Russian researcher Victor Mazo identifies the following features of audience fragmentation:

1. Fragmentation of the audience into a large number of small interest groups;
2. Personal fragmentation, in which consumers distribute the time and money they spend on media content across many media channels;
3. Content fragmentation, which is when audiences receive portions of information tailored to their individual interests, with information coming from multiple sources simultaneously. [6]

In his paper "Media Fragmentation, Party System, and Democracy," Paolo Mancini, Professor of Sociology and Political Science at the University of Perugia, points out that fragmentation has led to the disappearance or weakening of traditional media as well as the emergence of new media. The Internet, blogs and social networks have significantly changed traditional professional journalism. He also draws attention to the fact that the emergence of new technologies raises not only the question of who can be considered a

professional journalist, but also "what organizations can produce journalistic content," and their relationship with traditional media. [7]

Speaking of the rapid pace of development of the modern world, it is important to remember such a term as "new media". It means interactive Internet publications and new forms of communication between content producers and consumers. This term allows us to draw a clear distinction between traditional media and new media, with their unique features, such as multimedia, interactivity and digital format. Doctor of Philological Sciences Ya. N. Soldatkina in her article "Problems of Concentration Segmentation in the Media and the New Opportunities of Mobile Messengers" also touches on the process of convergence, which has had a significant impact on modern media, eventually leading to the formation of a single information and communication space for mass communication. This space includes not only analog and online media, but also social networks, messengers, including Telegram, as well as WhatsApp, and other forms of web communications focused on the mass replication of information and functionally closer to the media, such as Periscope. In addition, the author emphasizes that Telegram most fully meets the conditions of content segmentation, its qualitative consistency and interactive consideration of users' interests in modern domestic media [8].

Telegram, and specifically Telegram channels, can be safely classified as new media. The first mobile application of the messenger appeared in August 2013. Initially, it was intended only for iOS-based devices, but a month later an Android version appeared, and since then Telegram has been actively developing and acquiring new functions.

Telegram channels are designed identically to chat rooms, messages are published in chronological order, and users have the ability to search, keyword search, turn off notifications, unsubscribe from the channel or send a complaint about it. You can also notice both segmentation and fragmentation among the audience of Telegram Channels. As an example of the use of segmentation, in this case segmentation by geography, we would like to cite Telegram Channels:

1. "Карточный Домик" - <https://t.me/WhiteHouseCards>, description of the telegram channel - Everything you wanted to know about the United States but were afraid to ask. Other projects: @HouseOfCardsRussia, @HouseOfCardsEurope. Feedback: @HouseofCardsFeedback. The number of subscribers on 10.03.2023 - 18996;

2. "Карточный Домик: Europe" - <https://t.me/HouseOfCardsEurope>, description of the telegram channel - Everything you wanted to know about Europe but were afraid to ask. Other projects: @WhiteHouseCards, @HouseOfCardsRussia. Feedback: @HouseofCardsFeedback. The number of subscribers on March 10, 2023 - 24163;

3. "Карточный Домик: Russia"-<https://t.me/HouseOfCardsRussia>, description of the telegram channel - Everything you wanted to know about Russia, but were afraid to ask. Other projects: @WhiteHouseCards, @HouseOfCardsEurope, @HouseOfCardsSPB, @HouseOfCardsMoscow. Feedback: @HouseofCardsFeedback. Number of subscribers as of 10.03.2023 - 15169;

4. "Карточный Домик: Moscow" - <https://t.me/HouseOfCardsMoscow>, description of the telegram channel - Everything you wanted to know about Moscow, but were afraid to ask. Other projects: @HouseOfCardsRussia, @WhiteHouseCards, @HouseOfCardsEurope, @HouseOfCardsSPB. Feedback: @HouseofCardsFeedback. The number of subscribers as of 3/10/2023 is 1,121;

5. "Карточный Домик: St. Petersburg" - <https://t.me/HouseOfCardsSPB>, description of the telegram channel - Everything you wanted to know about St. Petersburg but were afraid to ask. Other projects: @HouseOfCardsRussia, @WhiteHouseCards, @HouseOfCardsEurope, @HouseOfCardsMoscow. Feedback: @HouseofCardsFeedback. The number of subscribers as of 3/10/2023 is 1,970.

The total number of subscribers of these telegram channels on 10.03.23 - 61419. The existence of telegram channels with the common name "Карточный Домик" with different geographical reference indicates the presence of geographical segmentation of the audience.

