Political opinion making on blog and twitter – an European comparison of actors, standards and internet literacy –

Editor: Heinrich Bücker-Gärtner

Report of an International Seminar

March 14th to 26th, 2010
Berlin School of Economics and Law
Faculty of Public Administration

Contents

A Introduction

Since 1997 the Berlin School of Economics and Law (Hochschule für Wirtschaft und Recht Berlin (HWR)) has already organized ten international workshops[1] qualified as Intensive Program (IP) in the context of the European University Program LIFELONG LEARNING – ERASMUS. There has been a co-operation with at least three universities of different European countries, among them universities from Belgium, France, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland and Sweden. The focused subjects vary according to the interests of the participating partners. This report is presenting the results of the IP workshop on the subject "Political opinion making on blog and twitter – an European comparison of actors, standards and internet literacy" which took place in Berlin from March 14th to 26th, 2010.

These workshops are designed according to the principle "experts meet experts". They comprise 10 workdays and feature a very intensive participation of students. The students acquire the essential aspects of the topic of the seminary within a preparation course at their home university and prepare a presentation (look part C – reports of different countries). The technical input is completed by the experts' presentations. On this basis the different viewpoints of the representatives of the participating universities meet and during the workshop the nationally mixed workgroups discuss solutions to the problems and create a report comprising the results thereof (look part D – reports from the workgroups).

The concept of the intensive program offers very good conditions for an intensive exchange between lecturers and students of different countries. Besides the technical discussions, especially insights into the specific academic practices (e. g. the way students and lecturers are dealing with each other) and standards (competences of presentation and communication as well as breadth and depth of the students' technical knowledge) are helpful to receive impulses for the own university and the personal design of one's role as lecturer.

In the current year the workshop took place at the Faculty of Public Administration of HWR Berlin. The following persons participated:

- 2 professors and 9 students of the Faculty of Economic and Public Administration of University College Ghent (Belgium),

- 2 lecturers and 8 students of the Faculty of Political Science and Journalism of Adam Mickiewicz University Poznań (Poland),

- 1 lecturer and 8 students of the department of Human Sciences of Linnaeus-University Växjö/Kalmar (Sweden),

- 1 lecturer and 6 students of the Institute of Contemporary History of the University of Vienna (Austria),

- 2 professors and 14 students of the Faculty of Public Administration of HWR Berlin

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[1] http://www.hwr-berlin.de/internationales/projekte/erasmus-intensivprogramme/

The program designed by the hosting faculty (look part B) has put special emphasis on including practical political experiences. The presentations of the experts won over to this subject gave a rather disillusioning portray of the benefits of blog and twitter for their work. Unfortunately, none of these experts has handed us a written article for this report. Furthermore we were not able to engage journalistic experts for participating in this workshop.

The Berlin School of Economics and Law was formed in 2009 by a merger two rather small universities. It comprises five faculties of 8,500 students in total, offering 26 bachelor and 16 master degree courses as well as 5 MBA programs. The university's departments of economic science, police and administration of justice have specialized in company-linked programs. Currently 480 business partners, the Berlin Supreme Court and the Berlin Chief of Police have sent out 2,900 young people in total for studying at HWR. Their three-year courses combine a regular bachelor degree course with periods of practical training in the relevant areas. At the same time, the students are also employed and thus paid a trainee allowance by their employers. None of the students of a company-linked program took part in this workshop.

The IP-workshop was financed by

      a) subsidies of the European Commission (LLP – ERASMUS – IP),

      b) funds of the budgets of the participating universities,

      c) personal financial contributions of the participating students.

The present report concerning IP 2009/10 is at the same time attached to the „FINAL REPORT", which was sent to Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD) in September 2010, and thus is part of the evidence on the adequate use of granted funds of the ERASMUS program.

We would like to thank Bettina Krumm for her qualified work of translating the German texts into English and vice versa.

Prof. Dr. Heinrich Bücker-Gärtner
HWR Berlin, Faculty of Public Administration
Head of the Project

B Programme

ERASMUS Intensive Programme
International Workshop March 14ᵗʰ to 26ᵗʰ, 2010 at HWR Berlin
Chairman: Prof. Dr. Heinrich Bücker-Gärtner (HWR Berlin)

"Political opinion making on blog and twitter
– an European comparison of actors,
standards and internet literacy –"

Programme

Stage of the project (start-end dates)	Activities undertaken
Day 1 (14/03/10)	**Arrival** of lecturers and students from Ghent, Poznań, Växjö and Vienna **8:00 p. m.** Restaurant Le Village, Lepsiusstr. 63, 12163 Berlin **Welcome of the participants** by Prof. Dr. Heinrich Bücker-Gärtner and students of HWR Berlin in the frame of a joint dinner
Day 2 (15/03/10)	**10.00 a. m.** HWR Berlin – Campus Lichtenberg Alt-Friedrichsfelde 60 – 10315 Berlin **Welcome** of the participants and presentation of the HWR Berlin by vice-rector Prof. Dr. Hennig Spinti **10.45 a. m.** **Introduction into the IP and explanation to the IP programme** Prof. Dr. Heinrich Bücker-Gärtner **11.30 a. m.** **Ice-Breaking**: Integration play by German students **1.00 p. m.** Refectory lunch **2.00 p. m.** **New media in Swedish politics** Presentation by the Swedish group with an introduction by

	Thomas Marten, followed by a discussion **5.00 p. m.** **Sightseeing in Berlin** Berlin students and the guests by tube and tram
Day 3 (16/03/10)	**10.00 a. m.** HWR Berlin – Campus Lichtenberg **Relation between new media and political awareness** Presentation of the Belgian group with an introduction by Prof. Dr. Frank Naert, followed by a discussion **1.00 Uhr** Refectory lunch **2.00 p. m.** **Relevance of internet and web 2.0 for a politician in Berlin** Sascha Steuer (MdA, CDU) **4.00 p. m.** **Political opinion making process on blog and twitter** Presentation of the German group with an introduction by Prof. Dr. Heinrich Bücker-Gärtner, followed by a discussion
Day 4 (17/03/10)	**10.00 a. m.** HWR Berlin – Campus Lichtenberg **Politics and new media** Presentation of the Polish group with an introduction by PhD Bartosz Hordecki, followed by a discussion **1.00 Uhr** Refectory lunch **2.00 p. m.** **The fear of losing control? – German parties in web 2.0** Katharina Weise (Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung) **4.00 p. m.** Establishing of 4 international groups and first discussions in groups

Day 5 (18/03/10)	**10.00 a. m.** HWR Berlin – Campus Lichtenberg **Political opinion making on blog and twitter** Presentation of the Austrian group with an introduction by Mag. Lucile Dreidemy, followed by a discussion **1.00 p. m.** Refectory lunch **3.00 p. m.** Klingelhöferstraße 8, 10785 Berlin **What we did in Outer space – Political parties and their web 2.0** **activities in the "Superwahljahr" German Elections 2009** Stefan Henneweg (CDU-Bundesgeschäftsstelle) **6.00 p. m.** Visit to a museum (e. g. Jewish museum, museum for communication,Pergamonmuseum) 6.00 p.m. Evaluation of the project by the participating lecturers and some lectures of HWR Berlin in the frame of a joint dinner
Day 6 (19/03/10)	**9.00 a. m.** HWR Berlin – Campus Lichtenberg **Working in 4 international groups with topics as fol-lows:** 1. Demokracy 2.0?; chair: Prof. Dr. F. Naert 2. New media as a challenge for the journalism; chair: PhD B. Hordecki 3.Opportunities and limitations of web 2.0 for the political mobilization; chair: T. Marten 4. More information – less knowledge?; chair: Prof. Dr. H. Bücker-Gärtner and L. Dreidemy **11.30 a. m.** Refectory lunch **1.00 p. m.** Abgeordnetenhaus Berlin, Niederkirchnerstraße 3-5, 10117 Berlin **Changes in political communication by web 2.0** Anja Schillhaneck (MdA, Bündnis 90/Die Grünen)

	3.00 p. m. **Conducted tour of the Berlin city state House of Parliament** **6.00 p. m.** **Sightseeing Schloss Charlottenburg**
Day 7 (20/03/10)	**9.00 a. m.** HWR Berlin – Campus Lichtenberg **Continuation of the works in 4r groups** **15.00 p. m.** Alexanderplatz 7, 10178 Berlin **Sightseeing tour with guide** **6.00 p. m.** Restaurant „Deponie Nr.3",Georgenstrasse 5, 10117 Berlin dinner
Day 8 (21/03/10)	**3.00 p. m.** Neues Museum, Bodestraße 1,10117 Berlin **Conducted tour of New Museum** **6.00 p. m.** Restaurant „Bierbörse" ,Schiffbauerdamm 8, 10117 Berlin dinner
Day 9 (22/03/10)	**9.00 a. m.** Brunnenstr. 105, 13355 Berlin **Conducted tour of „Berliner Unterwelten"** **11.00 a. m.** HWR Berlin – Campus Lichtenberg **Continuation of the works in 4 groups** **1.00 p. m.** Refectory lunch **2.00 p. m.** **Continuation of the works in 4 groups** **8.00 p. m.** Playhouse, Kurfürstendamm 153, 10709 Berlin **Dance theatre „Trust"**

Day 10 (23/03/10)	**9.00 a. m.** HWR Berlin – Campus Lichtenberg **Continuation of the works in 4 groups** **12.00 p. m.** Platz der Republik 1, 10557 Berlin **Conducted tour of German Bundestag** **2.30 p. m.** Restaurant Löwenbräu, Leipziger Str. 65, 10117 Berlin lunch **4.00 p. m. till 7.00 p. m.** HWR Berlin – Campus Lichtenberg **Continuation of the works in 4 groups** **7 p.m.** Evaluation of the project by the lectures in the frame of a joint dinner
Day 11 (24/03/10)	**10.00 a. m.** HWR Berlin – Campus Lichtenberg **Old media, new media: Journalism after 11 September** Presentation by PhD Agnieszka Stepinska, University Poznań **1.00 p. m.** Refectory lunch **2.00 p. m. till 6.00 p. m.** **Continuation of the works in 4 groups**
Day 12 (25/03/10)	**10.00 a. m.** HWR Berlin – Campus Lichtenberg **Presentation of the result of the international groups** by one student of each group **12.00 p. m.** Refectory lunch **1.00 p. m.** **Evaluation of the seminar with all participants** **6.00 p. m.** **Closing event** in the frame of a joint dinner Submission of certificates for participation by the dean of Faculty 3 of HWR Berlin, Prof. Dr. Dörte Busch

	10.00 p. m. „Sage Club", Brückenstr., 10179 Berlin **Farewell party**
Day 13 (26/03/10)	**8.00 a. m.** **Departure of participants** from Ghent, Poznań, Växjö and Vienna

The participants of IP 2010 in Berlin

C Country Reports

1 The relation between new media and political awareness in Belgian

1.1 Walking through the digital divide in Flanders

In this part of the report, we will discuss concepts like social (in)equality, the democratic potential of ICT, the digital divide and give an overall view of the use of ICT in Flanders. Throughout this chapter we will have to make some choices concerning definitions of concepts, however it is not our objective to formulate a conclusive theoretical analysis. We only seek to give an overall view of the current situation in Flanders.

The democratic potential

The last few years there has been a fundamental increase in the use of ICT in Flanders. We can assume that this digital development has undoubtedly had an effect on the political system, concepts like e-government and digital citizenship spring to mind. The question of the nature and intensity of this effect can be reduced to the discussion about *the democratic potential* of ICT and internet in particular.

The *democratic potential* of ICT can be described as "the way in which it is going to be able to counteract, rather than maintain (or even amplify) social inequalities" (d'Haenens, Koeman, & Saeys, 2007). In other words, does ICT have the potential to resolve cultural differences and solve integration-issues, whilst at the same time creating opportunities to support the cultural identity of ethnic minority groups?

The academic discussion on the democratic potential of the internet can be polarized into two competing sorts of theories (Vissers, Hooghe, & Moreas, 2009; Bree, 2004). *Mobilization-theories* are rather optimistic towards the democratic potential of the internet. These theories state that the internet has a tremendous potential to mobilize new groups in society that so far have been relatively uninvolved. These authors believe that internet creates new possibilities for political participation, that it stimulates better informed citizens because of drastically reduced cost-barriers and ever increasing supplies of new information, and finally that internet can be used to tighten the relations between the general public and the political world. In contrast *consolidation-theories* are not at all convinced of the *democratic potential* of the internet. These rather skeptic authors assume that there is a significant *digital divide* in society as far as access and use of internet is concerned, furthermore they state that people who participate in online politics are mostly already participating in offline politics. Additionally the information-potential is minimized because of the self-selective nature of online information-seeking, i.e. people usually seek information that confirms with their current views, internet can thus stimulate social fragmentation in society (Vissers, Hooghe, & Moreas, 2009). The reality is as always neither black nor white; none of these theories have the monopoly on the truth (Bree, 2004). In chapter two we will further elaborate the 'digital divide' applied to 'new media' in particular.

Due to the fundamentally increasing importance of ICT, concepts and subjects like *the digital divide* have become very popular. In the last few years the *digital divide*, or the social (in)equality due to the ICT-developments, has been subject to a lot of research. As a result of these mainly young studies there is no universal definition of the concept. It is simply not unambiguously describable. According to Pieter Verdegem (2009) the *digital divide* is a "*container-concept*", i.e. a concept that has many

meanings[1]. In this fashion the concept stands for the general social consequences of ICT-evolutions and highlights the limitations of the information- and knowledge driven society, i.e. possible *exclusion* of some social groups.

"The 'digital divide' is one of the most discussed social phenomena of our era. It is also one of the most unclear and confusing." (Warschauer, 2003) [translation from Dutch]

Originally *digital divide* was used as a confined concept to describe the gap between those with and those without access to new technologies. Together with digital evolutions and research concerning these innovative technologies, the concept was further refined to the *ownership* and *(material-)access* of a computer and later internet. As more and more research was being published, the focus of the *digital divide* gradually included *skills-access* (the possibility to use ICT) and *mental-access* (attitudes towards ICT) (d'Haenens, Koeman, & Saeys, 2007; Verdegem, 2009). David Gunkel (2003) has suitably concluded that the concept of a *digital divide* is an ever changing notion, which is mainly due to the constantly evolving technical aspects of ICT and the set of applications that are being studied. And that there is not one but a whole range of *digital divides*, varying in social, economical and technological dimensions (Gunkel, 2003; Verdegem, 2009).

The digital divide: a multi-dimensional approach

To avoid confusion, we have based our following description of the *digital divide* in Flanders on the pragmatic definition by Pieter Verdegem (2009, p. 49) while still taking into account the limitations of such a definition like we have mentioned above: "*The different gradations in access to and use of new communication-technologies (ICTs), including these factors that have a determining influence such as socio-demographical and socio-economical variables*"[2]. Finally, we have extended this definition with an ethno-cultural dimension.

A socio-demographical & -economical dimension

In the following study by the Flemish government (Moreas, 2007), five different personal factors were measured: year of birth, gender, years of education, paid employment and the amount of formal social networks. Next to that, there are also three family factors: family-revenue, number of children and the highest diploma in the family. The study has shown that there is some sort of digital divide for most of the studied aspects of ICT-adaptation.

As mentioned before, the digital gap changes when the focus is shifted to the specific use of certain applications, with which people can maintain or improve their own position in the society. The different possible applications measured in this

study are: 'multimedia', ' information-seeking' ,'e-government', 'social chat', 'bridging a distance', 'participating in debates or following courses', 'gathering news' and 'financial services' (Moreas, 2007).

Each gap is not only determined by the studied factor, but also by the amount of different *resources* and the influence of existing *motivational variables*. First of all, the *cognitive*, *social*, *material* and *cultural resources* of the individual play an important role. The respective gap can be closed by maximizing these resources for deprivation groups or by minimizing the needed resources through production innovations. If a person has more of these resources, this person has to make a smaller effort to possess or use ICT, and he has a greater chance on using ICT efficiently. This person will experience more advantages of ICT-use and thanks to these positive experiences he will have less fear to use a computer (Moreas, 2007).

Cognitive resources refer to the differences in the possibility to adjust oneself to new technology, whereas *social resources* stand for the differences in experience with ICT and the positive appreciation towards ICT in the social environment. *Material resources* are the amount of time and money one is able to spend on ICT. Lastly, *cultural resources* are the differences in the culture of a person in terms of standards, values and habits towards ICT-use.

Secondly, a set of *motivational variables* exists, namely the *cognitive component* (balance of the advantages and disadvantages) and *affective component* (fear of using a computer versus the desire to explore new technologies) (Moreas, 2007).

a) The digital divide based on income

Families with a higher income have almost twice as much chance to possess and use ICT in comparison with people who have a lower income. The chance that people with a low income abandon the internet is more than twice as high as people with a higher income. Internet users with a higher income frequently use more than one application in the categories 'e-government', 'bridging a distance', 'participate in debates and following courses' and 'financial services' than people with a lower income. The other applications are almost just as popular in both groups (Moreas, 2007).

b) The digital divide based on year of birth

In 2006, older people were lagging behind, especially those who were older than 60 years. Only 13% of the people older than 60 used the internet, in contrast to 88% of the people between 18 and 30 years and 81% of those between 31 and 45 years. Additionally older groups had a bigger chance to drop-out (13%) than younger groups of the population (5% - 7%) (Moreas, 2007). The relative lead of the youngsters on the older generation has only got bigger since 2001. Especially for the oldest generation (>59 years) the biggest problem remains the difficult connection of this age-group with the new communication technologies (Vissers, Hooghe, & Moreas, 2009).

Internet users younger than 45 years use one or more applications in the categories 'multimedia', 'social chat', 'bridging a distance' and 'participate in debates and following courses'. 'Information-seeking' is the application that is used by almost

all of the internet users. The other applications are almost just as popular in all the groups (Moreas, 2007).

c) The digital divide based on gender

There is no difference between men and women in the possession of ICT, but women do use it less. In 2005-2006, 64% of the men used the internet in comparison with only 54% of the women (Moreas, 2007). For the year 2008, this inequality is still the same but, the difference is not as significant as between the people with a higher or a lower education (Vissers, Hooghe, & Moreas, 2009). Men tend to use one or more applications in the categories 'multimedia', 'e-government', 'bridging a distance', 'participate in debates and following courses' and 'gathering news' more frequently. The other applications are equally used in both groups (Moreas, 2007).

d) The digital divide based on years of education

Lower educated people have a larger shortage in comparison with the higher educated: the amount of possession and use of the internet with the lower educated (16%) is not even half the amount of the higher educated (91%). The drop-outs of the lower educated are 19%, people who had a higher education have a drop-out percentage of 3%. Applications in the categories 'multimedia', 'e-government', 'bridging a distance', 'participating in debates and following courses', 'gathering news',

and 'financial services' are more used as people have had the advantages of a longer education. 'Information-seeking' and 'social chat' are just as popular in each group, and so they are independent of the years of education (Moreas, 2007).

e) The digital divide based on employment

People who do not have a paid job, have a smaller chance to use ICT (35%) in comparison with working people (79%). In 2005, they also had a bigger chance to abandon the internet. But in 2006, that difference was disappeared. Internet users with a paid job frequently use one or more applications in the categories 'e-government', 'bridging a distance' and 'financial services'. Users who don't have a paid job mostly use the application 'social chat'. The unmentioned categories are equally popular in both groups (Moreas, 2007).

f) The digital divide based on the amount of formal social networks

People who do not participate frequently in social networks, e.g. via voluntary work or via the club life, have a smaller chance to use ICT (51%) in contrast to people who do participate frequently (74%). The amount of drop-outs is also a lot smaller in the last group (3%-6% against 9-14%). People who have a high score in the amount of formal social networks frequently use one or more applications of the categories 'e-government', 'participation in debates or following courses' and 'gathering news' (Moreas, 2007).Between the frequency of the informal social contacts with neighbors, friends and family and the chance of using ICT, strong, linear and meaningful connections were not found in the study (Moreas, 2007).

g) Overall remarks

In spite of the quick growth of the use of internet these past few years, the inequality related to the use of it has not disappeared. For the period of 2001 until 2008, the youngsters, the men and the higher educated people are particularly overrep-

resented (Vissers, Hooghe, & Moreas, 2009). Nowadays, the term 'deepening divide' is very suitable. This means that more and more people are getting access to the internet, but while one part of the population uses it for leisure activities, like games or downloading music, the other better educated part uses the internet mainly for information-seeking (Moreas, 2007; Warschauer, 2003).

The access to the internet is, and remains, much more unequal in comparison with other news-media. This means that every attempt to use the internet for political purposes will be confronted with problems in terms of representativeness (Vissers, Hooghe, & Moreas, 2009).

As with every new aspect of ICT-use, it will be the precursors who are the first ones to use it. So, they keep their lead in the ICT-field. In the meantime, the deprivation groups are still trying to catch up with the older aspects of ICT (Moreas, 2007). As far as applications are concerned 'information-seeking' is by far the most popular, it is used by almost everyone who is connected to the net. About 14% of the users restrict themselves to only one or two applications, while 29% of the population uses almost the full potential of the internet (seven out of eight applications) (Moreas, 2007).

In the literature, the people with a low income, a low education, the elderly, the unemployed, the childless, the (older) foreigners and the women are pointed out as more vulnerable groups for *exclusion*. These groups are called deprivation groups. When people from those groups do use the internet, they generally use the same applications repetitively: the use of 'e-government', 'the participation in debates and taking courses' is less popular with those people. Deprivation groups also have a higher chance to abandon the internet with drop-out percentages of up to 20% (Moreas, 2007).

