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Ukrainian Electronic Encyclopedias

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ABSTRACT: This article describes contemporary Ukrainian electronic encyclopedias, proposes their general review and characterizes their main types and the thematic and typological peculiarities of both online encyclopedic products and electronic versions of printed reference books, as resources which also contribute to the creation of an extensive network of Ukrainian electronic encyclopedias and their integration into the global network of electronic encyclopedias of various types and thematic contents. In Ukraine, the rapid process of creating electronic encyclopedias, as multimedia analogues of printed reference books as well as independent works on CDs, DVDs or their network versions began at the onset of the 21st century. Today, there is a noticeable tendency towards a constant qualitative improvement of online encyclopedias not only from a technical point of view (in particular, this refers to the speed and convenience of finding information, hypertext links, or the insertion of digital audio or video fragments, animations, and elements of virtual reality), but also from the point of view of content – scientifically valid, accurate, and proven facts.

Keywords: *electronic encyclopedia; thematic encyclopedia; regional and local encyclopedia; encyclopedia for children; personal encyclopedia; Ukrainian Encyclopedia in English; Ukrainian Wikipedia*

Introduction

Informational, intellectual, and technological revolution has by this time reached all spheres of public life in most of the countries of the world. Scientists have recently calculated that, on average, one-half of modern products' added values consist of informational costs.¹ Information that we obtain very often contains concentrated knowledge that pertains to a wider intellectual context. For many years in the past, people sought this concentrated knowledge in different types of reference books, manuals, and, more generally, in different types of encyclopedias.

As in other countries, the process of creating electronic encyclopedias in Ukraine began in the mid-1990s and has been ongoing for many years now. For

¹ Wyman O. Information Technologies as a Value Driver (https://www.oliverwyman.com/content/dam/oliver-wyman/global/en/files/archive/2012/Oliver_Wyman_ITO-Brochure.pdf)

example, the *Kyiv Web Encyclopedia* (Веб-енциклопедія Києва²) became available to users as early as 1998. Some electronic encyclopedias are now multimedia versions of printed books, but others are original creations on CDs, DVDs, or online versions.³ The latter now evidently prevail, as they are not limited in their amount of knowledge and types of data. Today in Ukraine there is a visible trend towards quality improvement of online encyclopedias not only technically (for example, higher speed and convenience of search through using hypertext links or the inclusion of digital audio or video clips, animations, and elements of virtual reality), but also regarding the content, its scientific credibility, and accuracy of facts. This has happened, first of all, thanks to technical improvements and the increased professionalism of their creators.

Today there is no doubt that the development of electronic encyclopedias is a priority, so many specialists in information technology and different areas of expertise are focused on this task; they are able to create and offer a quality Ukrainian product, which can rightly be named an encyclopedia, to the public.

General overview

Modern Ukrainian electronic encyclopedias can be divided into the following categories according to their purpose:

- scientific encyclopedias have the aim to meet the informational needs of professionals from different spheres (for example, the *Ukrainian Mining Encyclopedia – Українська гірнична енциклопедія*)⁴;
- popular science encyclopedias are designed for a wide range of readers and present issues from many fields of knowledge, thoroughly and from different angles (for example, the *Pharmaceutical Encyclopedia – Фармацевтична енциклопедія*)⁵;
- general encyclopedias contain mainly common information required in daily life or for leisure (for example, the *Encyclopedia of memorial places of Ukraine – Енциклопедія пам'яток України*)⁶.

² <http://wek.kiev.ua/uk/> Головна сторінка

³ See more: https://uk.wikipedia.org/wiki/Список_українських_енциклопедій

⁴ http://chtyvo.org.ua/authors/Biletskyi_Volodymyr/Mala_hirnycha_entsyklopediia_Tom_1/

⁵ <https://www.pharmencyclopedia.com.ua/>

⁶ <http://encyclosights.com/?ln=3>

Modern online reference books have very diverse thematic content. The *Encyclopedia of Modern Ukraine* (Енциклопедія сучасної України)⁷ or *Ukrainian Wikipedia*⁸ belong to the general category, the *Economic Encyclopedia* (Економічна енциклопедія)⁹, *Linguistic Encyclopedia* (Лінгвістична енциклопедія)¹⁰, and *AgroScience*¹¹ are rather specialized, while the aforementioned *Pharmaceutical Encyclopedia* and *Ukrainian Mining Encyclopedia* are quite narrowly specialized. Other encyclopedias on a particular subject are mostly represented by one electronic product. These include, for example, the thematic encyclopedia *Ukrainians in the United Kingdom*¹² where information about the Ukrainians in the UK is collected.

