

Put in a Good Word for the Human Being

Despite the diversity and multifaceted nature of the human-initiated changes taking place in the world today, from the formation of a new world order and a different geopolitical reality to the creation and development of a world of smart things and smart cities, the desire to create better living conditions for both present and future generations is generally declared in all cases.

Information technologies play an increasingly important role in the whole set of directions and measures. Diverse and timely information about various aspects of people's lives and activities is expected to enable them to make more informed decisions and implement various economic, social, technological and other changes more effectively.

The idea of the high importance of information for improving the efficiency of management in a variety of areas is not new. It has been actively discussed, developed and implemented for almost a hundred years, since the first works in the field of cybernetics appeared. However, the important fact is that all these years the area of application of cybernetic technology has been steadily expanding. From the collection of information and its processing, there is already a tangible trend toward the use of artificial intelligence in solving problems and tasks of an increasingly creative and less standardized nature.

These days, the new cybernetic reality is penetrating more and more deeply into those areas of human life and activity that were not previously of any importance in the development and use of information technology. In the last decade, their range has expanded

enormously – from solving «everyday» problems of everyday life (brought to perfection within the concept of «smart home») to broader and more systemic tasks – creating «smart cities» and «smart» specialization of territorial economies.

At the same time, it seems that at this stage the technocratic and, one may say, arrogant-educational approach to the formulation, development and practical implementation of the proposed solutions in the socio-economic sphere prevails. The vast majority of the proposals are based on the postulate of the unconditional necessity and preference for smart solutions: «We will make your life more comfortable, more rationally organized, and less burdensome in matters of current life activity.»

Of course, this approach is legitimate when it comes, for example, to the work of urban transport, street lighting, garbage collection and disposal and other relatively simple and obvious economic and municipal problems. However, the life and activities of modern man is not limited to these aspects of life. There is a huge layer of questions, in solution and realization of which «smart» technologies are obviously subordinated. First of all, this refers to the sphere of culture, traditions, the way of life of people in different territories and in different cultural and historical conditions.

It should be noted that the increasing role and importance of smart technologies in the life of cities and settlements occurs against the background and with the support of previously achieved solutions – primarily infrastructural ones. This concerns, in particular, the systems of centralized life support – water, heat and electricity supply. It is quite difficult to classify an urban settlement as «smart» if its power supply is based on last generation coal-fired generation with

occasional «black sky mode», although there are huge hydropower facilities in the immediate vicinity – quite a common situation in Eastern Siberia. In such cases, it only makes sense to talk about rational distribution and consumption of energy resources, but not about smart and modern solutions.

Of course, it is possible, for research purposes, to discuss and calculate indices of promotion of such settlements to the ideal of smart cities, which are formed by various organizations in our country and abroad. However, when calculating, for example, generalized indicators for our country, we should not forget about a large share of citizens and settlements with «basic amenities» still located in the street.

Pilot projects such as Innopolis in Tatarstan or the projected SmartCity near Novosibirsk are certainly important and necessary. But rather, as prototypes of the future and still largely virtual reality (see papers by A.A. Bozhey-Volya; E.V. Popov, K.A. Semyachkov, D.N. Borisov, as well as M.A. Shvetsov). The reality of the formation of smart settlements is connected primarily with the development and strengthening of partnership and interaction between all the main actors involved in this process – on the basis of modern information and communication technologies.

The opportunities offered by modern technology make it possible to «see» the problems and «hear» the voice of each individual person, as well as to take his or her opinion into account in the development and implementation of technocratic innovations.

We have neither the time nor the resources to repeat the experience of administrative economics, which undertook a campaign unprecedented in scale and expense to create an all-encompassing national

automated management system. Its main lesson is that it is simply impossible to improve the state of the economy and social sphere through information-technological solutions alone. Without active human participation – both the goal and the means of socio-economic transformation – no «smart» solutions have any significant chance of success. After all, smart solutions are based both on modern knowledge and on the wisdom and experience of more than one generation of our predecessors, dear readers.

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