An ethno-cultural dimension

Statistical information about the influence of culture-specific characteristics such as ethnicity, religion and others, remains scarce. Especially data for Belgium or Flanders are difficult to find. Early studies have shown that the use of or access to ICT in a society does not necessarily mean a furthering isolation of minorities. It can in fact help with the process of integration by stimulating the creation of new relationships within the own group (*bonding)* and with the native population *(bridging)* (Bree, 2004). Robert Putnam describes the process in which individuals from ethnic minorities "look beyond their own group and widen their own horizon (…) and enter into relationships with other groups in society" as *'bridging between cultures'* (d'Haenens, Koeman, & Saeys, 2007). Respectively *'bonding social capital'* can be described as the process in which ICT can increase the communication and participation within the own group, e.g. with the population in their home country (d'Haenens, Koeman, & Saeys, 2007).

Despite these positive bridging and bonding effects on integration, there still are some digital inequalities between native an ethnic minority inhabitants. Nevertheless it is crucial to clarify that these differences are not a mere result of the different ethno-cultural backgrounds as such. The lower access and usage of ICT by minorities is mainly due to their less powerful position in society which is in turn determined by the socio-demographic and -economic characteristics (Bree, 2004), like we have discussed earlier.

Since the late eighties research on the differences in media use and ICT-access, ethnicity has gradually gained some more scientific attention and importance, especially in the US and the UK. These early studies focused mostly on social and economic determinants, whereas ethnicity as possible determinant was ignored. Due to the increasing importance of ethno-cultural issues in the late nineties, especially in multicultural societies as the Dutch and Flemish society, more research has been dedicated to this topic (d'Haenens, Koeman, & Saeys, 2007).

Recent research on the digital citizenship among ethnic minority youths by d'Haenens, Koeman and Saeys (2007) has shown that there are no significant differences between native and ethnic minority youths in '*mental access*' and '*skills access*'. In contrast, as far as '*material access*' is concerned, there are more differences between native and ethnic minority youths. In general native youths have more access to a computer at home and focus on entertainment, emailing and downloading. Whereas a larger number of ethnic minority youths use computers in public places, e.g. libraries and internet cafes. They are more concerned with '*bridging*' and '*bonding*' activities such as information-seeking (on religion, art and culture), participating in news groups and keeping track of the developments in their home country. Finally most respondents stated that they felt more involved with the Dutch society and politics through the use of ICT (d'Haenens, Koeman, & Saeys, 2007).

The use of ICT-applications in Flanders, in comparison with Europe

In this paragraph we will sketch the general outlines of the most used ICT-applications concerning participation in Flanders. This can be helpful to put the information about the *digital divide* in Flanders in a realistic context, and could make comparisons between countries possible. We have chosen to restrict ourselves to the specific applications for individuals, and therefore will not discuss the nevertheless interesting ICT-applications on the institutional level. The following statistics were retrieved from the annual rapport of Flemish Regional Indicators as published by the Studiedienst van de Vlaamse Regering (Moreas, 2008) and apply to the year 2007.

The Flemish government has uttered the ambitions to develop Flanders into a progressive information-based society by bridging the *digital divide*. The 2007 figures show that about 65% of the population has access to internet, most of them (61% of the total population) via a broadband connection. These figures seem to indicate that Flanders has leading scores when compared with the 27 European Member States. This is only true for the *material-access*, the following statistics show that Flanders is lagging behind (in comparison to the leading European countries) for the *use of internet applications*.

Flemish scores for *e-government* applications are a bit below European averages (30% for the EU27 and 34% for the EU15), only 1 out of 4 have used the internet for e-government purposes in 2007. The figures for *e-commerce* activities show that about 60% of the population uses the internet to search information about products and services, while only a meager 13% really buys something online. This is shockingly low in comparison with the EU27 average of 27% or the EU top 3 (UK, DK, NED) scores of approximately 45%. Accordingly about 36% of the

population uses the internet for *e-banking*, which is better than European averages (29% for the EU15 and 25% for the EU27) but yet again significantly lower than the EU top 3, in this case the UK, DK and NED with percentages of over 60%. One could say that Flanders is missing the boat in e-commerce and e-banking.

The same differences were measured for the use of *e-learning* applications in Flanders. In 2007 only a quarter of the population has used the internet for educational purposes. Compared with the leading European countries, *e-learning* is lagging behind.

As far as *the collection of news* is concerned, Flemish citizens still rely mostly on traditional television- (92%) and radio- (76%) broadcasts or traditional newspapers (62%). While only a quarter of the population checks online news sources weekly, i.e. *e-media*. Television still is by far the most popular medium, especially for the elderly and the lower-educated, while radio and online news reach more young (under 45) and higher educated people. A mere 13% of the Flemish population have used online radio- or news broadcast in 2007, this is similar to the European averages but significantly lower than the EU top 3 (NED, DK and SW, each with scores of over 30%). These differences are even bigger for the use of online magazines and newspapers, with a Flemish score of about 18% (again similar with EU averages) compared to considerably higher scores for the EU top 3 (ES, FI and DK with scores of roughly 50%).

Generally speaking the results of used ICT-applications in Flanders are comparable with, or lower than, the European averages. Especially for *e-commerce, e-government and e-media* the results are significantly lower than those of the leading European countries. The Flemish government intends to use *e-competence* to bridge the *digital divide* and boost employment by stimulating the development of the necessary ICT-skills among citizens and thus facilitating easier *skills-access* in society. While at the same time keeping track of the developments in ICT, e.g. the rise of *user generated content* (Moreas, 2008).

Conclusion

In spite of the hopeful expectations of the "new" ICTs in the early nineties, we can safely state that the reality has caught up with the optimistic dream. Social inequalities are still alive and kicking, the rise of the internet has not been able to include all groups of society in public life. Therefore studies on this subject remain useful. We do see that the studies differ in the listed applications and used definitions, but generally the underlying social phenomena remains the same.

1.2 New media and political education

Web 2.0 is a collective noun for diverse internet sites that emphasizes on parts of information, knowledge and experiences in open and social networks of users who constantly interact. Citizens are no longer passive consumers of information and knowledge but they are active and design the knowledge and information that is relevant to them. Examples of these new media are: Facebook, YouTube and in-

stant messaging programs (Bekkers, 2008). In the third part of the presentation, we will concentrate more on this subject.

Blog

A blog is a specific site or a part of a site. On this page bloggers give their thoughts about topical matters or links to interesting sites. There are two types of blogs. The first are the personal weblogs where one person writes his or her thoughts or experiences and comments them. The second are thematic weblogs were the focus is on one topic. Several persons can post their contribution on the subject. A lot of individual politicians make use of weblogs to show their daily activities and/or discuss topical matters (Van Audenhove, Lievens, & Cammaerts, 2005).

Originally blogs were pure personal, they made the private public on a scale that was not possible before. It was only later on that blogs were interconnected in networks, they became more interactive and related to political events. Even though most of the blogs staid personal (Griffiths).

Social network sites

Social network sites make use of the content delivered by the users. They talk about 'user generated content'. Politicians often make use of social network sites to characterize, to clarify statements and to give citizens the opportunity to react. The initiative can start from citizens, they can set up a community about a political theme or a project in their district. They can do this by making a profile and link it to profiles with the same interests. In this way they can exchange information and found a community (Everaerd, 2008).

E-information

Access to information is an important condition for participation in the political process. If participation in political processes will be increased, than the need for reliable information and adapted access to information will become more important. A better access to policy and political information can contribute to an increased transparency to the policy process and a better insight in policy processes as such. So, important conditions for e-information are access and accessibility (Van Audenhove, Lievens, & Cammaerts, 2005).

Development in the expectations of internet in political participation

In the development of new media there are three successive movements in looking at their impact. The first movement is the *'empowerment-thesis'*. The internet has a lot of advantages that other media, for example television or newspaper, don't have. On the internet you can put and find an enormous amount of information. You can reach a large group in one time, or selected groups or even individuals. Also, the interactive possibilities and the fact that there is no intervention of third

parties are very important advantages for the use of internet. For all these reasons the expectations of the use of political sites were very high. Internet would reduce the gap between politics and citizens. It would lead to higher political participation,

more commitment and raised political knowledge. Another advantage is that the use of internet is a relatively cheap medium, so not only big, rich parties, but also smaller parties with less money and resources are able to spread information.

The second movement is the *'reinforcement-thesis'*. Studies showed that internet was not used as a new kind of campaign instrument. The internet was used to enlarge the effectiveness of campaigns, but not for participation purposes. Most of the citizens used the political sites to collect information about the points of view of the political parties. The visitors of the political sites were mainly limited to people who were already interested in politics.

The third movement is the *'construction-thesis'*. Here we can find a more moderate vision on the influences of the internet. Through the use of websites you can possibly attract a few more people when you talk to them goal-oriented. For example also young people make use of political sites on the internet, a group that on this moment doesn't use traditional media often. So, in the future the use of internet will possibly become more important (Van Santen, 2007).

The representative democracy also seems to be in a crisis. There is a growing gap between citizens and politicians. This is shown by lower membership of political parties, the rise of extreme right and populist parties. Also globalization and international and regional agreements led to this crisis. Consequently, political participation and the meaning of political activism changed, the political interest of people is focused on their own interests. So if the democratic system wants to be representative it has to try to raise the participation of citizens. This is one of the opportunities of new media (Van Audenhove, Lievens, & Cammaerts, 2005).

The idea that ICT would lead to a radical new kind of democracy, a *direct democracy*, has known a revival with the introduction of new media. The evolution to such a direct democracy would have important repercussions for intermediary actors, as well as for politics as such (Van Audenhove, Lievens, & Cammaerts, 2005).

But we have to nuance the rise of new media. New developments always get a lot of attention and expectations are high. But most of the time after ten or twenty years the real impact does not seem as great as expected (Van Dijk J.).

The advantages and disadvantages of new media in the political debate

Personalization of politics is one of the reasons these new media seem to be very important these days. We can distinguish two different types of personalization. Within the first type politicians represent the point of view of their party. This means that it is more a competition between political leaders of a party rather than between different parties. They represent their own points of view and have their own competences. They develop a personal political discourse and they focus on their personal contribution to the political initiatives. The second type has more attention for the politician as person and their private life. In this type emotions get much attention, we could talk about *'emotionalisation' of politics*. This form of politics is also known as personality politics, not the actions but the feelings of politicians are important. You can look for personal information on their sites, for example photographs of their family. You can find both forms on political websites. This

trend to personalization could be seen as a consequence of the crisis political parties have to deal with, the role of media and television and a call for authenticity (Van Aelst, 2002). In Belgium, Vincent Van Quickenborne is a good example of this emotional personalization.

"… present-day voters are higher educated, better informed, a lot more mobile and less bound on ideological contrasts. The result of these changes is that political parties are not longer sure of the vote of their supporters (Van Aelst, 2002).

The role of the media is also very important. Viewers or readers will identify themselves with the news and that is easier when it is personalized. That is also the case for political news.

The demand for authenticity is a last very important factor for the personalization of politics. Politicians try to show themselves as real people. In this way they try to narrow the gap with the citizens and try to escape from the negative aura of politics (Van Aelst, 2002).

Politicians use these new media because of the possibilities it creates to inform the public, whereas time and space in traditional media is limited. It is a fast and simple way to reach a lot of people or to contact a specific target group. There is also the possibility to communicate and interact with civilians. They see a website as an aid to get closer to the people. Besides, it can be used as an instrument during election campaign and enlarge their popularity. Through the use of new media politicians want to show they are up to date and create a modern image.

On the other hand, some politicians refuse to make use of personal websites because according to them there is sufficient information on the website of the political party. But only a few thought that information through the internet was not a priority and they would better invest in other ways of communication (Van Aelst, 2002).

These new media are also attractive for citizens. It creates a feeling they can influence the policy, they can support or sabotage it. An application of this is for example the 'I like'-button on Facebook. They can propose their own solution to specific problems and promote their interests. In this way they can also try to find support for a social problem they find important (Hanenburg, 2006).

Citizens can write longer pleas and there is a higher level of interaction than on personal and municipal websites. Moreover, when citizens already explored what politicians stand for online, it is easier for them to approach them with specific questions about matters that interest them offline (Everaerd, 2008).

This approachability has to be nuanced. Politicians are more approachable but this doesn't mean that they are more accessible. They like to give the impression that citizens can give feedback but they only allow a certain level of feedback. You often have to wait a long time before you get an answer to your e-mail and the staff works as gatekeepers between the politician and the citizens (Van Dijk J.).

Another aspect of new media that makes it attractive is the possibility to avoid media gatekeepers and the community feeling it creates among those who are 'privileged' to write and read things that have not been published elsewhere. Because of the popularity, the many possibilities to connect and the possibility to function

side by side to mass media, blogs are seen as a welcome addition to the democratic debate by political commentators. Blogs create an atmosphere were citizens can reflect and through that process can be empowered (Griffiths).

The democratic debate through new media could, on the other hand, also limit democracy. Because it is such a fast medium, democracy could be narrowed to the passive registration of opinions, while

one of the main values of a democratic system is the long process of debating over the pro's and contra's in an atmosphere where every party can contribute. To abandon this system could lead to a simplification of political subjects and more popular, short-term solutions (Van Audenhove, Lievens, & Cammaerts, 2005).

New media would make politicians more accessible and would facilitate participation in the political process. It could result in a more democratic policy process with informed and mature citizens (Hanenburg, 2006).

The users of new media - competences

With the rise of new media, the competences to participate in the public debate changed. Before, verbal skills and the art of negotiation were the most important. In a digital democracy those skills seem to be replaced by computer skills, the use of software and electronic communication. This transformation will take time and will probably not replace but complete the political communication (Van Dijk J.).

In the digital democracy useful, reliable and accessible information is a necessary condition. But there is a mass of information available, so selection and processing of information is necessary. The result of this process is not fixed and strongly dependent on individual capacity (Van Dijk J.).

Participation

In 2005 52% of the online visitors of a political website who participated in a survey searched the net for information, news, politics or to contact members of the government or politicians. 75% of these respondents were men and 2/3 were highly educated. They indicated to be very interested in politics and active on the internet. Approximately, 46% were already member of a political party, while only 6% of the total population is a member. This indicates that these websites mainly address those who are already politically interested and participating. So, it is improbable that party websites will be a good medium of communication for less educated and little political interested people (Hooghe & Vissers, 2006).

These features (high education, male, big network) are not only characteristics of those who frequently visit political websites but also for those who are political active (Moy & Gastil, 2006). These visitors seem to be interested in information in the first place, and less in the interactive possibilities of the internet. Only a few people use the website to compare the programs of political parties. 70% of the visitors of the website stated to vote for this party during the next elections (Hooghe & Vissers, 2006). When we compare online and offline participation, offline participation still seems to dominate.

These findings do not correspond with the implicit hope and often explicit goal of new media initiatives to reach citizens who otherwise would not participate, i.e. the more marginal groups in society (Van Audenhove, Lievens, & Cammaerts, 2005).

New media and political awareness

Remarkable is that almost a quarter of the respondents says that his visit to the website had a great impact on his political view. The political information has less influence on those who visit the site for the first time, only 29% of the first-visitors say to be influenced, while it is 49% for regular visitors (Hooghe & Vissers, 2006).

Blogs and other new media are an easy way for citizens to communicate. Such political discussions with other citizens are intrinsically valuable because they can exchange and enlarge each other's view. In this way, they are more informed, empathic and it leads to reflective judgments. These new media have an egalitarian and respectful atmosphere and afford each participant an equal and adequate speaking opportunity. The more networks you participate in, the better you can form a considered opinion (Moy & Gastil, 2006).

A possible disadvantage is the possibility of bad quality information and discussion. Most of the time people only react one time on a topic and there are no profound discussions on one specific subject. These discussions rarely lead to clear results. The opinions are often very different and they do not come to a consensus. Therefore, the statements in such discussions are seldom adopted by politicians. In face-to-face discussions this is more probably. Moreover, in real life there is peer pressure to come to a consensus and a conclusion (Van Dijk J.).

When we talk about a growing political awareness facilitated by new media, we have to keep in mind that technology alone cannot achieve this. This development is only possible in a certain social context. Besides, society has a certain political and social latitude to indicate direction to the implementation (Van Audenhove, Lievens, & Cammaerts, 2005).

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter it became clear that the use of new media creates new possibilities but also new difficulties for democracy and political participation. This statement is supported by several researches. Some are positive and others are negative for the impact of the use of political websites and other new media on political education. An important finding is that these new media do not seem to reach the general public, but especially those who are already politically interested. The real impact of these new forms of participation on the democratic process will probably only become clear within a few years.

1.3 Information through new media as a challenge for journalism

The internet is gaining more importance every day in our daily lives. Research shows that the internet is becoming an ever more growing source of information for an ever more growing population. During the presidential elections in the US in 2008 the internet was already the second biggest source of information for the electorate, television being the only one to be bigger than the internet, and this is very likely to change in the near future. Within a time period of five years, the use of internet as a source of information has doubled and if this rise continues, the internet will pass television as most important medium of information (Sels, 2008). This means that journalists can't just ignore the internet as a source of information because without it, their job would be more difficult these days.

Core internet business for journalists

Internet is constantly offering new ideas for another story which will probably be published online, while it's also covered in traditional ways of journalism. The internet mainly has an informative function for many journalists, a way to search and check information. The last few years the use of

internet by journalists has risen constantly, in such a way that 90% of journalists uses internet to search background information, 85% to check information and 68% to consult press messages. To gather journalistic information, journalists mainly use e-mail, websites and search engines. After them, other new internet applications such as *weblogs* and *RSS* have suddenly appeared. Especially *weblogs* have gained popularity the last few years, since three quarters of journalists admit to visit *weblogs* to gather information. The time span they spend on *weblogs* has stagnated lately, in fact, it has even lowered a bit. The average spending of time on the internet by journalists is an hour or more, which shows that there is a vast period of time journalists reserve next to other tasks, like meetings, covering news at the spot and calling sources by phone. Besides this, they frequently consult the World Wide Web: thanks to research we know that the percentage of journalists who frequently visit the internet between 2002 and 2006 has risen from 81 to 94% (van Heeswijk, 2007).

Features of online journalism

The use of internet by journalists enlarged greatly. Researchers have tried to distinguish the most important characteristics of the evolutions on the internet according to news and journalism. This has lead to a classification of four core features. *Interactivity* on the internet means that interaction is possible between journalists and readers. For example when there's room for a reaction on an article, but also by electronic correspondence with a journalist by e-mail or other suitable means.

a) Interactivity

This *interactivity* is not restrained to contact only: it's also possible for readers to direct themselves to the people mentioned in an article through online articles and the right references.

A second important feature of online journalism and news coverage is *customization*, which means that the user can create his personal account at a website and receives a personal homepage where he can select the subjects he thinks are im-

portant. This way, the user only gets to see the news he wants to see, other subjects are filtered out by the website he's visiting.

b) Hypertextuality

Hypertextuality is considered as one of the greatest modernizations in new media: in online articles journalists can do much more than in a newspaper article. This way they are capable of giving a broader explanation and they give readers the chance to find information themselves. They can do this by referring to other websites in their articles where readers can find more information about a subject in the article or they can refer to websites where they found their information. There is such a huge amount of information on the internet that it is an important task of the journalist to give information about the information they are spreading. *Hypertextuality* makes this very easy and accessible. For example, compared to a reference to a book in an article, clicking a hyperlink is not a hard job.

c) Multimediality

Multimediality of news is probably the biggest challenge for a journalist when he's doing his job. While other functions described above can also be done by a technician if a journalist gives him the fitting information, the journalist must still be capable of working with many different forms of media. On the internet, the boundaries between radio, television and newspaper are fading: a news site can publish one news item using text, audio or video materials. Because of this, the user gets the advantage not having to choose between one of the three forms. However, this is a challenge for a journalist: in the past he could specialize in one of these three media, but nowadays he has to be able to combine them.

These four features are regarded by scientists as the most important characteristics of online journalism en news spreading. They clearly have an influence on the jobs of journalists, because the job requires more skills than it used to do. Their training must embrace training in online skills to prepare them properly for their job. Which skills he will need, will mostly depend on the place where he works, because websites of newspapers are mainly better in offering *interactivity*, while websites of radios and especially television are better in offering *multimediality* (Bardoel & Deuze, 2001).

Technology does not only bring along good things. Besides the fact that there are more possibilities for media to reach people by internet, the internet also brings along more competitors. The media run the risk of becoming only one of the many information resources since more and more individuals will be capable of finding information on their own. This does not mean that the end of communication by media is in sight, it does say that journalists and media in general are no longer the first source of information for consumers. It's ironic that the old technology, mainly newspapers, has brought them in this position and that it's the new technology which will possibly get them out of this situation. *New technologies* and *online journalism* also support *individualism* and *globalization*. Interesting findings are that 33% of cell phone owners (which is one quarter of all Americans) access news on their cell phones, 28% of internet users have a personalized home page where they gather the news of their interests (36% of them want to be able to manipulate content themselves). The possibility to make your own news homepage with only news according to your interests becomes possible thanks to *customiza-*

tion (PEW Research Center, 2010). This *individualization* has consequences for journalists because they don't work for a big uniform public anymore, where the journalist had power. Now he writes for a fragmented, many headed public which has the power to select the news facts it wants to hear, see or read. This leads to a change in power balance. The *globalization* gives the user the advantage of getting into contact with each other to exchange information and doing so constructing their own stream of information without a role for the media. Because of these evolutions, it is necessary that journalism evolves from a profession driven by ideology and hierarchy to a profession with the stress on *transparence* and *interactivity.* This new form of journalism, which is necessary to tackle these challenges, is called *networking journalism*. In an environment where the media must converge more and more, the journalist is trapped between technology on the one side and the community on the other side. He must be aware of the fact that the public is becoming more and more independent of journalists as a source of information. So if the journalist is willing to hold his public, he must be aware of this and keep it into account. This clearly demonstrates that the power balance has changed: the journalist is no longer the only, unthreatened source of information. But still, the total impact of these new technologies is difficult to measure at this time. This is due to the sociological factors which play a part in the use of new technologies and the acceptance of the internet as a source of information.