There are numerous regional web-editions: the *Kyiv Web Encyclopedia*¹³, *Encyclopedia of Dnipropetrovsk* (Енциклопедія Дніпропетровська)¹⁴, *Kamienetz and Kamienetz region from A to Z* (Кам'янець і Кам'яничина від А до Я)¹⁵, and *Odessa: An Encyclopedia about Odessa* (Енциклопедія об Одесі. Одессика)¹⁶. There are also publications dedicated to one famous person – for example, the *Encyclopedia of Mykhailo Hrushevsky* (Михайло Грушевський. Енциклопедія життя і творчості)¹⁷. Similar publications are dedicated to Taras Shevchenko (*Encyclopedia of the life and works of Taras Shevchenko – Енциклопедія життя і творчості Тараса Шевченка*)¹⁸, Ivan Franko (*Encyclopedia of the life and works of Ivan Franko – Енциклопедія життя і творчості Івана Франка*)¹⁹, and Lesya Ukrainka (*Encyclopedia of the life and works of Lesia Ukrainka – Енциклопедія життя і творчості Лесі Українки*)²⁰. In spite of their names, these editions cannot be clearly categorized as encyclopedias, but are more akin to online collections of individuals' works and correspondence.

There are no differences between printed and electronic encyclopedias regarding their structure; the articles in the latter are also organized according to alpha-

⁷ <http://esu.com.ua/>

⁸ https://uk.wikipedia.org/wiki/Головна_сторінка

⁹ <http://studentbooks.com.ua/content/view/36/39/>

¹⁰ <https://linguapedia.info/uk/>

¹¹ <https://agrosience.com.ua/plant/agronomiya>

¹² <http://www.ukrainiansintheuk.info/>

¹³ http://wek.kiev.ua/uk/Головна_сторінка

¹⁴ https://www.dnopr.com/wiki/Заглавная_страница

¹⁵ http://www.tovtry.km.ua/ua/history/book/kamjanechyna_a_ja.html

¹⁶ <http://odessa.club.com.ua/>

¹⁷ <http://www.m-hrushevsky.name/>

¹⁸ <http://www.t-shevchenko.name/>

¹⁹ <http://www.i-franko.name/>

²⁰ <http://www.l-ukrainka.name/>

betic order (*Pharmaceutical Encyclopedia*), or by topics (*AgroScience, Encyclopedia of Mykhailo Hrushevsky*) or both, by alphabetic order and by topics (*Ukrainians in the United Kingdom*).

Personal encyclopedias are very convenient and user-friendly. They contain a rich scientific reference content and well developed site-map which allows choosing the best way of finding reference information (the search in such encyclopedias is usually rather diverse), and use not only text, but also images, tables, and audio and video materials that accompany it.

uk.Wikipedia.org

The leading electronic encyclopedia in Ukraine today is *uk.Wikipedia.org*²¹. The Ukrainian segment of the universal wiki-encyclopedia was founded on 4 April 2004, while preparatory work started in 2003. Design, search tools, and editing are the same for all segments. Launching a *Ukrainian Wikipedia* has started a new era in national encyclopedic editions. Its online directory contains more materials than all the printed encyclopedias in Ukraine; for example it has four times more articles than the *Universal Dictionary and Encyclopedia (Універсальний словник-енциклопедія)*²², and twice as much as the second edition of the *Ukrainian Soviet Encyclopedia (Українська радянська енциклопедія)*²³ in 12 volumes. Currently, there are more than 800,000 articles, which makes the *Ukrainian Wikipedia* the richest source of information about the country, Ukrainian culture, Ukrainians, etc., and in this respect it has no competitors. In addition, it is the world's largest electronic resource in the Ukrainian language. It is also evident that *Wiki* is generally the most informative resource that contains information about Ukraine in different languages. But here we have to note that the unique revolutionary opportunities in the accessibility of knowledge make *Wikipedia* potentially dangerous because, considering modern information hybrid warfare, it is quite possible to use this resource as an information weapon.

