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University-level online humanities education as a space of opportunities and risks

Abstract:

The thesis encompasses a multifaceted analysis of threats and prospects resulting from the presence of online education in academic humanities. At the starting point, the uniqueness of the humanities and humanistic studies is defined through the prism of tradition, immanent pedagogical values, the specificity of this field of science, as well as its social function. Subsequently, various aspects of online education are outlined: historical, medium of education, pedagogical, psychological, legal and technological. Based on available data and case studies, the current state of online humanities education worldwide is presented, both quantitatively and qualitatively. This portrayal includes models of online education at the higher education level and various forms of organizing the educational process.

The risk analysis primarily focuses on pedagogical aspects of education. It covers issues such as: the susceptibility of humanities subjects to an online format, the possibility of achieving educational goals, the assessment of the quality of online education from the perspective of scientific research and education recipients. Furthermore, it considers the possibility of implementing "boundary forms of education", such as the master-student relationship and humanities understood as a form of therapy. It then shifts focus to the social context of risk, identifying and analyzing key discourses shaping the contemporary paradigm of e-learning: neoliberalism, solutionism, and the gift economy. It is complemented by an analysis from the perspective of the philosophy and sociology of technology, in which the issue of technology-society relations and the axiology of technology is explored. Particularly relevant is the evaluation of the impact of technological determinism and axiological neutrality of technology on the societal reception of online education technology.

The work concludes with considerations regarding possible directions for the development of online education. Its main axis is an attempt to outline a path that supports the development of a humanistic paradigm of e-education that harmonizes technological development with sensitivity to values.

The work is accompanied by a supplement containing previously unpublished results of surveys of humanities students' opinions on the acceptance of the asynchronous form of online education conducted in 2011, 2012 and 2019.