As mentioned above a *digital gap* has appeared: prosperous people can gather information themselves by the internet, less prosperous people are more probable to remain dependent of classic media for their information. Because of this it's hard to predict which role media will play in the future (Bardoel & Deuze, 2001).

New technologies

New technologies make searching, editing and publishing faster than ever before. *Juice* is an application journalists can use in Mozilla Firefox, which is a web browser. The application is capable of searching texts for key words and then searches the internet for other articles upon the same

subject with similar key words. This application meant a revolution in searching the internet for journalists (De Meester, 2008).

Another interesting application on the internet is a *wiki*. *Wikis* are applications which make it possible that multiple authors can edit and remove parts from an article. Journalists first used wikis when Wikipedia launched Wikinews in 2004, with which they tried to give some attention to citizen journalism. The LA Times launched another site about the war in Iraq where they encouraged citizens to rewrite articles with the wiki technology (Wikijournalism, 2008).

Some companies have found a way to earn money from gathering information with these new technologies. They are called *content aggregators*. They collect information from several news sites and other resources on the internet to sell it to their own customers (SearchSOA, 08).

One of the latest evolutions on the web is the implementation of web 3.0. This new technology gives the web a better structure, gives chances to new applications and has more wireless features, which make it possible to connect to the internet with *smartphones*. Though this new technology is being developed and imple-

mented at this moment, *web 2.0* brought an even bigger revolution on the internet when it was implemented. *Web 2.0* changed 'the internet of documents' to 'an internet of multimedia'. *Wikis*, *social networks* and blogs, all very important sources for online journalists, were made possible when web 1.0 was replaced by *web 2.0* (O'Reilly, 2005).

Internet strategies

To handle the challenges mentioned earlier, some strategies have been developed for online journalists. These strategies partially concern the four core features described above.

A first strategy is *annotative reporting*: extra information is added to articles, readers are shown where to find more information about the subject – which means that they use *hypertextuality*. Journalists should also adapt their way of writing: they should limit themselves to the facts only and then direct their readers to other meaningful pages. If some would want to apply this strategy, they must offer the user the possibility to post information underneath the article.

Open source journalism is the second strategy. This strategy goes beyond *annotative reporting* where the user must contribute to the article. A practical example is given by the American magazine 'Jane's Intelligence Review': in 1999 the magazine decided to leave the control of a published article to a community of readers on the internet. When the readers had read it and submitted their comments, the magazine reformed the article following the comments of the readers and then published it. This is a pure form of *open source journalism*: giving the readers the permission to adjust an article. This is a form of *User Generated Content* (UGC), where the user partially creates the news himself.

A third strategy is the one of *hyperadaptive news sites.* This contains the three major characteristics of a news site, being *multimediality*, *hypertextuality* and *interactivity*, which evolve into one paradigm. These three separate concepts are melting into one and are applied in news sites. In 2001, there was still a lot of work to do. *Annotative reporting* is applied in most websites, the other two strategies are rarely used and one could notice that mostly news sites are staying behind. They apply none of these strategies properly, so there is room for more progress (Deuze, 2001).

Types of information

At a newsroom in the 21st century journalists must also search for new kinds of information. In the past, they primarily visited people to gather the necessary information. These days journalists find more and more information using the internet. We can divide this information into three categories.   The first category is the one of *feeds (RSS)*. *RSS* stands for *Real Simple Syndication*, which helps to follow up the latest news. A feed is a sort of subscription you have for a blog, a news site or whatever

other site you like. This feed keeps you in touch with new posts on this website, alerting you when a new article appears. The most famous example is Google News, which is connected to a lot of newspapers and news sites through this feeds. You can enter search terms and then Google offers you the most relevant articles sorted by date of publication. This can be a very important source of infor-

mation for journalists. *Social networks* are one of the latest new sources of information which are thankfully used by politicians. Here you can create your own account where you post some personal stuff. Everyone who is connected (by being your friend) with you, is able to see your posts on his homepage. When journalists are linked with politicians, other journalists or other sources of information through *social network sites*, they could rapidly gather personal information about important happenings.

Databases already are an older form of information gathering. In the past, a journalist had to consult reference books in a library, now these *databases* are more and more digitally available and to be consulted online. Through the internet journalists can find a lot of scientific information about certain subjects. An advantage of these *databases* is that the information is often more reliable than the information you can find on *weblogs*. The disadvantage is that to be able to consult some *databases* you have to pay high sums of money and that they are not appropriate to find very recent information (Bradshaw, 2008).

News sites

News sites must suffice certain demands when they want to meet with the demands of the user of today. One of the problems news sites are confronted with is the fact that they are often not profitable. On these sites, most information presented, is information you can find at any other information channel at the same time. The articles or items in a news paper or in a news emission are transformed by a journalist to put them online. It seldom happens that articles only appear online, mostly because newsrooms of websites are often limited in personnel because of a small budget. Besides this, the majority of news sites are free, which means they do not generate direct revenues. So if a news site wants to differentiate itself from others, it must do this through functionalities, which others don't have. The three major functionalities have been treated already while discussing the core features of online journalism.

Key qualities

The key qualities of a good news site are *interaction*, *hypertextuality* and *multimediality*. The interaction on a news site embraces a broad range of possibilities and is divided into 5 dimensions. The first dimension, *complexity of choice available*, handles the degree of how a user can determine in which way and in which order he can summon information. This dimension is close to *hypertextuality* because hyperlinks are the best means to give access to information to a user and to permit him to determine how much he wants to read himself. The *responsiveness to the user* is the second dimension and concerns the degree of possibility for a user to have contact with the journalist or the newsroom. However, we must add here that this feature is not always executed correctly. For example: an e-mail address of a journalist can be published, but this does not mean that the e-mails you send will be replied. The third dimension is the *facilitation on interpersonal communication* and mainly talks about the possibility for users to get in touch with each other through the news site. This can be arranged by a chat room. The fourth dimension is the *ease of adding information*, which handles the ease of adding information for users. This service can be settled by a message board. The difference with the

third dimension is the fact that interpersonal communication is about one-to-one communication between users, while the fourth is about one-to-many communication because the remaining message is posted which can be seen by all users. The fifth and last dimension handles the *immediacy of content*. This talks about the speed in which a news site is updated and the instant reporting about recent facts. (Paulussen, 2004a).

There is however a remark that must be added here. Giving users the possibility to react can sometimes imply negative effects. These reactions are often irrelevant, contain rude language or are inappropriate. Because of this, there is a vivid discussion about the possible benefits of users' reactions. Some websites have replaced the possibility to react to an external part of the site dividing the reactions from the article itself. Another option is to hire journalists who work on readers' reactions only. When they delete the inappropriate reactions and support the useful ones with background information, a constructive dialogue about the subject may appear. Thanks to this, *communities* of users with the same opinions can be established and this can generate commercial benefits (Picone, 2009).

Most of these interventions were made thanks to the Flemish Council for Journalism (FCJ). They demanded that the media took their responsibility by pre-monitoring, actively moderating or post-monitoring. Pre-monitoring means that incoming messages are tested on terms of admissibility for publication. When they do this by using active moderation, they reread the submitted reactions and publish selectively. For post-monitoring they create techniques to delete unacceptable reactions as soon as possible.

Besides this, the FCJ gave some recommendations to prevent inappropriate reactions. In their opinion, reactions can only be submitted by registered users, the website must clearly mention the terms of use and electronic philters must be present which refuse inadmissible terms, there must be a possibility for users to complain about bad reactions and the administrators of the websites should constantly moderate the submitted reactions (Raad voor Journalistiek, 2009).

Hypertextuality is, as stated above, the possibility to redirect readers to other information in an article about the subject such as relevant websites, pictures, video… This could be internally or externally. Internal links are links who redirect to articles at the same site as the one where you can find the original one. External links are links who redirect people to another website (Paulussen, 2004a). Thanks to these references, the journalist can also refer to his own sources. By publishing his references, a journalist may present himself as trustworthy because his readers know he represented the facts faithfully (Debruyne, 2009). *Hypertextuality* is often used at websites where news articles are being collected, such as Google News. In Belgium, Roularta (parent of weekly Knack) has founded a website where all the magazines are published online. Besides this, they cooperate with television company Kanaal Z, making the website a real newsroom with daily news en many external links to the sites of the other magazines (Koens, 2008).

Multimediality is the convergence of the different forms of media. This is in line with the convergence of media where the boundaries between old and new media are fading. On *news sites* you can find text, as well as audio and video fragments, where there is no borderline between them like there is between newspapers, ra-

dio and television. The difficulty to realize a high *multimediality* is due to two factors. On the one hand journalists must master the skills to be able to work with these different forms. On the other hand there is the technological challenge. For example: for a long time there were problems with the bandwidth of the internet. Because of this it was almost impossible to put video fragments on a website. But now this is no longer an issue though it is still difficult to use technology in an effective way (Paulussen, 2004a). The form of the media plays an ever more growing role in regard to the message. For example: when the Belgian Prime Minister Yves

Leterme emitted a video message through YouTube from out of the hospital after a gastrointestinal bleeding. Just because it was a video message it got a lot of attention, but if it had been an ordinary way of communicating, it would not have had so much coverage (Opgenhaffen, 2008).

Case study

So whether a news site uses the possibilities of the internet in a good way or not, depends on how they put these three important characteristics into practice. In 2001 a research was conducted in Flanders with 73 of the 130 online journalists back then. Table 4 shows us that traditional journalistic functions are still considered as valuable like proving new trends or giving an interpretation of facts. However, Flemish journalists are aware of the added value of the internet and new factors are appearing: 90% of them believe it is important to spread information as fast as possible, 80% thinks interaction with readers is important and 77% believes hypertext adds extra information (Paulussen, 2004a).

A research running from 2002 until 2007 gave likewise results. These scientists investigated the number of journalists that had not had training regarding internet research, evaluation of sources, information technology or skills in *multimediality*. Regardless the fact that 81% of these journalists did not have such training, there was an intensive use of the internet by journalists in 2002. In 2006 72% of them still had not had this training, while 94% of them thought internet skills as necessary. To solve this lack in training, there are different possibilities. On the one hand some want these skills to be included in CAO-discussions (organized labor relations, collective bargaining). On the other hand some advocate the induction of a circulation system which would add a journalist for a certain time span to an internet newsroom. This way they want to enhance the cooperation between traditional and online journalists and improve the internet skills. A third possibility would be to construct *media labs* where the leaders of newspapers together with external experts work on the expansion of knowledge between editors. Fast growing evolutions on the internet must be taken into account as well, an editor for multimedia only within a news concern could be a good initiative to reserve more time for internet policy (van Heeswijk, 2007).

Another research which looked into the news sites in Flanders in 2002 found out that in practice there are still many improvements possible. In total twenty websites were examined: six websites of newspapers, four which belonged to a radio or television medium, five belonged to magazines and five websites who only published online news. The result of this investigation was that only one newspaper offered the possibility for a personalized newsletter. This newsletter is an example

of *customization* of content that is being offered, but this rarely happened in 2002, while there was not enough interaction with users as well. One out of four news-rooms did not react on a simple question asked by e-mail and a chat room or fo-rum could often not be found. 'De Standaard Online' scored the best in this re-search, they were the only presenter of a personalized newsletter, worked in a good way with *hypertextuality* and had a well functioning archive with a clear search function. In the end this research shows that in 2002 technology was not yet implemented as it should have been (Paulussen, 2004a) .

Despite the fact that news sites hadn't developed fully in 2004, 'De Standaard Online' and 'De Tijd' respectively had 40.000 and more than 25.000 unique visitors every day (Paulussen, 2004b).

In 2009 there were some improvements but there are still some problems. The new phenomena like *social network sites* are often neglected by classic media. Because of this, uncertainty in the sector rises because classic media are under pressure, due to the rise of new media forms on the internet (Debruyne, 2009).

Debate on new media

Yet there are already media moguls who call to give *social networks* a prominent place in gathering information. In February 2010 one of the directors of the BBC did a call to his employees stating that they should have experience working with social media because they are indispensable to the work of the modern journalist, he wants to be embraced by the *social media journalists*, despite the skepticism that sometimes occurs in journalistic circles (The Guardian, 2010).

Besides the people who cling to the traditional media, there are more people who express their dissatisfaction about the traditional media and see salvation in the new media. Rue89, Bakchich and Mediapart are the pioneers of the *professional online journalism*. Each of these French websites comes from people who were dissatisfied with the traditional media because they were too commercial and too dependent on externals. They believe in the possibilities of the internet. Rue89 is completely free, though there was a need for government subsidies, Mediapart is completely payable and Bakchich was forced to make some parts payable. Arising from *weblogs* by journalists of Liberation, Rue89 is visited a half million times a month, but financing the project with journalism only is not enough. About 2000 different authors have been placing articles, partly because the founders want to give *citizen journalism* a chance. They consider building a community of journalists and readers necessary, which is reflected in the ability to respond to articles by readers and the journalists who follow up and pick off some of the articles to dis-cuss it further into detail (Cochez, 2010). In Flanders there is a new internet news-paper: Apache.be. This paper provides a broad perspective on journalistic issues and has 35.000 visitors per month and a huge group of friends on Facebook. It is the first truly independent news site in the Flemish media landscape (Timmerman, 2010).

This shift in mindset is also needed. The traditional media should realize that the new media can't be simply ignored. But online there is a need for initiatives like Apache.be and Rue89 because there is so much information available on the internet, while this information is often not reliable. A good example is Wikipedia: users can modify the articles themselves, a switch has happened from 'Comment

is free, facts are sacred' to 'Facts are free, comment is sacred'. It is necessary that the traditional media do more than what they used to do and provide more background information on the internet (Blanken, 2008). One of the ways traditional media can do this, according to the American news agency Associated Press, is by splitting the material into a *utility* and a *unique content*. In the first category, the regular news article is shared. In the second category, articles, sidebars, graphics and other items are offered to explain the articles of the first category. Then, the *utility content* of all sites, programs and members of AP are being spread, while the *unique content* on the AP-site remains until the internet traffic distributed via the world leads the *utility content* back to the parent site. So, AP could be a new kind of central directory and a major search engine and thus be a competitor to Wikipedia. This way AP is hoping to convert the power of the printed journal into a solid online position (van Stegeren, 2009).

In Belgium, columnist Geert Buelens wrote a scathing critique about the media in Flanders at the end of 2009. One of the questions he asked was whether the public broadcaster VRT is allowed to have such a firm developed news website. There are arguments for and against. Such a website is only profitable when in due course people will have to pay for content on the internet. Newspapers and commercial broadcasters, however, will not do this when the same content is offered free on the site of the public broadcaster. For example, some sites of newspapers including 'De Standaard Online' and 'De Tijd', are built around a mixed business model, they are partly free and partly paying (Paulussen, 2004b). The solution seems simple: make sure that you have to pay on the website of the

public broadcaster. However, this is not so easy because it goes against the public nature of broadcasting. Even advertising on the website to make it profitable is difficult in the case of a public broadcaster. Therefore, it will be necessary to deviate from the principle of public character, if it occurs simultaneously with a reform package where the commercial broadcasters are noted to their democratic duties. Anyway, something must change (Buelens, 2009).

Like all new technologies, opinions are divided on the issue. There are major opponents who cling on to the traditional media and there are strong supporters who resolutely choose the new technology and all the opportunities it offers. The picture is not as black and white as you would think, old and new media will co-exist, the mutual relationship will change, but neither of them will completely disappear.

Journalists uncovered - Roles of the online journalist

Because of the new technologies new things are expected from journalists. This is why there's a breakdown of the different roles journalists have to fulfill to work online. The first role of the journalist is the *online aggregator sub*. This journalist collects feeds. As stated previously, this can come from several sources, such as a news website, *a blog, a social networking website* … When he has collected the *feeds*, he filters out the unnecessary information (*filtering*) and publishes (*bookmark-blogging*), based on the remaining information, an article. The second role that was identified was the role of the *mobile journalist*. This kind of journalist is a journalist who is still on track and does reporting. He puts material online via his mobile phone or PDA. He can do this via Twitter, but he can also stream audio or

video or upload it to a website. The third role of the new journalist is the *data miner*. The *data miner* is well with word processors and databases. He can analyze statistics and knows how such things can be presented in a good way. The *multimedia producer* is the fourth role of the online journalist. This journalist has much technological knowledge. He is able to use different ways to bring news like audio, video, pictures, blogs. He gets most of his information from databases. Besides that, he can also appeal to the *mobile journalist* to get information on the spot.

The fifth role is that of the *networked specialist*. This one has not only knowledge of the subject, but is also familiar with the subject via networks of *blogs*, comments, *social networks*...

The sixth and final distinguished role is the *community editor*. This is a kind of coordinator of a community. Several individuals write, publish and work together. The *community editor* controls the community, starts discussions, keeps checking the content, helps users when there are problems... These six roles of online journalists are distinguished. Each of these journalists makes use of the internet in his own way and has several sources that he uses more than others (Bradshaw, 2008).

Who is the online journalist

The question now is how the online journalist looks like in this story. Figures show that online journalists are not always very young. The average age of journalists who work online with editors, is between 30 and 50 years old. The majority also has a permanent contract, despite the trend towards professionalism in journalism. When we look at the format of the online media, it appears that written information is still the bulk of the work journalists have to do. Then comes editing and then comes reporting. It appears that online journalists mainly work at the office. The journalists also report that they often ignore the demand for audio or video, they still prefer to write a text. This is probably because most owners of an online editorial simultaneously publish a paper medium.

This is so in 30% of the cases, followed by companies (19%), broadcasters (16%) and others (16%). The online journalists themselves indeed acknowledge that it is true journalism. Nearly 50% of the online journalists work at a site with a journalistic character, one third works with a site who has, besides a journalistic, also a commercial component, but the respondents indicate that these two components are kept separate. The most common problems with online editors are the small budgets, poor cooperation with the regular editor and technical problems. The latter could be because the online editors are separated from the ICT department. But despite the problems, more than 80% of the respondents are positive about the future. These figures come from the Netherlands, in Flanders, no such figures are known, but we can assume that the trend in Western Europe is similar (Nederlandse Vereniging van Journalisten, zj).

New qualification standards

Because of the new technologies and opportunities, qualification requirements have changed significantly for journalists. The role of the emergence of *CARR (computer-assisted research and reporting)* is hereby not to be underestimated. It

is nowadays inconceivable that contemporary journalists can't deal with media or *social networks* like Facebook and Twitter, or for example not know how to install an *RSS* reader. As described above, the current journalists can use extra training where they can learn to fully use the potential of the new media. But also the new generation of journalists, present-day journalism students need a good training. This also means that teachers have to be retrained in order to avoid not being familiar with the latest technologies, otherwise the value of studying journalism would greatly decrease. What is also very important and often emerges is that one must make use of *multimedia journalism*, and that is where today's training often greatly fails. Although knowledge of *FTP (File Transfer Protocol)* and *web building* is very important in today's journalism training, little attention is spent to it. Students should become familiar not only with video and audio recordings, but also how they can send included documents in difficult circumstances to the editors or place it online somewhere. Jeff Jarvis, author of "What would Google do" and lecturer at the University of New York, teaches his students all kinds of ways to publish: both print and audio, video, *weblogs* and Twitter. He also teaches them how to convert communities where they offer a discussion platform. Networking is nowadays much more necessary for journalists to create a good reputation (Rogmans, 2009).

Adapting courses to the contemporary developments is one thing, but the students themselves also have to be enthusiastic about it, and this not the case at the moment. At 100 students surveyed, only five of them dream of a job as online journalist, even though this is the future (Opgenhaffen, 2007).

Journalists & their point of view

Journalists are not exceptionally critical of the content of websites of organizations. They see information on the web in general as credible if it comes from the government, the media itself, international governmental organizations or the non-profit sector. For example in the UK, Press Association exercises no control over information they get from the internet. Although The Press Association has an impeccable status as message service, even the BBC accepts them as a single source without checking the information (Meens, 2008).

Journalists are neutral towards sites of politicians, trade associations, interest groups and companies. However a growing group considers information from the internet unreliable for direct use. 75% first checks the information before using it, also within the group of journalists there is a growing population who believes that the use of internet makes journalism superficial, that the care is decreasing and that internet is often used too easy as a source. Thus, the *social networking sites* are increasingly used as source and subject. News Up did an investigation into the number of articles on Twitter and Facebook in a number of newspapers. It showed that there is diversity among newspapers, but that an average of 24% of the published articles went about Twitter and/or Facebook, the articles were often of low news value (Van Nijverseel, 2009). This while Twitter is already a disappearing phenomenon, end 2009 there were 30.000 Belgians active on Twitter, beginning 2010 this number had already fell towards 21.000 (Deltour, 2010). Even blogs and other new technologies are often not reliable, successful search engines like Google and Yahoo do nothing more than collecting another person's work and re-

classifying it. Few blogs are based on *investigative journalism*, sometimes called *fact-based journalism* (Lewis, 2008).

But the *social networking sites* are not entirely negative: after the train wreck in Buizingen for example, the first images of the disaster came through Twitter to the public and from there to the websites of newspapers. Also with the earthquake in Haiti social networking websites were used, this time to raise funds for victims and to gather information about casualties via Facebook for example. CNN has also made good use of the internet with its *iReport* website, where people can share photos, videos and experiences. This explains why CNN had material for reporting so quickly (Pieter, 2010).

In short, it appears that the collection of information has become faster and wider, allowing journalists to work better and faster but of course there are also a few disadvantages. In particular the origin and reliability of the information online is often difficult to ascertain. Such boundless wealth of information also creates a pressure to constantly monitor whether information is useful and how that could be monitored, while it has become increasingly important to publish news without doubt, otherwise the competitors could be first with a new story. Checking facts is in this way jeopardized. Logically the danger of the internet is therefore that the reliability of the news can be compromised. The treasure of information that ends quickly and easily on the desk of journalists would also be to the detriment of the need to go on research and to report about events. According to many, it is important to make sure that these technologies do not have the effect that journalists produce uniform news (van Heeswijk, 2007).