As an example of fragmentation we would like to cite telegram channels:

1) "PeachBlossom" - https://t.me/peach_blossombazi, description of the telegram channel - What the media is silent about: Conspiracy of the Shadow Government, Exposing global elites, Analysis of the world evil system, Owner / author @Tatianapb, Buy advertising @peachbPR, @davidwals, Assistant / Admin chat @pro555z, Chat @peachblossomchat, Communication @pblos_bot. Number of subscribers as of 10.03.2023 -74020;

2) "PeachBlossom Talks" - <https://t.me/peachblossomtalks>, Telegram channel description - Everything you know is a lie, Channel from creator @peach_blossombazi, Owner and author @Tatianapb, Buy ads @peachbPR, @davidwals, Assistant @pro555z, Send materials @pblos_bot. Number of subscribers 10.03.2023 - 22900;

3) "PeachBlossom Chat" - <https://t.me/peachblossomchat>, description of the telegram chat - Secrets of the world behind the scenes, exposing lies, finding answers to forbidden questions, Chat Admin @pro555z, On unblocking questions @pro555z, @peachblossomtalks, @pbrealstories. Number of subscribers 10.03.2023 -7445;

4) "PeachBlossom Real Stories" - <https://t.me/pbrealstories>, Telegram channel description - Real stories of real people, Send content: @PbStories_Bot, @Tatianapb, Buy ads @peachbPR, @davidwals Owner @Tatianapb, Assistant @pro555z. The number of subscribers on 3/10/2023 is 6,180.

The total number of subscribers as of 10.03.2023 is 110545. We used TGStat.ru service for Telegram-channel analytics to collect data on the number of subscribers. The existence of several telegram channels with the common name "Карточный Домик" and different geographical reference to regions indicates the segmentation of the audience on geographical grounds. In the case of the "PeachBlossom" telegram channels, the main channel is "PeachBlossom" (https://t.me/peach_blossombazi), whose audience is distributed among the others, which in turn indicates the fragmentation of the audience.

It seems to us that segmentation and fragmentation of the audience can be successfully projected onto the audience of other telegram channels. Another example of audience segmentation is the main telegram channel "Mash" and its regional telegram channels. In this case, the segmentation will be geographical, that is, the division is carried out on the basis of geography. Mash has 16 telegram channels, the total number of subscribers on March 10, 2023 - 2 558 260.

1 - "Mash" t.me/breakingmash, channel description: Send news, photos, video, audio, birch bark: @mshbot_bot. Mash and discuss news: @mash_chat. Buy ads: @marina_mousse. For all other questions, write to the admin: @MashAdmin_bot. Number of subscribers as of 10.03.2023 - 1 760 659.

2 - "Mash on the Moika" t.me/mashmoyka, channel description: The little brother of the Mash. Important and exclusive - from St. Petersburg and the Leningrad region.

- information, video, photos, questions - in @moyka_mashbot_bot
- advertising prices, stata and conditions here: @rkml_v_mnm
- good instagram - [instagram.com/mash.moyka](https://www.instagram.com/mash.moyka).

The number of subscribers on 10.03.2023 - 186 302.

3 - "Don Mash" t.me/don_mash, channel description: Rostov region here? Courageous, nimble, skilled and very southern. We will find out everything, find everyone, write about everything important and interesting. Chatik: @rostov_mash, send in a photo/video/newsletter/your poem about love: @don_mash_bot, on advertising write here: @kgitsj777. Number of subscribers as of 3/10/2023 - 53,609.

4 - "Mash Iptash" t.me/mash_ipdash, channel description: Friend of the big Mash in Tatarstan. Fast, honest, soulful and in a way no one else has. To talk about life with milk tea: @KamyrBatyr. Let's fight for truth in chat: @masx_alga. Give the news, video, photo: @mash_ipdash_bot. To advertise here: @kgitsj777. Number of subscribers as of 10.03.2023 - 49,731.

5 - "Mash Siberia" t.me/mash_siberia, channel description: Mash in Siberia. Short and clear. All as fast, exclusive and without a hint of cold. @masx_sbr - firehouse of discussion. @mash_siberia_bot - send news and throw a message to the editorial board.

For ads, write here: @kgitsj777. The number of subscribers as of 10/03/2023 is 49,487.

6 - "Kub Mash" t.me/kub_mash, channel description: The tanned brother of Mash is now in Kuban. Let's shine brightly, write richly - it will always be hot here. Our chat room: @kub_masx, offer news: @kub_mash_bot, for advertising write here: @kgitsj777. Number of subscribers as of 3/10/2023 - 63,161.