Ukrainian encyclopedias in English

In the international electronic segment, Ukraine is also represented by the project *Internet Encyclopedia of Ukraine*²⁴. The encyclopedia is in English, and was originally

²¹ https://uk.wikipedia.org/wiki/Головна_сторінка

²² <http://slovopedia.org.ua/29/53392-0.html>

²³ <http://leksika.com.ua/ure/>

²⁴ <http://encyclopediaofukraine.com/>

established in Toronto (Canada). It is a rich source of information about our country, its history, famous people, geography, society, economy, and cultural heritage. It contains updated information from five volumes of the famous reference book *Encyclopedia of Ukraine* (Toronto, 1984–93). The resource has six sections: history, land, people, culture, art, and literature. The home page familiarizes users with the main features of the encyclopedia, its structure, general content, and the team that created it. It also contains important information for users about the properties of the website.

As mentioned above, there are also other specialized encyclopedias for different categories of users about Ukraine in the English language segment of the Internet. First of all, it is worth mentioning the online encyclopedia *Ukrainians in the United Kingdom*²⁵ which is a common edition of the British editorial board of the *Encyclopedia of Ukrainian Diaspora* (EUD) and Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain. The website has been available to the public in Ukrainian since August 2008, and in English from October 2009. The main objective of the EUD project is to publish a multilingual encyclopedia about the Ukrainian diaspora. Thus, the online encyclopedia *Ukrainians in the United Kingdom* can be categorized as specialized and thematic, because it predominantly contains information on remarkable personalities who are residents of the UK and local issues of the Ukrainian diaspora in this country. The encyclopedia is created for readers who want to learn more about the members of the Ukrainian diaspora in the UK, but it can also be helpful to experts or scholars who need these materials for their work. The articles in the encyclopedia *Ukrainians in the United Kingdom* are sorted both alphabetically and by topic; search by site is also available.

Thematic encyclopedias

During the last years, experts in various fields have created and updated a number of specialized electronic encyclopedias mentioned above, such as the *Ukrainian Mining Encyclopedia*²⁶, *Pharmaceutical Encyclopedia*²⁷, *AgroScience*²⁸, and the electronic versions of the *Economic Encyclopedia*²⁹, and the *Encyclopedia of Political Thought* (*Енциклопедія політичної думки*) that were published earlier. But, in particular, we want to draw attention to the *Pharmaceutical Encyclopedia* that became available on

²⁵ <http://www.ukrainiansintheuk.info/eng/01/ukrinuk-e.htm>

²⁶ http://chtyvo.org.ua/authors/Biletskyi_Volodymyr/Mala_hirnycha_entsyklopediia_Tom_1/

²⁷ <https://www.pharmencyclopedia.com.ua/>

²⁸ <https://agrosience.com.ua/plant/agronomiya>

²⁹ <http://studentbooks.com.ua/content/view/36/39/>

the Internet in 2010. It is based on the printed version of the *Pharmaceutical Encyclopedia* (second edition), which is a solid reference book of more than 800 pages, and contains almost 5000 articles. The purpose of this encyclopedia is to organize and summarize data on the national pharmaceutical industry. It is difficult to determine whether this encyclopedia is specialized, narrowly specialized, or interdisciplinary because it contains a lot of information from different areas of knowledge: biology, chemistry, and medicine. The *Pharmaceutical Encyclopedia* was written for professional and scientific application but it can be used as a textbook for students as well. Its users are mainly medical specialists: doctors, pharmacists, biotechnologists, students, but common people who are interested in such type of information can also use it as a valuable source of reliable information.

Like any other reference source, the *Ukrainian Mining Encyclopedia* is intended not only for professionals. On its home page, one can read opening remarks where the goal of the encyclopedia is defined as informing people about the diverse field of the mineral resources of Ukraine. It has a clear structure that describes the role of Ukraine as a leading mineral resource in the world. Information in this digital publication is divided into 10 segments; besides Ukraine, it also presents nine other countries that possess the greatest deposits of different mineral resources (Australia, Canada, China, UAE, South Africa, Poland, Portugal, Russia, and USA).