1.4 Blogs and their consequences

One of the channels where journalists get there information from are *blogs*. A *blog* is a piece that someone writes on a website about a certain subject. Anyone may subscribe through a *RSS-feed*, a concept which had already been explained whereby the *blog* appears on a page of the user so he can easily read it. *Blogs* are a way for new players to show themselves in the journalistic sphere, it may be by individuals or organizations. There are examples of football clubs who have their own media channels to reach supporters, and also companies do this. There are also individuals who do this. Belgian Prime Minister Yves Leterme himself disseminates information via YouTube. Publishing is watched as a way to achieve commercial or public goals (Spek, 2008). *Blogs* can be very important for journalists as sources of information. They are a huge source of new ideas, arguments, new stories or new pieces of an old topic, though we have to be careful with it. Besides facts, *blogs* are often used to ventilate personal opinions and rumors. The reliability and credibility can be questioned strongly, as already mentioned above. Except for journalists, *blogs* also may have a significant value for organizations. We already mentioned companies that distribute information, but also media companies can benefit from it. *Blogs* can be useful to news organizations to involve the public into debates. Additionally, *blogs* are the ideal way to reach new readers. Particularly for newspapers, blogs can be very effective. Besides reaching new readers, the speed of *blogs* is also an asset. What can be blogged today appears only in the morning newspaper by the time consuming assets of newspapers. *Blogs* are also cheaper, they can refer to websites of media organizations where

they collect their information, with the result that the website of that organization will attract more visitors.

This is because via *blogs*, real communities can be built around people with similar interests, profession. They have a new way of dialogue. The influence of *blogs*, according to some scientists, even goes so far that they say that *blogs* are the first innovation of the internet that will cause effective electoral differences because *blogs* can encourage people to act. The opinions on this are divided, on the other side of the spectrum you find scientists and editors who think that *blogs* are not worth taking into account because they have a lack of credibility.

Journalists can also write *blogs* themselves. *Blogging journalists* have some advantages. They have a lot more freedom. Journalists of newspapers are not being restricted to certain words or rules, they can write pieces as long as they like. They have more freedom in terms of style: it can be slightly less developed. One of the main benefits of blogging for journalists is to build a reputation. Who *blogs* justified, writing accurate information, will most likely build a good reputation and attract more readers (Baltatzis, 2006).

In terms of *blogs* Flanders doesn't score well. Gentblogt, an internet newspaper on regional news from Ghent, was named the best Flemish blog of the year. We can clearly see that the blog landscape in Flanders is very limited. Examples like the United Kingdom where *blogs* took the first images of the attacks of July 7,2005 in London, the U.S. where *blogs* spread the first images of hurricane Katrina or even the Middle East and Africa where bloggers give a more nuanced picture of the living conditions than CNN are at this point of view hardly conceivable in Flanders. Furthermore, we can say that *blogs* in Flanders have a more personal nature (Hoefkens, 2007).

Everyone journalist?

Thanks to the press in Belgium, and more generally in the Western world, and the new media and blogs, it is possible to anyone to call himself a journalist. In its pure form, journalism means 'news coverage of things that happen, if necessary with a dash of opinion and interpretation'. The Council of State and the Constitutional Court have also been repeating this statement (Deltour, 2010).

In principle, every blogger or twitterer therefore is free to call himself a journalist. The question then is whether everyone can enjoy the same privileges as for example a public broadcasting journalist. Basically, any journalist can rely on the confidentiality of his sources and each journalist can also count on a press seat in parliament. Fortunately there is a law in Belgium, dated 1963, that distinguishes journalists from others. This gives journalists an official status and work facilities such as a press card to those who work for general news media in a professional manner. In Belgium, this amounts to about 4,500 accredited journalists. The granting of this status is done through an approval committee. Despite his age, the law also gives online journalists this status if they meet the conditions. A lot of bloggers are already excluded by the first restriction. The remaining bloggers who qualify for the status are excluded by the second criterion that is stated. The second criterion says that journalism should be their main occupation. Because of that second criterion internet journalists are often only *professional journalists* when they work for multimedia houses. In Belgium there is a distinction between *profes-*

sional journalists and *journalists of profession*. *Professional journalists* work for general news media, a *journalist of profession* works for specialized media. They both have a separate status and now there is the idea to converge to a mutual status (Deltour, 2010).

Yet, journalists sometimes feel threatened by the rise of *blogs*. The increasing popularity of *blogs* makes "participatory journalism" a more realistic concept. It is a finding that individuals are playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analyzing, and the dissemination of news and media. "The Cult of the Amateur", a work of Andrew Keen, is a devastating critique of Wikipedia and bloggers. They are described as monkeys and the book calls internet fascistic. This is also the reason why the traditional media pays so much attention to this threat. They want to undermine the internet as a poor and unreliable medium to promote themselves and win back customers (Ameloot, 2008).

Where the *professional journalists* have the most difficulty with are the different values between traditional journalism and the *blogs*. Traditional journalism attaches great importance to the smooth production, profitability and strict editorial requirements. Key values for bloggers are informal conversations, egalitarianism, subjective opinions and colorful writing style. The contrast is obvious when we formulate it as follows: traditional journalism may be summarized as "filter, then publish" while *blogs* work under the motto "publish, then filter". *Professional journalists* call bloggers often amateurs and find them the name journalist not worthy. Bloggers, for their part, find *professional journalists* a gang of elitists who only want to work in their private circle. Yet this is really a sham opposition. *Blogs* are not a real threat to the traditional way of journalism. They should be seen as a complement to traditional journalism. First, *blogs* also make small things interesting to display. TV companies and other major news media want as many viewers, listeners or readers. Small events do not make the news because of small target audience. *Blogs* can make sure that there's still a full report and that it can be read by those who are interested. *Blogs* will not make the traditional media disappear, they complement traditional journalism and these forms can coexist (Lasica, 2003).

Online copyright

A very common critic of the internet is the lack of protection of material on which it appears. There is very little control on the reuse of information on the internet, as it often happens that news websites use articles from each other without watching if there is a good reference of the origin. There is also discussion about which rules to apply and which not. In the Netherlands there was a discussion going on in 2008 concerning this issue. Some find it useful to tighten the rules on *copyright* and that greater protection should be provided around the copying of online reporting. Others find it not feasible because bloggers are not always aware of the regulations and information dissemination should be free. In response, the Dutch Association of journalists opened a *plagiarism service* where journalists can detect *copyright violations*. A few months after the establishment of this service there was already an extensive use of this service (Nederlandse Vereniging van Journalisten, 2008).

In Belgium there was also a big case around copyright violations: the Central Station case. Central Station was an electronic clipping service founded by newspaper publishers who offered articles on the net, and for these articles you had to pay. They did not have permission of the journalists, they were not compensated for this and their name was not mentioned. They took this case to court and won because converting (?) an article from an analog form to a digital one is reproduction, and thus falls under copyright. After this case, the initiative was still implemented, although with some adjustments: the authors and paternal rights were respected and the service was split into a Flemish and a Walloon part. Mediargus, the Flemish digital press database, collects articles from all Flemish newspapers, 6 Dutch ones, magazines of the press group Roularta and the coverage of the press agency Belga (Paulussen, 2004b).

The problem is sometimes presented bigger than it really is. Research has shown that the same rules are applied to the internet in privacy rights, copyrights and commerce rights as in traditional media. Often the online counterparts are even stricter in the application of the rules because they want to lose the stigma that there are no laws on the internet. Because of all the negative coverage of the internet and its dangers, there is the wish among the internet journalists to do everything by the book. Demands for collective agreements, privacy statements, drafting statutes and behavior codes are growing. Despite the desire to get rid of the stigma, there are always individuals who care nothing for the rules that are applicable in traditional media. Cutting and pasting when a competitor comes with a novelty is a trend which is very often used, about 50% does not use a source when there is a new item and it is often combined with rewriting a paragraph, an addition of a news agency or some extra links. A convenient circumvention of the law on *plagiarism*. Another thing is said about illustrations. A majority of the respondents uses them well, including consent and acknowledgment, but there are quite a few moral intermediate forms. Everyone is aware of the existence of copyright, but still there is a minority that regularly uses images from the internet without permission, even if there is *copyright* on it (van Heeswijk, 2007).

Conclusion

To conclude we can say that if we compare traditional media to new media, internet has become more popular than newspapers but television remains the primary source of information for citizens. Although the internet rose in importance to citizens, it remains a secondary source of information for journalists. This point of view regarding the internet is being criticized by some experts who say that the internet should be used as the primary source. The internet makes news gathering less complicated but at the same time the credibility and the reliability of the information journalists collect is under pressure. This is due to the fact that journalists often do not check their sources. However there is a growing consciousness of ethics among journalists to get rid of this stigma. This is the reason why rules of conduct are applied more strictly by online journalist compared to traditional journalists. One of the negative consequences of the use of the internet as a source of information for journalists is that copyrights are not always respected. It is a habit among online users to copy content without referring to their original source. In

Belgium, as well as in The Netherlands, there have been examples of law cases about abuse of online copyrights. Due to the recent evolutions on the internet, the current generation, as well as the future generations of journalists, faces many new challenges before being able to fully master the abilities of the internet. Despite the difficulties with the implementation of the new technologies, it is very important to encourage students to aspire a career in online journalism.

1.5 Politicians and their blogs: a case-study

The phenomenon of blogging by politicians is still an unexplored area in scientific research in Belgium. Mr. Bruno Peeters, an avid blogger himself, took a specific interest in blogs and social networks in Belgium. He posted all his findings on his blog, where we could find a lot of useful information for this chapter (Peeters, 2005-2010). We are all aware of the impact of internet on our lives. Social network sites, blogs, penetrate our lives more and more every day. Politicians know this, and are finding their way to the internet and the new possibilities and technologies it has to offer. For Obama this was a great success, politicians over the whole world are following his example. In this chapter we will take a look at the Belgian situation. How are politicians adapting to the new possibilities the internet brings, are they following Obama's course?

Politicians and their blogs, the federal elections 10 June 2007

A person's blog quotient shows the number of times someone is mentioned in blog posts. It is a referral to the popularity of a person in the blogging atmosphere.

The blog quotient (BQ) that is used here is obtained by making the sum of the number of times a referral is made to a person in search results from 4 different search engines, specialized in blogs (searching on the person's name): Google blog search, Technorati, Icerocket blogsearch and Sphere.

A much used way to measure a politician's popularity is the number of personal votes obtained in an election. During a legislature, polls are often used to estimate a politician's popularity, and blog quotients can be used as an additional tool for this.

Blog quotient: figures in the months before the federal elections of 2007

a) Top 5 of the most popular mandated politicians in general

The top 5 in Belgium: Laurette Onckelinx at fifth place, than Filip dewinter, Richard Miller, Yves Leterme and Guy Verhofstadt at first place. Hereby some facts have to be taken into account. Some politicians were mentioned in blogs for extra-governmental activities, and some politicians have a very common name. Also nine members of the Flemish parliament were not found by the search engines at the moment the research was conducted (BQ=0).

b) Flemish political parties: Average blog quotient by type of mandate

Members of the different governments obtained a higher average blog quotient than members of the different parliaments. The members of the Government and the Parliament of the Brussels-Capital Region were much less popular than their colleagues at the Federal and Flemish level. Also the 14 Flemish members of the European Parliament obtained higher scores in average than all other Flemish

members of the other parliamentary assemblies in Belgium at that time. However, the high score of the members of the European Parliament were partially due to the high scores of two very popular Flemish politicians, Frank Vanhecke (BQ=733) and Jean-Luc Dehaene (BQ=583). Beside these two politicians, the European Parliament and their Flemish representatives were seldom mentioned in political coverage, an indicator of their lower popularity in the blogging atmosphere.

c) Average blog quotient by political party

CD&V, the Christian democracy party in Flanders, is doing relatively poorly, at the the second last place Members of the 'Vlaams Belang' party (situated extreme right on the political left-right scale) were regularly mentioned in political news, due to their sometimes radical statements (although being mentioned in blogs does not necessarily imply approval with those statements).

d) Average blog quotient by Flemish party presidents in 2007

In the full report you can also find the average blog quotient of Flemish party presidents during the elections of 2007.

The regional elections of June 7th 2009

The official results of the regional elections of June 7th, 2009 can be found at the governmental website. We can see clearly that CD&V was the big winner of the elections. There you can also find the preference votes for the different candidates. For the next part, the graphs were left out of the summary. In the full report, available at the IP-website, you will find the fully integrated version.

Obarometer

On May 12$_{th}$ 2009, the Belgian newspaper "De Standaard" and NOCUS launched the "Obarometer". This website measures all online communication (blog posts, twitter messages and the amount of Facebook friends) of Flemish politicians on social-media platforms. It measures the "political climate" before, during and after the elections (Standaard, 2009).

The Obarometer website was launched to push politicians to become active on Twitter. On May 12$_{th}$ 2009, 23 Flemish politicians had a twitter-account, today there are more than 60. The study indicates that the evolution of the amount of politicians active on Twitter. While the eldest twitter-accounts dates from April 2007, on January 1$_{st}$ 2009 , ten politicians were active on Twitter.On May 11$_{th}$ 2009, one day before the launching of the Obarometer, already 67 Flemish politicians were active on Twitter.

The sudden increase of twitter-accounts can be noticeable for most of the political parties. Within CD&V and Groen! the number of twittering politicians had doubled. Only LDD remained constant with two twittering politicians. From our analysis we can see that CD&V, OpenVLD and sp.a are clearly the leading parties in twittering politicians. While LDD and Vlaams Belang are severely underrepresented on twitter. As far as the volume of tweets, posted by the Flemish politicians, are concerned the study shows a significant increase since January 1st 2009. It is remarkable that LDD, with only two politicians active on Twitter, is responsible for 14% of

the tweets posted by Flemish politicians. CD&V, produces only 9% of the tweets with 22% of the accounts, which is relatively "low".

Some twitter-accounts are especially activated in purpose of the elections, others were already active before the elections. Also, the tweets on politicians' twitter-accounts are very diverse. Some only talk about their election campaign, while others talk about normal, personal, daily-life events and reservations.

Twitter patterns of the Flemish political parties

CD&V: The first tweet posted in the twitter-account of CD&V was posted less than a month before the local and European elections of June 7th 2009. The average amount of tweets posted a day is two.

Groen!: The twitter-account of Groen! is the eldest of all Flemish political parties. The first message dates from December 8th 2009. The amount of tweets posted a day increased towards the elections of June 7th 2009, in the meantime, the frequency of tweets posted has decreased significantly.

N-VA: The twitter-account of N-VA was activated on 16 march 2009, a while before the elections of June 7th 2009. The frequency of tweets posted a day is low, only one every three days .

OpenVLD: started twittering on 26 February 2009, with an average frequency of one tweet posted a day.

SLP: The first week this party became active on Twitter, six tweets a day were posted. After ten days, no tweets were posted anymore. This party had a very bad election result.

sp.a: The Twitter-account of the sp.a is the most active of all, with an average of three and a half tweets a day.

Conclusion: after the elections

Politicians have found their way to the internet. Several candidates were already blogging before the election campaign, and continued doing so during the elections. However, a lot of the other candidates started blogging in purpose of the coming elections at that time. Some candidates distributed campaign movies on YouTube, started their own personal websites or even bought ads on internet to gain reputation (due to that they sometimes appeared on blogs of other political candidates).

Bloggers have spent more attention to the elections of 2007 and 2009 than they did during the previous election period. But once the elections passed, the interests in politicians and political parties on blogs decreased significantly.

In Belgium, during election times, there are free online tests available to determine which political party best suits your opinion. Examples are doedestemtest.be, or Kieskompas. Especially these websites get a lot of attention on blogs during the election campaign.

There was never any real debate between bloggers. Remarkable was that the websites or blogs of politicians were never really in the middle of the attention. So, even though their presence, they were never the subject of discussion.

The impact of blogs on the federal elections in Belgium of 2007 was modest at that time (also in comparison to other countries such as France and the United States of America). The biggest problem of blogs as a campaign tool is that the citizens have to search for the information they need themselves. This is in contrast with the traditional media, such as newspapers or billboards, where the electorate is confronted with political information, whether they want it or not.

1.6 Conclusions

In the first chapter we have discussed the digital divide as it occurs in Flanders, with special attention for the academic discussions about definitions and concepts. This walkthrough has shown that in spite of the hopeful expectations of the "new" ICTs in the early nineties, social inequalities are still alive and kicking. The rise of the internet has not been able to include all groups of society in public life.

In the second chapter we have concluded that politicians and researchers have been very enthusiastic about the introduction of new media as an aid in the democratic process. They believe it could tackle some problems democracy was confronted with. But research has also indicated that it could create additional difficulties. The real impact of these new forms of participation on the democratic process will probably only be clear within a few years.

In chapter 3 traditional media were compared to new media. The latter play a continuingly growing role to citizens and journalists, although internet still is a secondary source to the journalists. Even though the internet is the fastest information-gathering engine. This is probably due to a stigma of unreliability, which is why there is a need of ethics for online journalists. One of these ethics' main themes is about respecting copyrights. Due to the internet, which is always evolving, current and future generations will have to face many challenges to be able to master the tricks of it, which makes the training of journalists, to move alongside the internet, absolutely necessary.

In the last chapter we have discussed the results of a case-study. We have seen that politicians have found their way to the internet. Several candidates were already blogging before the election campaign, and continued doing so during the elections. However, a lot of the other candidates just started blogging in consideration of the upcoming elections.

It is remarkable that there was never any real debate between bloggers and that the websites or blogs of politicians were never really in the middle of attention. In spite of their presence, they were never really the subject of discussion. The impact of blogs on the elections was modest at the time, also in comparison to other countries such as France and the USA. The biggest problem of blogs as a campaign tool is that the citizens have to search for the information they need themselves. Unlike traditional media, such as newspapers or billboards, where the electorate is confronted with political information whether they want it or not.

Although the full potential of these new forms of media is not fully exploited today, we presume that the impact of blogs and other forms of social media will increase significantly in the future.

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2 Political opinion making and web 2.0 in Germany

2.1 The digital divide

Introduction

Using web 2.0 requires being online which means having access to the internet. However, we are often oblivious to the fact that not everybody is online yet. This phenomenon is called digital divide or digital gap. The reasons for the rising of this digital gap and the factors affecting it will be illustrated in the following paragraphs – as well as the current situation in Germany and its prospective development.

The concept of the „digital gap" or „digital divide" arose in the mid nineties. It describes that different groups of society have an unequal access to ICT by a national, regional and international comparison. [2]

An international comparison

The digital divide occurs on many different levels. This is especially apparent by comparing developed and developing countries. The last have only restricted access to the internet. Africa is an example which makes that very clear. South of the Sahara only about 5% have a fixed or a mobile telephone connection. The average usage of the internet in all of Africa amounts to 8%. Something similar is true for South East Asia[3]. By the end of 2006 about 1.2 billion people worldwide were online. The United Nations have set themselves the goal of providing 3 billion people with online access by 2015.

In 2008[4] Eurostat examined the use of the internet of Europeans at the age of 16 to 74 during the last three months. By their results shown in a graph we can draw the following picture. In the north of Europe the internet is used very frequently and figures decrease the closer the countries are to the equator. Here are some figures: Iceland 90% (figure of 2007, first place), Sweden 88% (third place); Germany 75% (place no. 9), Italy 42% (place no. 22), Greece 38% (place no. 24), Romania 29% (place no. 27). The 27 European member states used the internet at an average of 62%, compared to 82% in the United States. The US figures, however, comprised only the group of people above the age of 18.

Factors affecting the digital divide

The phenomenon of the digital divide is affected by different factors. The greatest differences are those by the age of the internet users, their level of education and net income per household. But also ethnic origin, gender and place of residence affect the access to the internet. The type of access (e. g. via broad band connections), the drifting apart of town and country areas as well as the still existing east-west-divide in Germany may influence and even reinforce the digital gap. These factors may in general also be applied to other countries. In the United States for

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2   Vgl. http://reset.to/wissen/digitale-kluft-0

3   Vgl. http://www.geteilt.de/forum/viewtopic.php?f=25&t=6903

4   Vgl. (N)Onliner-Atlas 2009. S. 67.

example, the group of blacks and Hispanics are also underrepresented on the internet.[5]

Statistics of the year 2009 document that students have the highest online share of 96%[6]. But the percentage of people with a simple formal education (secondary schools without university entrance qualification) has also risen by 5.3% compared to the year before, and thus breaks the 50% mark for the first time. The higher the user's level of education, the more probable it is that this person also has access to the internet.

For long the access to the internet has been a question of money. But there is still a connection between the net income per household and the usage of new media. In 2009 the group of incomes up to 1,000 EUR increased by 6.1%, the group of incomes between 1,000 and 2,000 EUR increased by 4.5%. This shows an over-average increase, but they had also been the groups that had to catch up the most. The average monthly net income per online household amounts to 2,306 EUR – the average monthly net income per offline household without having the intention of using the internet amounts to 1,546 EUR.[7]

The closer look at these factors shows that the use of the internet decreases with age. The difference between the group of people aged 14 to 20 and the group of people above the age of 70 is 76.6 %(!). More than two thirds of the group of people up to the age of 59 are online. In the group above 70 only every fifth person is online. This is resulting in the average age of 64.3 years of a person being offline and of 40.6 years of a person being online. Compared to that the average age of the German population is 47.3 years.[8]

The „initiative D21" is working on the topography of the digital gap in Germany. It is a network of politicians and representatives of the economy targeting at advancing the information society, due to the fact that a restricted or even lacking access to the internet not only land individuals, but also whole national economies in difficulties. Furthermore, this initiative wants to impart digital literacy to all levels of education, as only by the literate use of the new media, they can be used in an optimal and successful way. Imparting this methodological competence is the primary goal, since it is more and more a condition for equal chances in job and life.