7 - "Mash on the wave" t.me/mash_na_volne - channel description: Flagship in the sea of news now in the Crimea! We catch the most relevant: objective, exclusive and before everyone else, debriefing: @masx_volna, on the news? throw photos and videos: @mash_na_volne_bot, on advertising write here: @kgitsj777. Number of subscribers as of 10.03.2023 - 50 019.

8 - "Ural Mash" t.me/url_mash, channel description: The Ural Heart of Big Mash. Cold and harsh telling you about the hottest news from around the region.

chat mash: @url_m, bot-beauty, where you can send the news: @ural_mash_bot

on advertising write here: @kgitsj777. The number of subscribers on 10.03.2023 - 48 444.

9 - "Ni Mash" t.me/mash_nimash, channel description: Mash in Nizhny Novgorod! News about the city and the region. We do fast, exclusive and normal in general.

Mash chat: @macx_nn. Bot Petrovich, where you can send your news, photos, videos, so-and-so: @mash_nimash_bot. To advertise write here: @kgitsj777. Number of subscribers as of 10/03/2023 - 43,860.

10 - "Babr Mash" t.me/babr_mash, channel description: Irkutsk, are you with us? Come on in, sit down to warm up - here will be the hottest news of our cold Eastern Siberia. Chat right here: @masx_babr, saw, heard - wrote: @babr_mash_bot, for advertising write here: @kgitsj777. Number of subscribers as of 10.03.2023 - 34 576.

11 - "Amur Mash" t.me/amur_mash channel description: Amur citizens, meet Amur Mash! We are higher, stronger and faster, and also - faster and cooler. The latest and most relevant news only here. Discuss everything here: @amur_masx, if you've seen a wonderful thing, post it here: @amur_mash_bot, to advertise: @kgitsj777. Number of subscribers as of 10.03.2023 - 35,410.

12 - "Mash Gor" t.me/mash_gor channel description: Mash Gor. We'll find everything faster than the wind, and the news will be as juicy as fychik, and will have time to cover the entire Caucasus! Chat here: @masx_gor, throw your content here: @mash_gor_bot, for advertising write here: @kgitsj777. Number of subscribers as of 10.03.2023 -34,593.

13 - "Amber Mash" t.me/amber_mash channel description: News from the shores of the Baltic. Fast, exclusive, best writing about the westernmost region.

Chat portal: @masx_amber, suggestion: @amber_mash_bot, for advertising write here: @kgitsj777. Number of subscribers as of 3/10/2023 -33,948.

14 - "Mash Batash" t.me/mash_batash channel description: Bashkortostan online? Mash Batash bursts into our land with news! Truthful, fast and tasteful.

Chat and discuss the news: @batash_m. And here to share something interesting: @mash_batash_bot. To advertise write here: @kgitsj777. Number of subscribers as of 10/03/2023 -37,043.

15 - "Kras Mash" t.me/kras_mash channel description: Distant relative of the big Mash. All the news of the Krasnoyarsk region. Mash and discuss: @kras_masx, it's easy: there is information, photos, videos - you write here: @kras_mash_bot, for advertising write here: @kgitsj777. The number of subscribers on 10.03.2023 - 20,417.

16 - "Mash on Donbass" - https://t.me/mash_donbass channel description: Mash on Donbass - all the most important from the DPR and LPR. The bogus - do not drive, exclusive - yes. The number of subscribers on 10.03.2023 - 57 001.

As another example of the fragmentation of telegram channels, we would like to cite the telegram channels of the online publication "Meduza"*. In this case, there is a fragmentation of the audience. "Meduza"* has 5 telegram channels, the total number of subscribers as of March 10, 2023 - 1,435,306.

1 - "Медуза" – LIVE t.me/meduzalive channel description: Official Telegram Channel of "Meduza". Telegram for contact: @meduzalovesyou. Download the Meduza app for iOS (<https://mdza.io/JtSJ9t50Ww4>) and Android (<https://mdza.io/IQkzDh0RHw4>).

"Evening Meduza" on Telegram - @meduzaevening. All Meduza news in one, with 1,219,068 subscribers as of 3/10/2023.

2 - "Медуза – все новости" t.me/meduza_news, channel description: All "Meduza" news in your Telegram. Don't forget to turn off notifications! Only breaking news: @meduzapro. Evening Meduza: @meduzaevening. Chapito: @shapi_to, number of subscribers as of 3/10/2023 - 155,080.