The *Economic Encyclopedia* and *Encyclopedia of Political Thought* (*Енциклопедія політичної думки*) do not have their own websites (both can be found on an online platform, *Slovopedia*³⁰) and they are analogues of earlier published printed versions. The information in these directories is in alphabetical order; a search function is also available. The *Encyclopedia of Political Thought* is used mostly by professionals and scholars, less often by students. This is because the articles in this encyclopedia are quite narrowly specialized.

The *Encyclopedia of herbs and plants*³¹ (*Ліктрави. Енциклопедія лікарських рослин*) could be useful to a wide audience. There is an introduction and list of plants in alphabetic order on the home page that helps one find the articles of the directory. This encyclopedia contains many high-quality images of plants that well exemplify the information about officinal herbs and plants and how they can remedy different health problems. It also contains numerous prescriptions and instructions that explain how to safely apply different plants and their combinations.

³⁰ <http://slovopedia.org.ua/>

³¹ <https://liktravy.ua/useful/encyclopedia-of-herbs>

Encyclopedias for children

A number of encyclopedias are created especially for children. First of all, it is appropriate to mention the *All-Ukrainian Big Encyclopedia of Plants*³² (*Всеукраїнська велика енциклопедія рослин*) and *All-Ukrainian Big Encyclopedia of Animals*³³ (*Всеукраїнська велика енциклопедія тварин*). It is also worth mentioning *Astronomy. Teaching Encyclopedia for Students*³⁴ (*Астрономія. Навчальна енциклопедія школяра*), created by teachers and students from the Special Physics and Mathematics High School in Vinnitsa. This Encyclopedia has similar thematic oriented structure.

Regional and local encyclopedias

There are many popular scientific thematic encyclopedias; for example, there is the *Encyclopedia of Ukrainian monuments*³⁵ (*Енциклопедія пам'яток України*). A user can choose a region (territory) or a category (fortification, religion, palaces, nature, antiquity, civil architecture, industry, folklore, cemeteries, public buildings, etc.). On the website, one can also find guidebooks for the selected region, lists of hotels, maps, and more. There is a possibility of interactive communication for users, i.e. they can leave comments, ask questions, and add facts. On the home page, one can see a list of objects about which there is information in the electronic database, news regarding the website, recent comments, important statistics (number of articles, photos, etc.).

As mentioned above, there are quite a few interesting regional encyclopedias on the Internet. The first among these is the *Kyiv Web Encyclopedia*³⁶. Although the information in this resource has practically not been updated since 2012, it is still the largest website about Kyiv, its culture and history. The website's design, search and editing tools are similar to *Wikipedia*. The data basis of the online publication is the most authoritative encyclopedic reference book, *Streets of Kyiv*³⁷ (*Вулиці Києва, довідник*). It was published by the Main Editorial Office of Ukrainian Soviet Encyclopedia in 1981, but its electronic successor was substantially updated and edited, and was expanded with new information. Such local encyclopedias are interesting especially for the general reader, as they are clearly popular scientific online

³² <http://roslunu.com.ua/>

³³ <http://tvarunu.com.ua/>

³⁴ <http://www.galaxy.vinnica.ua/>

³⁵ <http://encyclosights.com/?ln=3>

³⁶ http://wek.kiev.ua/uk/Головна_сторінка

³⁷ [https://uk.wikipedia.org/wiki/Вулиці_Києва_\(довідник\)](https://uk.wikipedia.org/wiki/Вулиці_Києва_(довідник))

editions; this website is designed to meet the needs of users who want to find more information about the past and present of the capital of Ukraine. A user can search articles by their names (according to the alphabet) or using the search box. There are also valuable illustrations – many images, maps, diagrams, pictures, etc.