In 2001 the first „(N)Onliner-Atlas"[9] was published and gave a review of the digital topography in Germany. The examined population was the German speaking residents of 14 years and older with a fixed telephone connection (in 2009: 30,702 interviews via phone). By the end of 2010 the German Federal Government wants to realize a comprehensive and efficient broad band connection.

In the course of this survey the respondents were separated into three groups: the active users of the internet – independent of the place and reason of the use; the

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5   Vgl. http://www.geteilt.de/forum/viewtopic.php?f=25&t=6903

6   Vgl. (N)Onliner-Atlas 2009. S. 16.

7   Vgl. (N)Onliner-Atlas 2009. S. 17.

8   Vgl. (N)Onliner-Atlas 2009. S. 14.

9   Vgl. (N)Onliner-Atlas 2009. S. 5-9.

people who plan to use the internet and the non-users who do not plan to use it in the future.

The current situation in Germany

In the year 2009, 69.1% of the German residents were online – this figure is equivalent to 46.3 million persons[10]. Compared to the previous year this means an increase of 4 percentage points. The largest group of internet users is the group of people between the age of 14 and 20, amounting to 96%. The biggest growth however had the group of people between 50 and 59. Not half of the people between 60 and 69 are online. Thus every third person does not make use of the internet.

In 2010 further 4% are planning to get started with the internet.[11]. The federal government and various initiatives – amongst others D21 – want to facilitate the individual benefits of the internet to everybody. For making the internet more attractive for everybody, a sufficiently fast internet connection and continual updates of operating systems and software are required.

Conclusion

By overcoming the digital divide the hindrances of development can be overcome cost-effectively. It is possible to have people participate in political and economical processes – independent of spatial barriers. The digital gap has not yet been closed, neither will this happen automatically. Purposeful commitment is mandatory for creating online access for the German population – especially for certain regions and groups of people.

2.2 Political education on the internet and media literacy of the users

Political education describes the manifold, mainly state-financed efforts to direct the citizens' interests and capabilities towards political contexts, to expand their political knowledge and insights, to strengthen their power of judgment and to advance their political commitment.[12]

In Germany, as in other countries, an independent technical discussion of political education started in the second part of the 19th century. This was due to the development of the modern nation states, raising the issue of an adequate preparation of the (young) people for their new part of being citizens and thus replacing their part of being royal subjects.[13]

It is controversial and subject to change which functions political education has in detail. The following chart illustrates the task field of political education:[14]
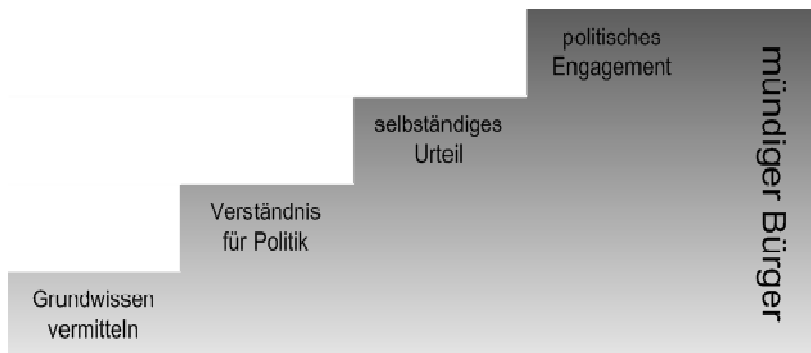
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[10] Vgl. (N)Onliner-Atlas 2009. S. 10 ff.

[11] Vgl. (N)Onliner-Atlas 2009. S. 7.

[12] http://www.bpb.de/popup/popup_lemmata.html?guid=I4WKEQ

[13] http://www.bpb.de/popup/popup_druckversion.html?guid=U5F770

[14] Quelle: http://www.online-dissertation.de/politische_bildung/aufgaben_ziele.htm

Level 1: Imparting the political basics. Among those are the handling of basic concepts like democracy, separation of powers, elections, political parties, peace, power etc., as well as the forming and strengthening of a consciousness of liberal democratic values.

Level 2: Understanding the basic structure of politics as the solution of topical problems by bringing about binding decisions in controversial social questions

Level 3: Communicating knowledge in important topical areas of politics of future importance (e. g. the threats of democracy, the relation between economy and ecology, the future of a purchasing society, globalization, the European unification), based upon which a judgment can be formed.

Level 4: Political involvement (active cooperation in political parties and action groups) as far as the person is interested in.

The goal of political education in democratic societies is to communicate systematical knowledge about the democratic system and to strengthen competences for democratic actions in order to make the citizens mature. In other words: learning democracy.[15]

Institutions of political education

The governments and law-givers have accounted for the requirement of democratic political education, e. g. by establishing the "Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung" and "Landeszentralen für Politische Bildung". Furthermore all political parties represented in Parliament have established political foundations with the main task of political education.[16]

In addition there are the general educational schools as well as vocational schools and universities. The schools deal with the subjects of political education in detail, according to the guidelines, especially in the lessons of history, ethics, social studies and religious education. They offer an abundance of stimuli and starting points for the education in tolerant thinking and acting, openness, intercultural education and peace education at school.[17]

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[15] http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politische_Bildung

[16] http://www.bpb.de/popup/popup_lemmata.html?guid=I4WKEQ

[17] www.mk-intern.bildung-lsa.de/Bildung/na-schule_politischebildung.pdf

The teachers have to implement the respective subjects by action-oriented forms of teaching and education and they have to find links to the students' world of experience. The guidelines provide goals and space for developing a solid and application-oriented knowledge and ability respecting political questions in the different teaching lessons.

At school, social studies is a central lesson of political education with the purpose of joining what other lessons have to contribute to the subject of political education, since interdisciplinary cooperation has a foundational significance for political education. The subject social studies introduces the technical aspects of social and political sciences into the context. Its purpose is to encourage the students to deal with politics independently. The teachers have to take into account that they do not anticipate the political opinions, judgments and convictions the students may come to, as far as they do not violate other people's dignity.[18]

The subjects economy and law are especially qualified for dealing with and developing subjects of political education in their subject specific view.

Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung

Another institution is the „Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung" (based in Bonn and Berlin). It was founded in 1952 and helps all interested citizens with dealing with politics. Its purpose is to advance the understanding of political issues, to firmly establish the democratic consciousness and to strengthen the readiness for political involvement.[19] They offer a broad variety of events, publications, audiovisual media and online services.[20] One of the main subjects of the Bundeszentrale is the media and its importance within the knowledge and information society. In cooperation with the nationwide network of Landeszentralen, educational institutions and providers the Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung und Kultur is very committed – in an independent and non-party way.[21]

Landeszentralen für politische Bildung

The „Landeszentralen für politische Bildung" of the German federal states have mainly the same function in the respective federal states as the Bundeszentrale. The historical development and organizational forms and links of the Landeszentralen vary according to the federal state. The assignment of Bundeszentrale and Landeszentralen für politische Bildung was stated May, 26th 1997 in the Münchner Manifest:[22]

The tasks of the Landeszentralen are mainly:
- to strengthen the citizens' democratic and political awareness and
- to advance their active participation in political life.

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[18] http://www.mk-intern.bildung-lsa.de/Bildung/na-schule_politischebildung.pdf

[19] http://www.bpb.de/die_bpb/

[20] http://www.bpb.de/die_bpb/XXOFDN,0,Die_Bundeszentrale_f%FCr_politische_Bildung.html

[21] http://bildungsklick.de/s/bpb-politische-bildung/bilder

[22] http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Landeszentrale_f%C3%BCr_politische_Bildung

This happens by
- providing publications of politically relevant subjects,
- realizing events and
- advancing events of recognized educational providers.[23]

All of the above points – in the publications as well as the events – have to be granted by a high degree of nonpartisanship and impartiality. [24]

For the purpose of political education the Bundeszentrale and the Landesentralen für politische Bildung have established a common platform: www.politische-bildung.de. On this platform internet services are summarized and made available to a broad audience.

Party-affiliated foundations

Further important institutions of political education are party-affiliated foundations. They are foundations associated with political parties in Germany with the purpose of political education. However, due to legal purposes, they are strictly separated from the political parties they are associated with.[25]

Each of the parties represented in the German Bundestag cooperates with a foundation that represents their principles. Since the party represents the party's principles this of course also means that each of these foundations promotes the political principles and viewpoints of their party more or less directly.[26]

Each of the big catch-all parties possesses such a foundation on the national level as well as most often also on the federal state's level.[27] The task of these foundations is the political education of the population.[28] The following stated foundations are the most important. The academic support is what they all have in common:

 Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (CDU-associated)

Their aim is the advancement of leaders and academically gifted people who take over responsibility in politics and other. [29]

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[23] http://www.bpb.de/partner/7KK0V7,0,0,Landeszentralen_f%FCr_politische_Bildung.html (Zusammenfassung)

[24] de.wikipedia.org/.../Landeszentrale_für_politische_Bildung

[25] http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parteinahe_Stiftung

[26] http://www.mein-parteibuch.com/wiki/Parteinahe_Stiftung

[27] www.uni-protokolle.de/Lexikon/Parteinahe_Stiftung.html

[28] http://www.lexikonia.de/75744_parteinahe_stiftung.htm

[29] http://www.kas.de/wf/de/42.8/

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (SPD-associated)

Being the oldest political foundation in Germany, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung takes a stand for the core values of freedom, justice and solidarity by being engaged in educational programs, scholarships for outstanding students, research and international cooperation. The foundation especially supports gifted and committed junior employees from families with a low income as well as applicants with a migratory background.[30]

Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung (FDP-associated)

With political education and dialogues, scholarships for outstanding students, research and political advice the foundation contributes to the shaping of the future. Scholarships are given to gifted junior scientists who are politically and socially liberally committed.[31]

Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung (associated with Bündnis 90/Die Grünen)

The Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung supports students and graduates of all branches of studies and nationalities at universities and academies. The foundation expects excellent performance, commitment and an active dealing with the foundation's core values: ecology, non-violence, solidarity and democracy.[32]

Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung (associated with Linkspartei):

This foundation supports graduating students standing out due to their excellent professional performance as well as their distinct social involvement.[33]

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[30] http://www.stipendiumplus.de/de/99.php

[31] http://www.freiheit.org/webcom/show_uebersicht.php/_c-175/_lkm-9/i.html

[32] http://www.boell.de/stipendien/stipendien.html

[33] http://www.rosalux.de/stipendien

Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung (CSU-associated)

This foundation supports graduating students with a distinct social engagement and outstanding performance.[34]

Hans-Böckler-Stiftung (associated with Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund)

They assist doctoral students of all disciplines. The conditions are outstanding scientific skills and involvement in trade unions or social politics.[35]

Besides the above stated special tasks of the mentioned foundations their primary job is to advance the political education of the citizens and especially of young people. For this reason they especially hold seminars and release publications.

Political parties

Political parties also contribute to political education. A political party is an intermediary system, a so-called connecting link between the state and the politically interested people.[36]

The political party transfers political contents and decisions between the social and political level. The intermediary structures also contain organizations as well as the media.[37] According to article 21 of the German Grundgesetz the political parties participate in the forming of the political will:[38]

- by stimulating and engrossing political education and influencing the forming of public opinions
- The political parties encourage the citizens to participate actively in political life and create citizens capable of taking over public responsibility.
- Furthermore, political parties participate in elections on a national level as well as in the federal states and communities by nominating candidates.
- They influence the political development in parliament and government.
- They introduce the worked out political goals into the process of decision-making by the state and they see to an ongoing active relationship between the people and the government bodies.

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[34] http://www.hss.de/index.php?id=2570

[35] http://www.boeckler.de/458_85096.html

[36] http://www.dadalos.org/deutsch/Demokratie/demokratie/Grundkurs4/grundkurs_4.htm

[37] http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intermedi%C3%A4res_System

[38] Grundgesetz, Art. 21

The coverage of political education on the internet

"Today politics on the internet take place in many different forms. Ministries, state governments, counties and cities have discovered the colorful websites as a forum. The offered data range from true information to multicolored illustrations of the individual ministries. For a short time the big political parties have become involved on the internet and partly on T-Online, too. They provide topical global analysis as well as alternative proposals of urban planning for the local political discussion.

On the internet national party executives and local party structures are represented likewise and they offer not only information but also the opportunity of discussing in so-called newsgroups or even online chats. For almost one year the SPD has offered the possibility of becoming a member of the so-called "virtual" local association and only having "virtual" online meetings.

The political parties' foundations have for some time been offering political education online. By announcing seminars, offering literature research in the respecting libraries and their own full text publications they try to inform on other important political and social offers on the internet and provide the respective links.

But not only state-run institutions and political parties have discovered the internet. Social organizations like Greenpeace, Amnesty International, trade unions and numerous local organizations are already represented, as well as transnational organizations like the European Union and the United Nations rely on informing citizens via the internet.

Besides these offers focused on information and research on the internet, newsgroups or diverse mailing networks have been used for the political discussion and communication.

Even without the requirement of the efforts of political education or of the political parties, political information and opinion making have been taking place for quite some time. Many people involved on the internet do not show up at traditional events of political parties, foundations or the Landeszentralen für politische Bildung. Many technically interested and fascinated people have entered a political discussion for the first time.

From a viewpoint of traditional involvement this is rather non-binding, but concerning the political contents of the debate it is more committed."[39]

Deficits of political education on the internet

„The internet is not capable of taking over every kind of communication alike. The conversation orientated towards communication among attendants which is one of the central media of political decision making on one hand as well as political education on the other hand, cannot be reproduced fully due to the inevitable indirectness and writtenness.

There is a whole spectrum of groups of young people who develop and actively convey their own ideology and attitude towards life. However, the internet cannot

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[39] http://www.sowi-online.de/methoden/dokumente/internet_templ.htm

link to the whole spectrum of these youth cultures and their adopted forms of communication and aesthetic styles.

Besides, to a high degree the internet is operating milieu-selective and milieu-favoring. This leads to an internet-induced class separation in which two groups face each other. Namely those, who master all media including the internet competently and thus come into contact with political education on the internet, and those who, added to all other deficits, do not yet have access to the internet and therefore cannot be reached by political education on the internet."[40]

Media literacy of the internet users

It is important to ask the question if the internet users are able to handle the information they obtain on the internet. In this context media literacy is understood as various abilities of effectively using the media and their contents respecting the personal goals and needs (e. g. recognizing and using all kinds of media, creativity and orientation in the media world etc.) This most common definition was made by educationalist D. Baacke.[41]

In many cases people are overwhelmed by the information flood of the internet and are not able to separate relevant information, which is needed for social discernment, from irrelevant one. What is more, due to their lacking media literacy, average users are not capable of evaluating the reliability of internet sources. Technical processes produce a feigned objectivity which reduces the critical faculty. Additionally, there are theses on a – so to speak – natural passivity of the audience reducing the usage of the internet's interactivity in political communication.[42]

Role and new qualification of teachers

School and society have to impart even more media literacy than so far. Among other things the teachers' job is to introduce the media and information technology to the students, to lead them to a reasonable use and a responsible handling of the media.[43]

„The teachers' media literacy and media education as elements of their qualification need to be systematically rooted both in the university and the practical part of their vocational training."[44]

First of all the teachers themselves have to learn:[45]

- to handle the media adequately and to use them for different functions, to design them on their own, to understand media designs and functional principles of information processing, to penetrate the influences of media as well as the conditions of media production and distribution and to clas-

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[40] www.bildungsforum21.de/.../hintergrund_zehnthesen.html

[41] http://wiki.bildungsserver.de/mauspaed/index.php/Medienkompetenz

[42] www.bpb.de/.../ZU0HC7,,0,(K)eine_neue_Medienkompetenz_für_das_Internet.html

[43] http://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/cps/rde/xbcr/SID-49055E29-13CD7403/bst/xcms_bst_dms_18640_18641_2.pdf

[44] http://www.studienseminar-paderborn.de/gy/downloads/lenhard08medienausbildung.pdf

[45] http://lehrerfortbildung-bw.de/kompetenzen/medien/paed/

sify them critically, to discern possibilities of influence and to cooperate in the development of media culture

- • to comprehend and take into account the value of media for children and young people
- • to use media and information technology as a teaching tool
- • to use media and information technology for teachers' tasks of administration and organization

2.3 Political information on the internet - a challenge for journalism

In this subject the so-called online journalist plays the major part. In his job he connects the traditional forms of journalism with the specifically online possibilities of communication. Using teasers is typical for this kind of work. They are placed on the cover page of a website and are meant to mislead the users to continuing to read and click. Web journalism is counted among the major tasks of an online journalist, i.e. the searching, examining and selecting of information. Furthermore he/she sends e-mail newsletters to interested customers, leads online-chats, edits data bases and offers journalistic data via blog and twitter. For research online journalists mainly use search engines and web catalogues, news offers and company websites as well as databases.

It can be observed that traditional journalists make increasing use of weblogs for their research, for tracing topics and new trends. Weblogs serve as a source even when other sources are not available. In 2005 in the English-speaking countries a non-representative survey has been carried out, called EURO RSCG Magnet. 1202 journalists were interviewed respecting their use of weblogs. About half (51%) of the respondents stated that they use weblogs on a regular basis. 70% of them use weblogs for professional purposes. The major part uses weblogs for finding ideas of topics (56%), for verifying facts (43%) and for searching sources (36%).[46]

A survey carried out by Christoph Neuberger, Christian Nuernbergk and Melanie Rischke (Institut für Kommunikationswissenschaft of the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster) had similar results. They asked managing editors of German news editorial offices what they search for in weblogs. 42.4% indicated that they frequently use weblogs for searching ideas of topics.[47]

Relationship between journalists and bloggers

The university of Leipzig interviewed more than 5,300 media representatives and found out that two third of the respondents know weblogs and that 15% also use them. 3.2% of the respondents write weblogs themselves, 60% use them for research, 51% for opinion making and 46% for searching topics. However, only about 1% of the blog articles are written in German. Compared to the US and Japan only quite a few German speaking internet users read weblogs regularly. A non-representative survey of German speaking bloggers dealt with the question

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[46] Vgl. http://callcenterinfo.tmcnet.com/news/2005/Jun/1156371.htm

[47] Vgl. Christoph Neuberger, Christian Nuernbergk, Melanie Rischke: Weblogs und Journalismus. Konkurrenz, Ergänzung oder Integration; in: Media Perspektiven. 2/2007, S. 96-112

what brings people to write weblogs. The results were obvious, since 71% of the respondents named fun and 63% enjoy writing. Only 13% stated professional reasons. Bloggers are mainly motivated by self-referred motives. A representative US survey of 2005/2006 had similar results.

Even there, self-display was prevalent to socializing, distributing information and influencing opinions.

A non-representative survey about German-speaking weblogs in 2003 found out that bloggers see their own strengths mainly in enjoying expressing their opinions, subjectivity, topicality and entertainment. They mainly express their personal feelings. Furthermore, they are of the opinion that journalism rather has to fulfill criteria like relevance and correctness. The major advantages of journalism are said to be neutral reporting and a more profound dealing with the topics. A further advantage of journalism is its higher credibility and independence. It is very likely that people agree on the viewpoints of journalists. In 2006 many managing editors of editorial news offices observed similar strengths and weaknesses. This shows that external and self-perception overlap in most parts.

A media survey of the year 2007 revealed that most of the interviewed editors (25%) consider web 2.0 being no more and no less than the logical development of the internet. For 52% of the respondents web 2.0 had only a little relevance for their journalistic work, for 25% a high relevance and for 5% a very high and for 9% no relevance at all. However, it is interesting, that German journalists hardly consider weblogs as a threat.

With other words, weblogs first of all seize on news and comment them, but they are quite rarely producing them. The blogosphere serves the journalists as a rich source of research where they can find topics, sources, new trends and inspiration. Bloggers, however, often refer to the mass media topics and so provide continuing communication. Journalists mostly have better access to overall-social relevant events. In contrast to them bloggers often are the better source for online information. Via weblogs information can be spread nearly in real time. This may cause problems like inaccuracy of the information. Finally it can be said that bloggers want to point to issues they have learnt from other sources, that they want to express and discuss their opinion.

Reliability of internet information

Since everybody is able to publish information on the internet, very often institutionalized quality control is lacking, e. g. by editors or lecturers. This makes it a task of the readers to review the information found on the internet if it is reliable.

In Germany journalistic sources are subject to the Pressekodex. It was determined in 1973 and contains the following text:

> „Die im Grundgesetz der Bundesrepublik verbürgte Pressefreiheit schließt die Unabhängigkeit und Freiheit der Information, der Meinungsäußerung und der Kritik ein. Verleger, Herausgeber und Journalisten müssen sich bei ihrer Arbeit der Verantwortung gegenüber der Öffentlichkeit und ihrer Verpflichtung für das Ansehen der Presse bewusst sein. Sie nehmen ihre publizistische Aufgabe fair, nach bestem Wissen und Gewissen, unbeeinflusst von persönlichen Interessen und sachfremden Beweggründen wahr. Die publizis-

tischen Grundsätze konkretisieren die Berufsethik der Presse. Sie umfasst die Pflicht, im Rahmen der Verfassung und der verfassungskonformen Gesetze das Ansehen der Presse zu wahren und für die Freiheit der Presse einzustehen.

Die Regelungen zum Redaktionsdatenschutz gelten für die Presse, soweit sie personenbezogene Daten zu journalistisch-redaktionellen Zwecken erhebt, verarbeitet oder nutzt. Von der Recherche über Redaktion, Veröffentlichung, Dokumentation bis hin zur Archivierung dieser Daten achtet die Presse das Privatleben, die Intimsphäre und das Recht auf informationelle Selbstbestimmung des Menschen.“[48]

Moreover, respecting the truth, protecting human dignity and informing the public truthfully have to be the highest precepts of press and research has to be an indispensable instrument of journalistic diligence. The observation of the Pressekodex improves the trustworthiness of journalistic sources. This was shown in 2006 by a survey concerning "The New Digital Divide" dealing with the trustworthiness of different sources. Weblogs reached only place no. 4 (7%) – far behind journalistic sources (16%) and newspapers (14%).