3 - "Signal" <https://t.me/meduzasignal> (formerly Meduza formerly Evening Meduza t.me/meduzaevening) channel description: Newsletter from the creators of Meduza, which really helps you understand the news.

Subscribe to the newsletter: https://getsignal.news?utm_source=tg

Подкаст: <https://pc.st/1643701746>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/meduzasignal>

Email us: signal@meduza.io 10.03.2023 - 45,827.

4 - "Meduza Breaking" t.me/meduzapro channel description: All "Meduza" pooches are in your Telegram. Want more news? Subscribe to @meduzalive.

In general, all news: @meduza_news. Evening Meduza: @meduzaevening. Shapito: @shapi_to, number of subscribers as of 10.03.2023 - 10,389.

5 - "Шапито" t.me/shapi_to channel description: All notes from Meduza craziest column. All the news: @meduza_news. Only breaking news: @meduzapro. Evening Meduza: @meduzaevening, 4,942 subscribers as of 3/10/2023.

Another example of simultaneous audience segmentation and audience fragmentation are the telegram channels of the Russian Internet news site Lenta.ru. Lenta has four telegram channels. The total number of subscribers on March 10, 2023 - 353,720.

1 - "Лента дня" t.me/lentadnya channel description: Lenta.ru news. Mainly news Alternative Lenta - bottom @lentadna. Cats, goodness and unicorns - @lentalite. The most important from Moscow - @moslenaru. Channel verified by @TgPodbor_bot. The number of subscribers as of 10.03.2023 - 192,768.

2 - "Лента дня" t.me/lentadna channel description: All circles of news hell from lenta.ru. More official Lenta - of the day - @lentadnya. Evil suggestion - @lentaDna_bot. Channel verified by @TgPodbor_bot, number of subscribers as of 10.03.2023 - 49,631.

3 - "Лента добра" t.me/lentalite channel description: Drinking candy, eating tea and no negativity. Kind offer - @lentalite_bot.

The channel is checked by @TgPodbor_bot, the number of subscribers as of 10.03.2023 - 45 590.

4 - "Мослента" t.me/moslentaruru channel description: Moscow. News.

The most important thing. 24/7. Questions and suggestions - @glavredlenta_bot, the number of subscribers on 10.03.2023 - 65 731.

Another example of geographic segmentation of content could be telegram channels: "Осторожно, новости" (https://t.me/ostorozhno_novosti), "Осторожно, Москва" (https://t.me/ostorozhno_moskva).

1 - "Осторожно, новости" https://t.me/ostorozhno_novosti, channel description: offer news, write to us: @ostorozhno_novosti_bot, number of subscribers as of 10.03.2023 - 1,387,327.

2 - "Осторожно, Москва" https://t.me/ostorozhno_moskva, channel description: contact the editorial office / offer news / send interesting photos and videos about Moscow, Muscovites and events: @ostorozhno_novosti_bot, the number of subscribers on 10.03.2023 - 144 722. These telegram channels are approximate geographic segmentation. In addition, there is another telegram channel "Осторожно: подкасты! " (https://t.me/ostorozhno_podcasts). Telegram channel description: Addictive. A collective podcast studio blog for those who want to get into them. VK: https://vk.com/ostorozhno_podcasts. Our feedback bot: @ostopodcasts_bot. At the moment this telegram channel is inactive, since the last entry in it appeared on 06.10.2022 at 15:02, the number of subscribers on 10.03.2023 - 16,020. The existence of this telegram channel and its activity in the past may indicate the fragmentation of the audience, since the content of the channel is entirely devoted to podcasts. The total number of subscribers of «Осторожно» is 1,548,069.

4 Conclusion

Thus, we have confirmed our assumptions about the relevance of the concepts of fragmentation and segmentation in relation to Telegram channels. Based on our research, we can suggest that there are other Telegram channels in the Russian-speaking segment of Telegram that use fragmentation and segmentation. This area is promising for further more in-depth research.

Summarizing the above, the presented examples confirm the relevance of considering segmentation and fragmentation in relation to Telegram channels. In conclusion of this paper, we would like to quote from the article by A.K. Mahort and P.D. Sinenko "TELEGRAM AS A UNIQUE PLATFORM OF THE MESSENGER INDUSTRY" - Telegram cross-platform messenger is a new round in the global information field, combining the classic properties of a messenger, a browser and a news feed. [3]

5 Notes

The Russian Ministry of Justice recognised "Meduza" foreign agent as a media organization;

The Russian Prosecutor General's Office recognised "Meduza" as an undesirable organisation.

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