Personal encyclopedias

As I have mentioned above, there are also personal encyclopedias on the Internet. The most used are the reference book on Mykhailo Hrushevsky and the electronic version of the *Shevchenko Encyclopedia*. They have different structures and content that obviously stem from the different ideas of the creators about electronic encyclopedias and their features. The *Encyclopedia of Mykhailo Hrushevsky* begins with a brief biography of the prominent Ukrainian scientist and statesman and a short presentation of the ideas presented in his publications; the first page also contains instructions how to use the resource, information about the authors, and similar electronic directories. For some sections, a user can choose one of three languages – Ukrainian, Russian, and English are available. The encyclopedia has following sections: »News«, »Biography«, »The History of Ukraine-Rus«, »Different Historical Works of the Outstanding Scientist«, »Literary Studies«, »Fiction«, »Journalism«, »Memories«, »Diary«, »Letters of M. Hrushevsky«, »Gallery«, »Research«. The *Encyclopedia of Mykhailo Hrushevsky* is a valuable source of diverse information, which includes facts about the life and the main socio-political and scientific works of this outstanding representative of Ukrainian society. Unfortunately, this encyclopedia is still incomplete. For example, the famous historic work *History of Ukraine-Rus* is represented only by the first volume of the 12 published in hard copy.

The *Shevchenko Encyclopedia*³⁸ is structured differently. On its home page, it is emphasized that this website is an electronic version of the *Shevchenko Encyclopedia* (6 vols.), published 2010–15. The first volume contains a short biography of Shevchenko that includes new facts and objective information. Data in the encyclopedia are presented in alphabetical order. The material is lavishly illustrated with numerous portraits, reproductions of Shevchenko's works of art, photos of the poet's monuments around the world, etc.

However, it is essential to mention that, because this encyclopedia is an electronic PDF copy of the printed edition, it is quite difficult to practically use it. In addition, the encyclopedia itself is incorporated into the site of the Institute of Literature of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, which also complicates quick searching for any topic.

³⁸ <http://www.ilnan.gov.ua/index.php/uk/pro-instytut/shevchenko>

It is now clear that development of original personal electronic encyclopedias is important for the wider public as it is an easily accessible source of up-to-date and reliable information about prominent figures from the Ukrainian past, its remarkable figures in science and culture. This is especially important now when the Ukrainians are trying to revive the memory of personalities who were banned by the totalitarian regime. Even today we still have very little objective information about many of them.

Conclusion

The list of Ukrainian encyclopedias, mentioned above, as well as their short description confidently demonstrate that electronic encyclopedias in Ukraine are constantly developing and include more and more information on various topics about Ukraine, its past and present, and make it available to everyone, promoting better understanding between peoples.

Today, when electronic encyclopedias are beginning to be used in information warfare (for example, articles about various important historical events in multi-language versions of Wikipedia), electronic encyclopedias, especially their political and historical content, have become an important source for the formation of connections between generations of users both at the national and at the world level.

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UKRAJINSKE ELEKTRONIČKE ENCIKLOPEDIJE

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SAŽETAK: U članku se opisuju suvremene ukrajinske elektroničke enciklopedije, preporučuje se njihov općeniti pregled te se karakteriziraju njihove glavne vrste, tematske i tipološke osobine online enciklopedijskih proizvoda i elektroničkih verzija tiskanih vodiča kao izvora koji također pridonose stvaranju opsežne mreže ukrajinskih elektroničkih enciklopedija i njihovoj integraciji u globalnu mrežu elektroničkih enciklopedija različitih vrsta i tematika. Od početka XXI. stoljeća u Ukrajini je započeo ubrzan proces stvaranja elektroničkih enciklopedija kao multimedijских pandana tiskanim knjigama, kao i neovisnih djela na CD-ovima, DVD-ovima ili mrežnih verzija. Danas postoji primjetna tendencija prema stalnom kvalitativnom poboljšavanju online enciklopedija, ne samo s tehničkoga aspekta (konkretno, ovo se odnosi na brzinu i lakoću pronalaženja informacija, hipertekstualne poveznice, ili ubacivanje digitalnih audio ili videoisječaka, animacija i elemenata virtualne stvarnosti) nego i s aspekta sadržaja – znanstveno važećih, točnih i dokazanih činjenica.

Ključne riječi: *elektronička enciklopedija; tematska enciklopedija; regionalna i lokalna enciklopedija; dječja enciklopedija; osobna enciklopedija; ukrajinska enciklopedija na engleskom jeziku; ukrajinska Wikipedia*