Besides, the reliability of online information is influenced by the chance of misuse. Weblogs often comprise false information, thus complicating online research, since various sources have to be checked for finding the correct content.

Furthermore, inadequate presentations in text and picture may offend people's honor. Religious, ideological or moral beliefs may be despised. Often an inappropriate display of violence, brutality and harm is shown, too. Further problems may be the violation of the legal protection for children and young persons, as well as discrimination due to gender, disability or belonging to an ethnic, religious, social or national group.

What can be done against that? First of all moderators can delete inappropriate articles in weblogs and in case of recurrence block the access of these members. False or immoral blogs are corrected by other bloggers' comments. This is a very simple but effective system, since everybody is watching out for each other and so false information hardly has a chance. Besides, certain weblogs have restricted access, so that not everyone can write an article or a comment. These blogs are mostly for special interest groups which want to stay among themselves.

However, there are some governments that also use censorship as major means of control. Unfortunately this is rather used in dictatorships, e. g. in China, where the communist government in Beijing filters and control the internet by using a very sophisticated system. But this is not meant to be the prevalent form of control.

Qualifications required for media professions, especially online journalists

First of all we have to ask the question: What are media professions actually? The term is very broad and seems to be unspecific with many definitions. There is no binding or exhausting definition of the term "media profession".

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[48] Deutscher Pressekodex in der Fassung vom 3. Dezember 2008

Under this term the Statistisches Bundesamt summarizes all print and print processing professions, radio and TV technicians, book and music sellers, editors, advertising specialists and publicists.

By the differentiation of media in the past years, especially with respect to digital media, the already traditional diversity of jobs in the area of media has increased and the change of qualification requirements has continued.

The use of human capital is a vitally strategic and at the same time critical success factor of each company, since „die Produkte von Medienunternehmen, ob Zeitungen, Zeitschriften, Bücher, Internetauftritte, Fernsehserien oder Filme, sie alle kommen aus den Köpfen von Menschen und nicht aus Maschinen, sie leben von der Kreativität, dem Engagement und der Begeisterung aller Mitarbeiter".[49]

Therefore well-trained junior employees and qualified employees are indispensable for companies of the media and communication sector. The following chart shows which qualifications the media companies require for online journalism.

Anbieterbefragung 2007, „sehr wichtig"/"wichtig", Angaben in %

Qualifikationsanforderungen	Tageszeitungen (n=87–89)	Wochenzeitungen/ Publikums- zeitschriften (n=13–14)	Rundfunk (n=28–30)	Nur-Internet- anbieter (n=21–22)	Gesamt (n=151–155)
gute Allgemeinbildung	97,8	100,0	100,0	100,0	98,7
zielgruppengerechte Informationsaufbereitung	87,6	92,9	96,7	90,9	90,3
fundierte journalistische Ausbildung (z.B. Volontariat, Journalistenschule, Journalistikstudium)	94,4	71,4	90,0	45,5	84,5
Bereitschaft zum Dialog mit den Nutzern	86,5	92,9	86,7	68,2	84,5
Vermittlungskompetenz für mehrere Medien (z B. Text, Bild, Video)	86,4	69,2	89,3	36,4	78,1
mindestens ein Jahr Berufserfahrung als Journalist	55,2	71,4	66,7	27,3	54,9
besonderes Ressort- und Spezialwissen	45,5	64,3	60,0	77,3	54,5
abgeschlossenes Hochschulstudium	35,6	64,3	76,7	31,8	45,8
spezielle Ausbildung für den Internetjournalismus	39,3	50,0	56,7	27,3	41,9
basale Programmierkenntnisse (z.B. HTML)	38,2	28,6	26,7	36,4	34,8
Kenntnisse im Bereich Webdesign	41,6	21,4	40,0	4,5	34,2
Marketingkenntnisse	33,7	15,4	20,0	23,8	28,1
fundierte Programmierkenntnisse (z.B. XML, CSS, PHP)	12,5	7,1	6,7	4,5	9,7

Die Gruppe der Nur-Internetanbieter umfasst nur professionell-journalistische Anbieter und Portale. Vierstufige Skala. Nicht dargestellt sind die Ausprägungen „weniger wichtig" und „unwichtig".

Quelle: Erhebung von Christoph Neuberger, Christian Nuernbergk, Melanie Rischke, Institut für Kommunikationswissenschaft der Westfälischen Wilhelms-Universität Münster.

The most important qualification required is a good general education. Besides a well-founded journalistic education the ability of journalistically implementing new technical possibilities is also very important. So the target-group-specific editing of information, the dialog ability with the user and the ability of multimedia communication are central prerequisites of an internet journalist. However, internet providers relatively often expect desk and special knowledge, a well-founded journalistic education is less important for them. Internet specific technical and design knowledge is generally not of great importance.

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[49] Jürgen Deeters: Medienmanagement als Personal- und Organisationsmanagement; in: M. Karmasin / C. Winter (Hrsg.): Grundlagen des Medienmanagements. München 2002 (2. Aufl.), S. 93

2.4 Political blogs in Germany

Since in the history of the media blogs are a quite new kind of communication and the different kinds make it difficult to have them neatly categorized, blogs can only hardly be defined. The following definition tries to encapsulate the characteristics of blogs in general and as a summary: "Short for *Weblog*, a blog is a Web page that serves as a publicly accessible personal journal for an individual. Typically updated daily, blogs often reflect the personality of the author."[50]

Of course, this definition only describes the main concept from which many other forms and kinds of blogs have developed. By this exclusively so-called "user generated content" blogs are a textbook example of web 2.0.

Today the numerous kinds of different blogs can be categorized into three groups: On the one hand you can discern differences with the sender, so to say the author of the blog, as well as the receiver, that is the reader of the blog. The blogging is done by individuals, like private persons, who want to exchange their personal interests and in their own matters. But there are also people who blog on behalf of an institution, i.e. they have a topical aspect and aim at something, e. g. customer loyalty or public relations. Besides, there are blogs of organizations, the so-called "corporate blogs" which are often run by companies for reasons of advertising or blogs of non-profit organizations like federations, associations or other non-formal interest groups.

The second category is the kind of blog. Reaching from audio blogs, which in parts can only be listened to, via video blogs, through to micro blogs (the best example is twitter), numerous kinds of blogs can be listed and the number will increase due to the development of new technologies.

Third they are categorized with respect to their content. Hobbies, books and art may be the subjects ("litblogs" or "artblogs") as well as topical or past wars ("warblogs") or even political topics or current elections.

The current situation of weblogs in Germany

At the moment about one percent of the worldwide blogs is in German, thereof about 200,000 active blogs are from Germany. In this context "active" means that they are updated or commented at least once per day. This number seems to be high, but compared to the number of German internet users this figure is very low. The most frequently activated blog in Germany is "bildblog.de" dealing critically with German media and revealing discrepancies or false research.

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[50] http://www.webopedia.com/TERM/b/blog.html

Topics and kinds of German blogs
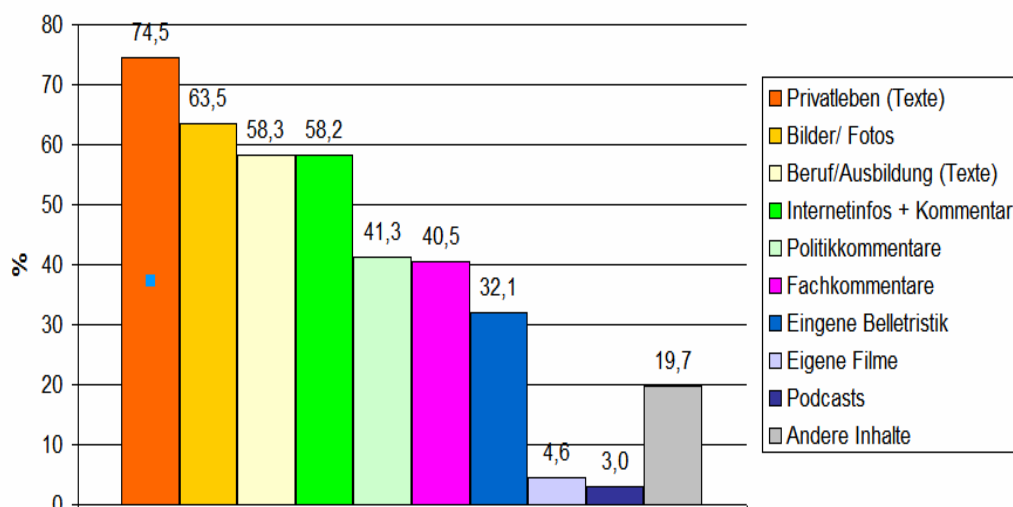
An interview of 5,246 German speaking bloggers revealed that everyday-life-blogs are still most frequently represented. Political blogs exist, indeed, but only take up mid-position.[51]

Besides, the bloggers were asked for their personal motivation of blogging. This reveals that "imparting knowledge", in which category political blogs are falling, in Germany is less marked, since most of the German bloggers write just for fun.[52]

The entirety of all blogs and their links with each other is called „blogosphere". This term also comprises the fact that blogs can only exist in common and all links form a community or a pool of linked communities. In another study of the year 2009 media scientist John Kelly tried to show the German blogosphere and came to the result that Germany is not yet able to keep up with international political blogs. The next paragraph tries to find reasons for this condition.

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51   http://www.train-und-coach.de/wp-content/uploads/2007/10/warum_bloggen.png

52   http://www.train-und-coach.de/wp-content/uploads/2007/10/warum_bloggen.png

Motivations for blogging
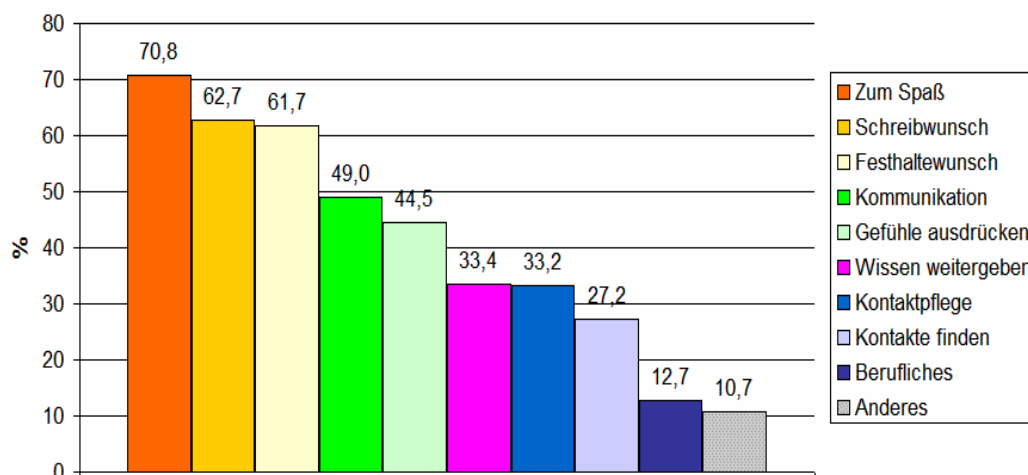
Development of political blogs

Since September 9, 2001, worldwide the number of political blogs has risen drastically and thus also the general interest in the political use of blogs. The United States are said to be the forerunners of political blogs, since they used them especially in election campaigns. But also in countries with restricted freedom of press, like Russia, China or Iran, a notable increase of political blogs can be observed, as they offer an opportunity for political participation.

Influence of political blogs in Germany

In Germany political blogs were used first in the federal election campaign of 2005. Compared to the United States, Germany is lagging about five years behind. For certain political events a rising use of political blogs by political parties can be observed, among others electoral blogs, but the potential thereof is far from being fully tapped. Formerly the political communication took place in the classical media, e. g. TV, newspapers and radio. In this country there are only few permanent providers of political blogs, most are private "amateur journalists" who are blogging with a political background. In the United States companies like "Huffington Post" have settled which have already discovered this niche for themselves and in the meantime have nearly 60 employees. To the most active and mostly attended portals of political blogs in Germany belong nachdenkseiten.de and netzpolitik.org. However, there are many extreme left and right-wing political blogs in Germany, too.

Who are the German bloggers?

In Germany only every fifth person is a blogger, in the US and Japan, however, already every third one. Political bloggers in this country are mainly male, above 30 years of age, with a high education, i. e. with university qualification or gradua-

tion, and also generally more politically interested and involved than the average citizen. [53]

Problems of political blogs in Germany

There are many reasons why there are some difficulties in establishing political blogs in Germany. The main problem is the general lack of bloggers. The few existing also rarely cooperate respecting the contents. But there is also a lack of bloggers of real quality. Most bloggers are journalists, not that there are no good journalists in Germany, but too few use blogs as a possibility of publishing. The reason is that blogs often have a bad reputation in the newsrooms. Besides that, blogs are not taken seriously enough, they are considered as competition and not as enrichment like in the US. Another problem is the "Telemediengesetz". It regulates the identification of providers, this means that there is no anonymity for bloggers on the internet. The missing interest of the advertising economy makes it also difficult to establish blogs, since the agencies are used to ask the question: "Why should I put something online if I could also sell it?" Besides, so-called adlinks are often linked to spamblogs which leads to a rather dubious and unattractive image of blogs. Furthermore, it was observed that blogs are developing well in countries with a historically grown discussion culture or in which blogs are the only mediators besides state-controlled media.

For advancing the use of blogs in Germany it would be necessary to intensify the social and political pressure, to take heed of blogs by the media, to promote cooperations of the individual authors of political blogs and to improve their reliability by making them verifiable.[54]

Weblogs as a source of political information

One result of the survey W3B showed how rarely weblogs serve as source of political information for the citizens. The majority of the population gets their political information mainly from websites of newspapers, magazines or public TV stations. Only 4.9% get their information via weblogs. This also underlines the current position of blogs once again. [55]

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[53] http://www.netzpiloten.de/2006/12/21/politische-blogs-in-deutschland-ist-da-was/

[54] http://don.antville.org/stories/1816384/

[55] http://www.w3b.org/nutzungsverhalten/nur-wenige-wollen-wahl-weblogs.html

Information sources about politics

Für Politik-Informationen spielen Weblogs kaum eine Rolle
Im Ranking politischer Online-Infoquellen sind Blogs ganz unten

Web Sites von ...

Zeitschriften/Magazinen	51,0%
Zeitungen	50,7%
öffentlich-rechtlichen Fernsehsendern	39,6%
privaten Nachrichtensendern	25,0%
privaten Fernsehsender	19,4%

Journalistische Online-Quelle

Web Sites ...

der Bundesregierung	12,2%
speziell mit politischen Informationen	10,4%
von Parteien	10,1%

Politische Online-Quellen

Andere Online-Quellen:

Suchmaschinen, Webkataloge	23,6%
Video-Communities	4,9%
Social-Network-Web Sites	4,9%
Weblogs, Blogs	4,9%
Mikro-Blogs	1,0%

Andere Online-Quellen

28. WWW-Benutzer-Analyse W3B, April/Mai 2009
Basis: Deutsche Internet-Nutzer im Alter ab 18 Jahre, die das Internet für politische Informationen einsetzen; Mehrfachnennungen möglich

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2.5 Political participation on web 2.0 – an example of political youth organizations in Germany

For comprehending the possibilities of web 2.0 for political decision-making in Germany it is necessary to reconstruct the development of the internet. First you have to become clear where is the difference between the obviously new development level of the internet and the old one.

Web 2.0 is a keyword which is used for a series of interactive and collaborative elements of the internet, especially of the worldwide web. In the style of the version numbers of software products, the term postulates a new generation of the web and separates it from former kinds of use.[56]

In fact, web 2.0 is less something new or something different. It rather is an advancement. The main difference to web 1.0 is the considerable increase of interactivity and of the number of users. In 1996 still 45 million people were active on the internet, until the year 2006 the number had grown to distinctly more than one billion people. At the same time the number of available websites has grown from 250,000 to 80,000,000.

This was accompanied by an increased quantity of so-called user generated content, which was not published professionally (published content).

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[56] Vgl. Wikipedia, Artikel zu Web 2.0

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This development rises the question if and how the information and opinion potential of web 2.0 may be and is used politically and socially. If we look at the example of political youth organizations in Germany the following can be seen:

Use of web 2.0 for decision-making

The use of web 2.0 for political purposes is mainly restricted to social networks (StudiVZ, Facebook etc.) which promise quick and non-binding access to presumable supporters. The actual accomplishments of this medium are nevertheless questionable. In most cases social networks are only another platform for published content.

The actual involvement of users into the decision- and opinion making process rarely takes place via web 2.0. In this aspect the work of youth organizations in Germany is still very traditional.

Using web 2.0 for mobilization

Nevertheless, web 2.0 is increasingly used for mobilizing one's followers. The possibility of spreading information quickly and the low or spread costs make it attractive. Services like twitter or facebook, so-called micro-blogs, facilitate quick communication and publications.

It is noticeable that mainly youth organizations of the left political wing make use of this medium. The reason is probably that the political camps have different structures.

As JU, JULIs and JuSos make either use of a very high membership or a strong financing and thus have good success in communicating traditionally, Grüne Jugend and Solid depend more on decentralized and cost-free ways of communication. Besides, mobilizing external sympathizers is more important and successful in the left wing than in the "bourgeois camp".

Regionalization in spite of „worldwide" web 2.0

The example of twitter makes it clear that despite an immense coverage of news and messages, regional aspects play an important role. So within three months (December 17, 2009 – March 18, 2010) Germany's JU only posted 66 tweets (0.7 per day). District and national associations, however, get a far higher number of posts. But this phenomenon is the same for all organizations. For comparison, Grüne Jugend (18) and JuSos (14) have considerably less tweets on a national level.

Apparently web 2.0 has for different reasons not yet arrived at the political youth organizations in Germany. We do not want to evaluate this result at all. But nevertheless the question has to be asked, if the increased use of web 2.0 even beyond social networks could be an opportunity of advancing political involvement. But due to the example of very successful e-petitions in the German Bundestag it cannot be imagined yet, which potential of political interest could be awakened.

3 Political opinion making on blog and twitter - A European comparison of actors, standards and web competences - Report of the University of Vienna

3.1 Portraits of politicians in web campaigns – an Austrian example

1. Introduction

„Bilder sind stärker als Worte, Schüsse in's Gehirn, behaupten PR-Leute. Bilder werden als Realität wahrgenommen, Worte dagegen als Codes, die erst aufgeschlüsselt werden müssen" (Radunski 2003: 189).

CDU-consultant Peter Radunksi is using these impressive words in order to describe the phenomenon that explains the different perception of text and visual messages. According to the German media scientist, Thomas Knieper, the essential difference in the perception of images and text is due to the fact that images are capable of communicating information more immediately.[57]

Political scientist Marion G. Müller says that with regard to the relation of textual and visual sources the logic and structures of the production of visual sources is essentially different from those of textual sources. But the mutual influence of both kinds of sources must not be renounced.[58]

Essentially, the goal of our research is to find out how images of politicians are used on the internet. It may be assumed that the fewest pictures of politicians have come on different websites accidentally. As the paradigm shift has already been accomplished, even press photos are no longer pure accidental products that occur due to an accidental event. Like the works of so-called "high art" even advertising and press photos, especially photos of politicians for election campaigns, underlie special codes that have to be deciphered.

With respect to the distribution possibilities of such pictures, the new medium „internet" offers possibilities that have not existed so far. The fundamental rules of production, however, have been the same for centuries.

Illustration no 1 shows a picture of Theodoric the Great on a golden medal. He was king of the Ostrogoths from 471 BC and he was acknowledged by the Imperator of Eastern Rome as Ruler of Italy from 493 until his death in 529. During his reign he aspired the balance of Gothic and Roman interests in which he, generally speaking, succeeded.[59] His presentation on this medal represents the fusion of two cultures. The Latin titles, the clothing and the Victoria-crowned globe stand for the typical repre-

Illustration no. 1) Theodoric the Great

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[57] Vgl. Knieper 2003: 193

[58] Vgl. Müller 2003: 14

[59] Vgl. Pohl 2005: 126-151

sentation or Roman Imperators. The long hair covering his ears and especially the moustache point to his Gothic descent.[60] This form of presentation can only be interpreted as a political proposal to both parties, namely wanting to be ruler of both parts of the population.

Josef II, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire from 1765 to 1790 was not only a great political reformer, he also broke with the baroque representation of his reign in the way his father and direct predecessor made use of it. By this he anticipated a role model which became popular about 50 years later in the Biedermeier era, the role model of the "Citizen Emperor".[61] Illustration no. 2 does not show a baroque ruler, as he lacks the symbols of power, e.g. the crown. The attributes shown are rather those of an officer or a civil servant: a globe, maps, documents, ink pots etc.

Illustration no. 2) Josef II

Political contents have always been transported by portraits of politicians. They are not sensed consciously. In order to carry out a scientific analysis of the pictures we fell back on the iconographic-iconological analytical method that was originally developed by art historian Erwin Panofsky for analyzing pieces of "high art".

We applied this picture analysis to the example of the current presidential election campaign in Austria in 2010. In order to conduct this picture analysis we mainly took pictures that were used on the internet medium *facebook.*

The second chapter will discuss the initial position of the upcoming Federal President's election campaign. The third chapter will deal with the analysis method for pictures by Erwin Panofsky and chapter four of this paper will show the application of this method in detail using the example of a photo of Barbara Rosenkranz, whereas the further analyses will only give a short summary of the method by Panofsky. In the end we will state the conclusions of this work.

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[60] Vgl. Ward-Perkins 2006: 72-77

[61] Vgl. Schaare (o.J.)

The presidential election in Austria in 2010

Three candidates are standing for the election of the Austrian Bundespräsident on April 25, 2010. These are Heinz Fischer, social democrat and current Bundespräsident, Barbara Rosenkranz, member of the provincial parliament of Lower Austria and member of the liberal party, and Rudolf Gehring, President of the Austrian Christian Party (CPÖ). The CPÖ and its president only play a secondary part in the Austrian party spectrum, thus leaving Mr. Gehring with only little chances to win the election. For this reason we decided not to include him into our analysis. Barbara Rosenkranz also has only little chances for becoming Bundespräsidentin, but her party plays a central role in Austrian interior policy. Besides the so called "third party" is currently on the right wing of the political spectrum and thus contrary to the party of the current President. This makes an analysis of these both candidates especially interesting.

Heinz Fischer quitted his membership in the social democratic party of Austria (SPÖ) after his first election for the Austrian Head of State in 2004. Although he is still very close to the left wing he mastered this non-party office of Bundespräsident. At least there are no remarkable contrary opinions. As the media already started to press him with the question if he would candidate for a second term in autumn 2009, he hesitated at first. Finally he announced for his candidateship on November 23, 2009 via YouTube, being a novelty in Austria and causing oddity among the population.[62]

Barbara Rosenkranz is member of the government of Lower Austria and at the same time president of the regional FPÖ (liberal party).

FPÖ became globally prominent especially with Jörg Haider. In 2000 he led the FPÖ, at that time at the very right wing, into a government and caused an international sensation.

In the media Mrs. Rosenkranz presents herself as housewife and mother of ten children. She is at the right edge of FPÖ. In 1995 "News" Magazine wrote about this and called her among other things "Kellernazi". She consequently filed a lawsuit due to defamation. The court of last resort, the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, at last permitted the publishing house of this magazine to call Mrs. Rosenkranz "Kellernazi".[63] On March 2, 2010 her party announced for her candidateship as Bundespräsidentin. Since then some of her statements respecting the "Verbotsgesetz"[64] (law that forbids Nazi-activities and the denial, the approval, the belittlement and the justification of Nazi-crimes) caused a public uproar. In the end she was forced to state publicly that she distances herself of National Socialism and its crimes and to do sign the written declaration on oath having it notarized.[65]

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[62] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hfxQurRWqDA (zuletzt 7.5.2010)

[63] Das Urteil im Wortlaut: http://www.menschenrechte.ac.at/docs/03_6/03_6_03 (zuletzt 7.5.2010)

[64] Das Verbotsgesetz aus dem Jahr 1947 verbietet jedwede nationalsozialistische Wiederbetätigung sowie die Leugnung, das Gutheißen, das Verharmlosen oder das Rechtfertigen nationalsozialistischer Verbrechen.

[65] Dieser Akt wurde aufgezeichnet:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b382uZLzVv4&feature=related (zuletzt 7.5.2010)

The iconographic-iconological method

The iconographic-iconological method of art historian Erwin Panofsky (1892-1968) is a method of picture analysis and interpretation. It is split up into three steps: 1.) the pre-iconographic description, 2.) the iconographic analysis and 3.) the iconological interpretation[66]. These steps aim at the decoding of the meaning of a picture.[67] Respecting political pictures Panofsky's method has to support the unmasking of the picture production and its intentions. The actual effect a picture has on the recipients cannot be analyzed by Panofsky's method.[68]

Pre-iconographic description

The pre-iconographic description provides the determination of the so-called „primary" or „natural" subjects. It describes the arrangement of lines and colors and the depiction of objects and living beings. Furthermore the mutual relations of the depicted objects and figures and the so-called "expressive features" – postures, gestures or the atmosphere of a room – are described.[69]

Summarizing this you can say: The pre-iconographic description holds on to the shape, subject, composition, technique and quality of the picture. A scientific description of a picture must be objective and free of any interpretations.[70] Even the textual captions of a picture must be considered for its description and the two further steps of its analysis.[71]

With respect to the necessary conditions of the pre-iconographic description Panofsky said:

„Die Objekte und Ereignisse, deren Darstellungen durch Linien, Farben und Volumen die Motivwelt bildet, lassen sich […] auf der Grundlage unserer praktischen Erfahrungen identifizieren. Jedermann kann die Gestalt und das Verhalten menschlicher Wesen, von Tieren und Pflanzen erkennen, und jedermann kann ein zorniges Gesicht von einem fröhlichen unterscheiden" (Panofsky 1991/1939: 214).

Iconographic analysis

The iconographic analysis identifies the so-called „secondary" or "conventional" subject. Here the identification and definition of the depicted objects and figures takes place. Besides, allegories and symbols are decoded.[72] During this step the topoi of a picture have to be named. [73] The most important element of the iconographic analysis is the allocation of the meaning specifically talking about who or what is seen on the picture.[74]

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[66] Vgl. Panofsky 1991/1939: 210ff.

[67] Vgl. Müller 2003: 34

[68] Vgl. Knieper 2003: 207

[69] Vgl. Panofsky 1991/1939: 210

[70] Vgl. Müller 2003: 35

[71] Vgl. Müller 2003: 37

[72] Vgl. Panofsky 1991/1939: 210

[73] Vgl. Dorsch-Jungsberger 2003: 185

[74] Vgl. Müller 2003: 42

Taking this step you can say exactly who or what you can see on the picture. The iconographic analysis can only make an issue of something that has been named before in the iconographic description.[75] The iconographic analysis illuminates the backgrounds of the picture by looking for the source of the picture, possible antetypes and similar picture objects.[76] The requirements of the iconographic analysis, according to Panofsky, are much more complex than those of the pre-iconographic description.

"Die ikonographische Analyse, die sich mit Bildern, Anekdoten und Allegorien statt mit Motiven befaßt, setzt natürlich weit mehr voraus als jene Vertrautheit mit Gegenständen und Ereignissen, wie wir sie durch praktische Erfahrung erwerben. Sie setzt eine Vertrautheit mit bestimmten Themen oder Vorstellungen voraus, wie sie durch literarische Quellen vermittelt wird, sei es durch zielbewußtes Lesen oder durch mündliche Tradition" (Panofsky 1991/1939: 217).

Iconological interpretation

Finally the iconological interpretation seeks the real meaning of the work of art. For interpreting the picture information on the socio-cultural context of the picture is also used, or as Panofsky says:

Es wird „die Grundeinstellung einer Nation, einer Epoche, einer Klasse, einer religiösen oder philosophischen Überzeugung" (Panofsky 1991/1939: 211) offengelegt. Thomas Knieper sees an essential difference between iconographic analysis and iconological interpretation. The first one analyzes the intentions of the author and the second one is working out those aspects of the picture which are not emphasized explicitly or are even excluded.[77] As the iconological interpretation is highly dependent on the subjective attitudes and characters of the researchers it is necessary to carry out the pre-iconographic description and the iconographic analysis as objectively as possible in order to have an effect as a corrective for the iconological interpretation.[78]

We let Panofsky have his say regarding the requirements of the iconological interpretation:

„Die ikonologische Interpretation schließlich erfordert mehr als nur eine Vertrautheit mit bestimmten Themen und Vorstellungen, wie sie durch literarische Quellen übermittelt wird. […] Um diese Prinzipien zu erfassen, benötigen wir eine geistige Fähigkeit, die derjenigen eines Diagnostikers vergleichbar ist – eine Fähigkeit, die ich nicht besser beschreiben kann als durch den ziemlich in Mißkredit geratenen Ausdruck synthetische Intuition und die in einem begabten Laien besser entwickelt sein kann als in einem belesenen Gelehrten" (Panofsky 1991/1939: 220f.)

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[75] Vgl. Knieper 2003: 203

[76] Vgl. Müller 2003: 43

[77] Vgl. Knieper 2003: 194 und 204

[78] Vgl. Panofsky 1991/1939: 221

Analysis of selected portraits of the canditates of Austrian presidential elections in the internet

Analysis of the photos on Barbara Rosenkranz' personal *facebook* page

illustration 3) Barbara Rosenkranz' photo on Facebook

Pre-iconographic description

The photo (illustration no. 3) depicts a woman clothed in a white jacket and with grey-black hair. The woman wears her hair short. The background of the picture is also totally white. The lines between the white jacket and the white background of the picture are blurring. The woman wears a white multi-row pearl necklace. Her lips are made up decently. On the right the woman's lips are puckered up to a slight smile. The woman's eyes are dark. She slightly looks to the right top of the picture. The woman's cheeks and nose are sun-tanned. The slightly tanned skin is in a clear contrast to the white background.

Under the photo are two comments of two different people. The first one sounds: „a strong personality…" The second one: "Verbotsgesetz – no no!"

Iconographic analysis

The depicted woman is FPÖ presidential candidate Barbara Rosenkranz. The photo is taken from the online medium Facebook. The picture is the photo of Barbara Rosenkranz' profile on her personal facebook site.

The first comment on the picture is from a certain Werner Kastenberger and has been posted on February 5, 2010, before Rosenkranz was announced for presidential candidate. Kastenberger is also member of the facebook-groups „Heinz Fischer NEIN danke wir wählen Barbara Rosenkranz!", „Kann diese seelenlose Zange mehr Freunde haben als Bundeskanzler Faymann???", "HC Strache" and "Böhse Onkelz" (a former punk band that repeatedly made a great stir as they were suspected of sympathizing neo-Nazi trends).

The second comment on the "Verbotsgesetz" is from a certain Patrick Holzer.

The predominance of the white color in the picture stands for the innocence of the depicted person. The almost unreal touch produced by the white color in the picture makes one think that the picture carries away her person from the everyday life. The authors' first two allegories with regard to this photo were those of the "innocent lamb" and the "angel".

Iconological interpretation

Both connotations seem to be consistent taking the severe arguments in the media into account that have come up in the first two weeks of March 2010 concerning the person of Barbara Rosenkranz. Rosenkranz has come under media pressure after questioning the NS-Verbotsgesetz. Consequently she quasi repented and in sense of the powerful newspaper "Kronenzeitung" declared on oath that she distances herself from National Socialism. Several FPÖ-colleagues have consequently tried to talk Barbara Rosenkranz up to a victim of a media smear campaign.

An analysis of Bundespräsident Dr. Heinz Fischer's profile photos on his facebook site

illustration no. 4) Heinz Fischer's profile photo on Facebook

The profile photo on the *facebook*-site „Bundespräsident Dr. Heinz Fischer" shows Heinz Fischer in rooms that the authors identify as rooms of the Viennese Hofburg, the official seat of the Austrian Bundespräsident. The authors therefore assume that Fischer's supporters want to make sure with the viewers the connotation of Fischer with the office of the Bundespräsident.

Profile Photos on *facebook* sites against Barbara Rosenkranz and Heinz Fischer

illustration no. 5) profile photo on the *facebook* site "GEGEN BARBARA ROSENKRANZ!!!!!!"

illustration no. 6) profile photo on the *facebook* site „Eine Million Österreicher gegen Barbara Rosenkranz!"

illustration no. 7) profile photo on the *facebook* site „Gegen Barbara Rosenkranz als Bundespräsidentin"

On several of the numerous *facebook* sites against Barbara Rosenkranz you can find this very simple and homogenous picture strategy. All of the three above mentioned profile photos show portraits of Rosenkranz crossed through with red lines or a black bar. The founders of these Facebook sites against Rosenkranz abandon any subtle picture manipulations that would have been possible by the use of "Photoshop" They simply use pictures that were originally used in the sense of the candidate and tried to twist the meanings of the picture by crossing them through.

illustration no. 8) profile photo on the *facebook* site „Heinz Fischer – NEIN danke, wir wählen Barbara Rosenkranz"

The same simple picture strategy has been applied to a photo of a *facebook* group against Heinz Fischer and for Barbara Rosenkranz. The strategy tries to twist the effect of the portrait of the opponent by crossing through Fischer's picture with a red line. Even so this double picture of Fischer and Rosenkranz shows an even subtler picture strategy, making use of the different colors of both portraits. While Fischer's picture is mainly dark-colored, Rosenkranz' picture is mainly white, thus proposing that Fischer is to be seen rather negatively and Rosenkranz rather positively.

Photos of Heinz Fischer and Barbara Rosenkranz on *derstandard.at*

illustration no. 9a) Heinz Fischer on *derstandard.at*

illustration no. 9b) Barbara Rosenkranz on *derstandard.at*

These both photos taken from the Austrian daily „*Der Standard*" are part of an article titled „*46% wünschen sich Alternative zu Fischer und Rosenkranz*". While the article speaks of an alternative to both candidates the used photos say something different. As Fischer's line of vision (to the right top of the picture), his rather optimistic countenance, the horizontal Austrian flag in the background and the brightness of his portrait cause a rather positive effect. On the opposite Rosenkranz' line of vision (to the right bottom of the picture), her slightly frustrated countenance, the vertical Austrian flag in the background and the dark shadowing of her portrait have a rather negative effect.

Conclusion and final remarks

As a summary you can say that the analyzed portrait photos of politicians used on *facebook* sites display a very simple picture language. They mostly lack any context to the used text information. The repeated strategy of crossing through a picture and thereby twisting its intention reminds strongly of pictures frequently used for protest marches. So they stir the impression of political agitation.

The picture language and the rules for deciphering this language are commonly known. The internet offers opportunities for the distribution of these pictures so far un-dreamt of. In their article published immediately before the US presidential elections in the New York Times, David Carr and Brian Shelter noted:„[…] not since 1960, when John F. Kennedy won in part because of the increasingly popular medium of television, has changing technology had such an impact on the political campaigns and the organizations covering them. [...] Many of the media outlets influencing the 2008 election simply were not around in 2004. YouTube did not exist, and Facebook barely reached beyond the Ivy League." (Carr u. Stelter 2008) Obama's election campaign was an example of how the new media can be used on a broad basis for a political campaign. The production of pictures and videos is not very expensive and thus facilitates their distribution among many millions of people, without causing considerable additional costs, and the quick and unproblematic gathering of their reactions which makes visual communication much more flexible than in former campaigns.

Obama had been very successful in raising funds for his campaign via the internet.[79] His budget enabled him to broadcast a 30 minute commercial in the prime time several days before the election via the three greatest TV channels, as Carr and Stelter noted.

One further example of the last presidential election campaign in the US showed that "old media, apparently, can learn new media tricks," as Carr and Stelter stated.[80] When NBC had concluded the recording of the program "Meet the Press" with Colin Powell as guest, while Powell had assured Barack Obama of his support, the video was not published on YouTube but on NBC's internet platform MSNBC and this hours before the first broadcasting of the program by the TV channel.

"[…] as NBC's decision to release the Powell clip early shows, the networks and their newspaper counterparts have not simply waited to be overtaken. Instead, they have made specific efforts to engage audiences with interactive features, allowing their content to be used in unanticipated ways, and in many efforts, breaking out of the boundaries of the morning paper and the evening newscast." (Carr u. Stelter 2008) Thus the „old media" have not yet given up and it may become exciting as politics have just started to discover web 2.0 for their own purposes.

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[79] Vgl. Carr u. Stelter 2008

[80] Carr u. Stelter 2008

3.2 A comparison of political opinion making and political education on the world wide web - Topical questions regarding the limits of web 2.0

Our considerations are based on the finding that web 2.0 is used in the area of political education in Austria in a different way than in the wide field of political opinion making. Thus the goals of educational work of the considered organizations are meant to cause long-term socio-political changes. This is contrary to the motives of the often spontaneous activities facilitated and promoted by web 2.0-channels with the intention of opinion making.

Various examples make clear that activities caused by web 2.0 are normally focused on special events and/or demands (flash mobs, demonstrations, petitions etc.). We want to start our analysis between the poles of this dichotomy.

Political activism: The quickening potential of web 2.0

In our survey we consider the mobilization for political activities as an indicator of the use of web 2.0 respecting political opinion making, since the change of activities which can be seen as an expression of political opinion making can be described according to this aspect.

We purposely do not regard election campaigns of political parties but movements gaining influence or size by web 2.0. With respect to the current events we are focusing the students' protests in Vienna in autumn 2009 and their web appearance.

The positioning of personal or common political interests in the public and the creation of a counter public sphere respectively are considered the original goals of political activism. It often acts as a mouthpiece for comments on topical political debates and issues. Having a look on the webpage of the named students' protests in Austria – www.unibrennt.at – and the chronicle of protests we can detect that during the first hours hundreds of students were mobilized via web 2.0 channels like *facebook* and *twitter*. Within a very short time the lecture hall of the University of Vienna was invaded by hundreds of students with no background organization like the Austrian body of students in charge. The quickening potential of the protests could only be carried by the used web 2.0 channels *facebook* and *twitter.* During the following weeks the mobilization potential of the students was continually used to its full extent. Short-term activities like flash mobs could be announced within short time to a multitude of interested students via smartphones (iPhone etc.).

Thus flash mobs are a phenomenon that can only be explained by the use of web 2.0. Without organizations, parties, trade unions etc. investing money into publicity, the high numbers of people could not be reached. Private persons are able to mobilize people for big political activities without having to invest money. Besides numerous flash mobs during the students' protests we have to mention the operations "Bring your beer to Museums Quartier" in June 2009 as well as "Lichtertanz gegen Rosenkranz" in 2010. These were big political operations in the public realm organized by private persons via *facebook*. Flash mobs therefore are a phenomenon of political activism of mainly web 2.0. But we have to question if flash mobs are rather seen as an event than as a political manifestation.

Furthermore we have to note, that the successful publicity of the students' protests may be traced back to the use of web 2.0, as the students made use of the same news channels as young journalists. Press releases have been replaced by tweets and weblogs – news are immediately released by RSS Feeds.

Summary

Various characteristics of political opinion making on web 2.0 can be described with regard to the aspect of political activism. They lead to a transition of the culture of political activism, whereas containing an enormous quickening potential for political movements. But without previous political education the activism however remains rather an event to which people are "invited", than an activism form of political opinion expression or political protests.

Political education in Austria

For having a look at the political education – even in its change of meaning – we want to introduce this paragraph with the following citation:

> „Die **Achtung** vor der Meinung anderer, das **Verständnis** gegenüber fremden Interessen und Handlungen wird für die Jugend im gesamten Schulleben maßgebend sein und sie wird immer wieder darüber belehrt werden müssen, daß eine Hauptaufgabe der Demokratie die
> friedliche Auseinandersetzung und der wechselseitige Ausgleich sind und daß jede **gewaltsame Lösung** von vornherein **ausgeschlossen** ist. Diese persönliche Haltung erwächst aus **strengem kritischen Denken** und einem **Einfühlvermögen** gegenüber dem Einzelnen und der Gemeinschaft, aus einem auf ernstem **Verantwortungsbewusstsein** begründetem Charakter und aus dem festen Willen, das richtig Erkannte durchzuführen und die **demokratische Freiheit** gegen jedes Unrecht zu **verteidigen**."[81]

It contains (and the authors also emphasize) the basic values of civics, that can also be made valid for today's understanding of political education. Civics has grown historically and has been the forerunner of today's political education. It mainly orientates itself by the central topics of National Socialism and the Holocaust.[82] The goals of political education can be expressed by the terms political awareness, political maturity and encouragement for political thinking and acting.

The previously cited values of the decree for civic education of 1949 are still the foundation of political education, whereas today not only its conveyance is intended, but rather the acquirement of competences. An Austrian board of experts is responsible for the drawing up of the according model (2007).[83] Four meshing sections are central:

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[81] Staatsbürgerliche Erziehung, Erlass des Bundesministeriums für Unterricht vom 6. Juli 1949.

[82] Vgl. dazu auch: http://www.holocausttaskforce.org/.

[83] Vgl.: Heinrich Ammerer, Hg., Politische Bildung konkret. Beispiele für kompetenzorientierten Unterricht, Wien 2009.

1. Political expertise: the ability of understanding and developing political concepts and categories

2. Political competence of judging: the ability of judging political decisions, controversies etc.

3. Political competence of acting: the ability of acting politically

4. Political competence of methods: the ability of political articulation and of understanding foreign political articulation.

In which ways does the political education in Austria use the medium internet?

For answering this question (in parts) we have analyzed two Austrian web portals with regard to the aspect how and if they make use of web 2.0.

I. *erinnern.at*

The association in the background of *erinnen.at* defines itself in the following way:

> „Der Verein "Nationalsozialismus und Holocaust: Gedächtnis und Gegenwart" - kurz "erinnern.at" - ist ein Vermittlungsprojekt des Bundesministeriums für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur für Lehrende an österreichischen Schulen. Es will den Transfer von historischem und methodisch-didaktischem Wissen fördern sowie seine Bedeutung für die Gegenwart reflektieren. Lernende sollen sowohl Kenntnisse erwerben als auch ethisch sensibilisiert werden."[84]

In this context the conveyance has two dimensions: on the one hand the website serves as a platform for further issues: projects of the federal states, linking of memorial sites, initiatives and other as well as announcing of events (seminaries, field excursions etc.), on the other hand the website is a platform for e-learning: projects around National Socialism and sources (text, video, audio) concerning different aspects of National Socialism are offered for download. The target groups are teachers, multipliers and – when instructed – students.

II. *doew.at*

In 1963 former resistance fighters and scientists founded the „Dokumentationsarchiv des Österreichischen Widerstands (DÖW)". Since 1983 it has been a foundation commonly run by the Republic of Austria, the City of Vienna and the association "Dokumentationsarchiv".[85] The website offers on the one hand material intended for political education, e.g. a permanent virtual exhibition and data bases (e. g. Austrian victims of National Socialism, victims of Gestapo). On the other hand it offers an abundance of scientific material addressed mainly to professionals, students and interested non-professionals.

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[84] http://www.erinnern.at/zu-erinnern-at, 22.05.10.

[85] http://www.doew.at/, 22.05.10.

Summary

After having explained the term of political education we have had a look upon two examples that take into account its demand for education (in the area of National Socialism and Holocaust). They used the internet in a reasonable and user-friendly way as a platform for e-learning and providing information. They made hardly accessible and costly material on the internet available by providing source material, audio and video files. The strict meaning of e-learning however is not found here, as the mentioned examples only use it in the sense of having access to an e-learning platform but not a specific form of learning via web 2.0 channels (key word: moodle, fronter etc.) The reasons will be discussed in the following part.

Criticising the utilisation of web 2.0 with regard to political education

Before discussing the meaningfulness of web 2.0 in connection with political education we want to mention two theses which will be considered from different aspects:

1. Being qualified as a fast moving interactive medium, web 2.0 hardly finds a place in political education.
2. Web 2.0 is no appropriate form of political education focused on sustainability.

First of all we want to explore the contradiction of connecting web 2.0 to political education and thus raise the following issues: Is there a contradiction between the rapid developments of the internet and the sustainability of political education? Are the sensitive contents of political education opposed to the *fun society of web 2.0*? Can the forms of web 2.0 meet the demands for sensitive and complex contents? Is there not a predominance of the medium towards the contents? Is the mentality of web 2.0 compatible with the ideas of political education at all? Are the demands of web 2.0 for attraction and efficiency not foreign to the precepts of education?[86]

Furthermore it can be discussed if web 2.0 should and can be a place of learning at all: The idea of generating "digital learning scenarios"[87] for *digital natives* is to be questioned. Is it not absurd to adapt the educational contents to young people's habits? Would it not be reasonable to make them familiar with techniques and qualifications that remain closed for them in their everyday life? This also concerns the key word of "media literacy" that is very popular in this context but that has to be re-thought towards a more diversified media literacy. Besides we also consider the learning of a "participation competence"[88] by web 2.0 as critical: Is it not a distraction from the issue that you should first learn <u>not to participate virtually?</u> We could not help suspecting that participating on the internet is much easier (key

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[86] Vgl.: http://politischebildung20.blogspot.com/, 22.05.10.

[87] http://politischebildung20.blogspot.com/, 22.05.10.

[88] http://www.slideshare.net/JanSchmidt/das-web-20-und-seine-bedeutung-fr-die-politische-bildung, 22.05.10.

word: facebook groups). But we have to question if participating is the right word when the only meaning of participation in projects is reduced to one mouse click.

It is justified to regard the paradigm of better learning via e-learning and communication and participation on the internet (above all web 2.0) critically, since: what has improved indeed? What have students gained in the end?

If we have a short look on the competence criteria of the board of experts of 2007 again, it seems they have not improved remarkably by using web 2.0.

Conclusions

Political education may use the internet but it prefers it in its form of web 1.0. The limits of web 2.0, as mentioned in the title, lie within itself – by its rapid development and interaction it is not applicable to areas dependent on sustainability. On the contrary, political education should not close its mind to the new and latest media: a plea for media plurality seems to be appropriate but the use of these media must be thought over and their meaningfulness must be granted.

The different forms of political opinion making however have discovered web 2.0 as a new medium for themselves. The speed, the quickening potential and the possibility of permanent interaction make web 2.0 a catalytic converter of a change of politics (especially of the direct democratic) itself. Thus the political opinion making of these days is experiencing a new dimension never seen before. To say it with exaggerated words: the blogs of today will be tomorrow's new news agencies and the former analogue election campaigns are mutating to live stream events on the high speed web of the future.

3.3 Right-wing extremism and web 2.0

The German organization jugendschutz.net has been pointing for years towards the fact that internet-activism of right-wing extremists in Germany is steadily increasing. Neo-Nazis especially use social networks more frequently to distribute their misanthropic contents among youngsters. Their brochure „Rechtsextremismus Online – Jugendliche im Visier der Szene"[1] draws attention to the rising number of right-wing extremist websites in Germany in 2008, amounting to more than 1,700. The organization also records more than 1,500 violations, more than twice as much as in the previous year.

Austrian numbers are not available at the moment. The Austrian „Verfassungsschutzbericht 2010"[2], however, mentions a rising number of right-wing extremist activities in the virtual realm.

In the next paragraphs we want to give a short presentation why right-wing extremists have intensified their internet activities in the last few years. We want to discuss the question why the web is of special interest for young people and we want to deal with the changed appearance of right-wing extremists and neo-Nazis in social networks and the internet. Afterwards we will outline which web technologies are used by right-wing extremists and discuss the possibilities of taking action

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[1] http://www.jugendschutz.net/pdf/Projektbericht_2008.pdf

[2] http://www.bmi.gv.at/cms/BMI_Verfassungsschutz/BVT_VSB_2010_20100401_ Onlinefassung.pdf

against neo-Nazi contents in the internet. However, we first want to sketch our understanding of the term "right-wing extremism".

Right-wing extremism – an attempt of definition:

There is no generally acknowledged definition of right-wing extremism so far. However, experts largely agree on the following three elements we took from the Swiss homepage http://www.rechtsextremismus.ch that play a central role in right-wing extremist thinking and acting.

a) Pursuing a homogenous national community

Right-wing extremism pursues a racially, ethnically or culturally homogenous national community accompanied by the depreciation and despite of people belonging to other races, ethnic groups or cultures. Negative characteristics are attributed to them and they are accused of disintegrating the national community by their differentness.

The image of a homogenous national community is formed by going back to a former, idealized time when the national community had been free of external influences. At the same time classical conservative virtues as order, tidiness and conscientiousness are cherished and used to separate oneself from others who are denied these virtues.

b) Rejecting democratic values

Right-wing extremism is rejecting the central achievements of democracy: the division of powers between government, parliament and jurisdiction, the right of opposition, the multiple party system and the accountability of the ruling towards the people.

Despite it is propagating a collective, led by a strong hand to which the individual has to bow unconditionally.

c) Readiness for violence

Right-wing extremism glorifies characteristics like strength, perseverance, harshness or self-assertion, as well as cruelty or ruthlessness – the strong one is always right. They consider violence as legitimate means for establishing political goals.

Why right-wing extremists use the internet/web 2.0

Right-wing extremists use the internet, since even technically unexperienced people have no problems in generating a blog or a website. As managing a homepage is rather inexpensive, the   internet presence does not cause high costs. Furthermore a relatively high number of people can be reached with the just mentioned only little technical and financial efforts. It is of advantage for the right-wing extremists that the naming of the author, the person in charge and the quoted person are not necessary. Besides that and due to the international structure of the internet, neo-Nazis are capable of anonymously putting contents online, that are punishable by German and Austrian law (e. g. texts and songs glorifying National Socialism), by using foreign internet providers and thus escaping from criminal prosecution.

Why is web 2.0 so attractive for young people?

Social communities, blogs or video platforms are very popular with young people. The reasons are numerous. For example young people can take over a virtual identity that enables them to be treated as adults and not as teens. Even contacting other people, is often much easier on the web than under real life conditions – at least at that age. Functioning as interactive web, web 2.0 offers young people the opportunity to find recognition. You can prove to other users that you are capable of something special. Be it blogging or playing modern warfare… Whatsoever: you often do not have to wait long for finding recognition. The combination of different web 2.0-choices makes the internet a world of experience for many young people. This is a fact being exploited by right-wing extremists.

The presentation of right-wing extremists on the internet

Videos and music on the internet are the no 1-propaganda instruments for right-wing extremists. It often occurs that it becomes clear only at second sight that the persons running numerous websites are right-wing extremists. The appearance of neo-Nazis has changed significantly. They are no longer disguised in combat boots, bomber jackets and skinheads. Nazis also avoid limiting themselves culturally by publicly making reference to the "Third Reich". On the internet the right-wing extremists pretend to be young, modern, activist, lively and accessible. In their appearance and forms of action they often fall back on the example of the left autonomous movement or use and work up ideas of other scenes like the graffiti and hip-hop scene

The screen shot on the next page shows the radical right-wing website straßenkunst.info. It is a textbook example of neo-Nazis leading users astray by their snazzy appearance in the beginning. Only calls to line up for "national resistance" and to become "free Germans" make clear again that the people running this website are right-wing extremists. On numerous websites neo-Nazis try to offer young people a world of experience. Pictures of radical right-wing graffiti in public settings, mobilization for "national demonstrations" and summons to organize radical right-wing flash mobs on Rudolf Heß' birthday are part of this world of experience. By activism young people are to be made familiar with the radical right-wing surrounding. The already mentioned organization jugendschutz.net states that right-wing extremists are capable of skillfully hiding their hateful messages in video clips. It says that the production of their videos would become more and more professional and that they would succeed in communicating their racist, antidemocratic messages and corrupted historical facts in a subtle way.

Web-applications (web 1.0 and web 2.0) used by right-wing extremists

As already discussed in the previous chapter, right-wing extremists take up more and more modern and up-to-date forms of communicating information. This is also reflected by the variety of technical applications on the internet. According to jugendschutz.net in 2007 already half of the 1707 registered right-wing extremist websites were equipped with videos, sounds and possibilities of communication. Today a website built up according to web 1.0-standards is no longer competitive. We therefore assume that almost all radical right-wing websites have integrated at least one application of web 2.0.

This screenshot on the next page shows an excerpt of the website of Austria's Nationale Volkspartei (NVP). It already reveals some applications, e. g. a YouTube-video on the right top of the page or the networking via social media as seen from the "twitter", "facebook" and "flickr" buttons.

The radical right-wing scene does not only use YouTube for documenting marches, demonstrations, speeches of (party) members or common activities as Midsummer Festivals or hiking trips but also for making propaganda for the radical right-wing scene. Rainer Fromm of "Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung in Deutschland" reports on video clips on YouTube that show pictures from Nazis' everyday life after Hitler's seizure of power. The material embraces NS-publications, photos, propaganda texts, video sequences of "Wochenschau" and NS-propaganda films. Personal statements of the video authors or text boxes are added to the material.

> „Auf diese Art entstehen neue Propagandawerke aus einer Kombination von altem und neuem Material, die entweder die NS-Diktatur verherrlichen oder aber, im Zusammenschnitt mit Symbolen der aktuellen rechtsextremen Parteien (wie der NPD, den Republikanern oder der DVU) und Gruppierungen, die "Erfolge" der NS-Diktatur auf die modernen Rechtextremen zu übertragen versuchen."[89]

Right-wing extremists make use of social networks, YouTube and increasingly message boards, too. There are right-wing extremist choices for all ages, interest groups and income classes: online dating platforms, job platforms "von Kamerad zu Kamerad", video, music and game share programs. The games carry names like "Nazi Doom", „KZ-Rattenjagd", „Die Säuberung" and are mainly distributed from the US. In addition to music share programs, Nazi web radio was established. In 2008 Jugendschutz.net counted 16 radio programs in Germany, twice as

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[89] http://www.bpb.de/themen/2BWYNR,0,Rassistischer_Hass_im_Word_Wide_Web.html [01.03.2010].

much as one year earlier. [90] Online shops are an important source of income for the right scene as well as a means for distribution of propaganda material. In technical language this web application is called "e-commerce". In the following chapter we will deal in detail with the sale of radical right-wing material.

Goals pursued by right-wing extremists on the internet

After numerous prohibitions of neo-Nazi organizations and marches in the nineties the right wing had to seek new forms of networking and new forms of activism and recruiting of members. Rather quickly the radical right wing learnt to use the internet for its own purposes. Its advantage is at the one hand that it is inexpensive and on the other hand that it addresses the young directly within their innermost territory (for a more detailed explanation of the advantages of the internet for the Nazi-scene, see chapter 1).

Internet goals of right wingers:

1. Mobilization: One of the advantages of the internet is that many people can be reached without spending much effort. This also helps the right wingers to summon their followers – e. g. for commemoration marches like the annual "Rudolf-Hess-commemoration march" or for demonstrations in regard to current events. On its website the NVP is calling its followers to become active on their own. As an example they provide anti-EU flyers, flyers against the construction of mosques or against foreigners and appeal to their readers to distribute the flyers.

2. Information of contrary contents: The right wingers want to push through „their truth", but as the attitudes of radical right-wing mostly do not correspond to common sense, they want to make known their information, their opinions regarding certain events and they want to invalidate the "publicly accepted" view. The right-wing radical website alpendonau.info, for example, has strongly promoted FPÖ-candidate Barbara Rosenkranz during the Austrian presidential election campaign in spring 2009. At this point it took a position different from most other media. The point of view in reporting about current events, living persons or parties is mostly a different one. Sometimes this can become a problem when right-wing extremists are questioning historical facts like the Holocaust and are demanding an abolishment of "Verbotsgesetz" at the same time

3. Diffamation of opponents of the radical right-wing scene: If student Robert Slovacek had never started a page against presidential candidate Barbara Rosenkranz on facebook his photo, name and address would have never appeared on alpendonau.info.

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[90] http://www.jugendschutz.net/materialien/projektbericht2008.html [01.03.2010].
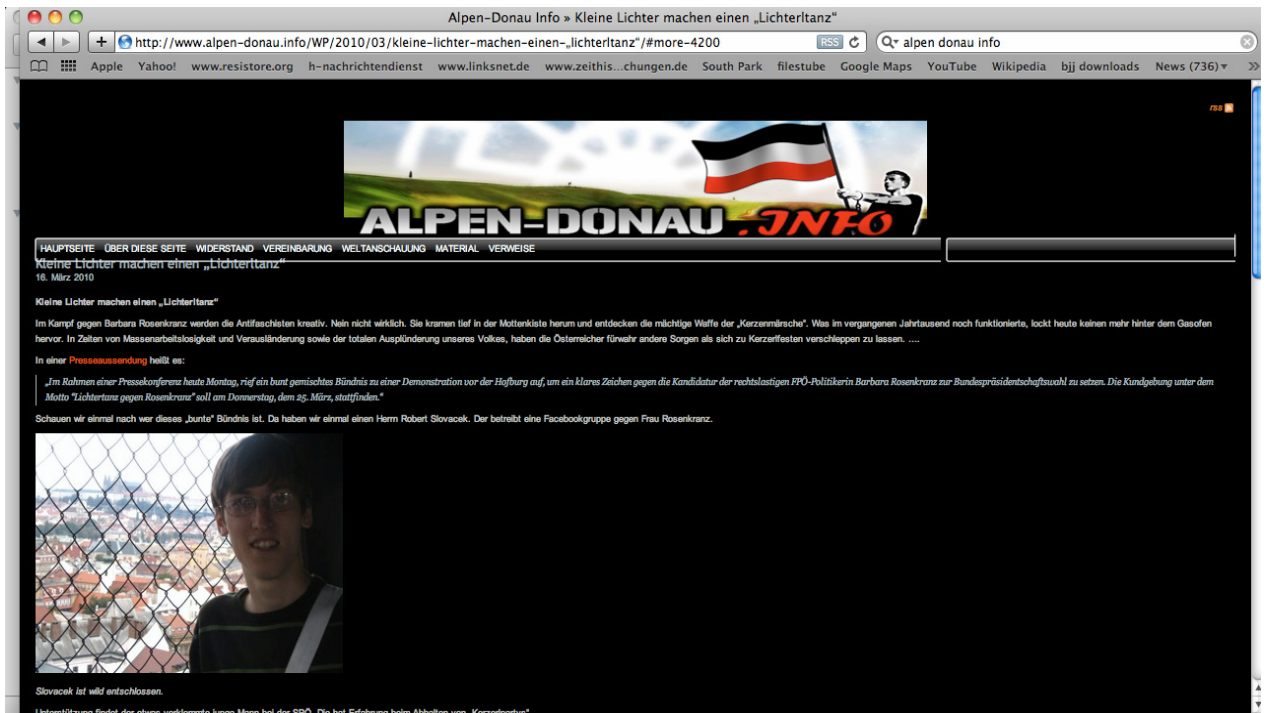
Slovacek is not the only one mentioned on this page with his name and address. Politicians, activists, journalists and Austrians of Jewish background are purposefully exposed. By publishing their personal data the sphere of personal privacy of the targeted persons is offended on purpose.

Some radical right-wing message boards – not on alpendonau.info – call openly or subtly for violence against certain persons.

4. Recruitment of new members: It has already been discussed in the third chapter which forms right-wingers use to especially address to young people.

5. Greater self-display: Each group depending on new members and struggling with its image, is displaying itself in a greater way than it actually is. By linking themselves on the internet with other websites, like-minded associations, political parties and private persons, the right-wingers want to display that they are embedded into a tight network and thus show certain strength. Another strategy for displaying greatness – mainly used by parties and clubs – is indicating the addresses of employees or members at the most different places. Both networking and geographical coverage is important for the size of an organization. Using these two components it is very easy to give a different picture.

6. Making money out of web shops: Besides numerous anti-Semitic, xenophobic, revisionist materials you can get for free on the internet, a number of web shops have developed. They are making a lot of money out of buttons, t-shirts, posters and flags. One example for such an online shop is "resistore". It is distributing t-shirts marked "Revolution since 1933", "Keine Waffen für Israel" or "Nationaler Sozialismus" (see screenshot).
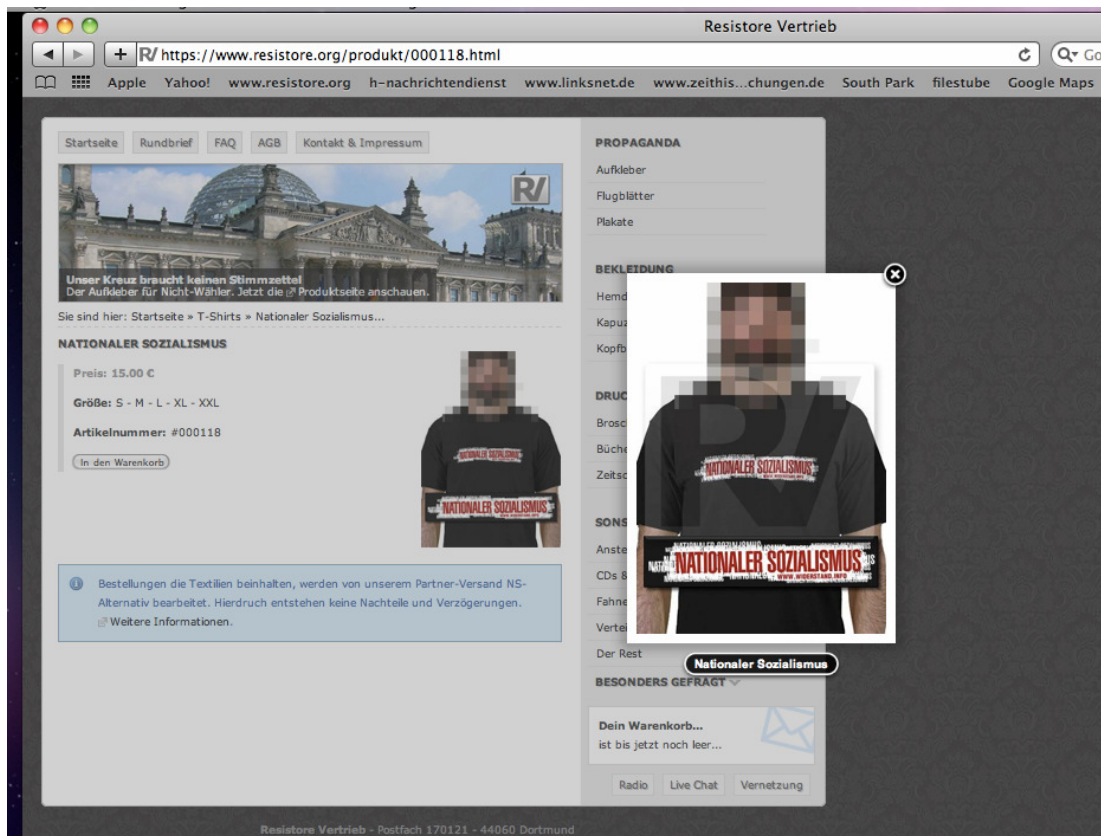
Online shops are offering many benefits for buyers and sellers. For starting an online shop you do not need a room for which you have to pay rent, you do not need personnel or at least less than in a real shop. Besides, you are not restricted to the size of your rooms nor to certain opening times. The greatest advantage, however, is the anonymity and that you neither as buyer nor seller have to struggle with opponents of the right-wing scene or the police with regard to criminal prosecution.

Problems in banning radical right-wing material from the internet

The basic problem of removing radical right-wing material from the web is that servers are not located in the home country. What is forbidden in Germany or Austria may be allowed in the US. Now a US operator may respond to complaints and take the material from the internet, but he is not forced to do it, as only the law of the country must be applied in which the server is located. For example the website of German neo-Nazi Ernst Zündel has been registered in the US, but has not been removed from the worldwide web in spite of Zündel's conviction in the meantime.

Another example for the powerlessness of German and Austrian authorities is the YouTube video platform that has been purchased by Google whose server is located in America. YouTube is offering several benefits to its users – among others are a very wide liberty of opinion and speech also being rooted in US American law. YouTube is of the opinion that its video platform should be openly accessible for everybody and that the responsibility of reporting extremist contents and of urging on abandoning them lies with the community.

Experiences have shown that YouTube's reaction is much quicker when videos impinge copyright law than when they are a matter of so-called hate speeches. Additionally, the great number of video clips makes it difficult to find radical right-wing material and thus to urge on its removal. YouTube is noting 70,000 video uploads per day – you have to be very familiar with that scene in order to discover new radical right-wing material. Often posts are not deleted but only deferred and renamed. Opponents are often not able to check whether the material has been deleted indeed.

What can be done against right-wing agitation on the internet?

What is most important, is on the one hand to inform especially young people about right-wing extremism on the internet and on the other hand that the community on the internet becomes active on its own. Users can report radical right-wing material to the authorities – e. g. the Austrian Office for Protection of the Constitution, e-mail directly to the providers but also address to websites revealing radical right-wing agitation on the internet and being up in arms against it. www.boocompany.com for example has been dealing for years with the transgressions of companies that admit radical right-wing agitation, e.g. *facebook.* This social platform is only very slow in responding to hints that right-wing radicals use the network for their own purposes.

The discussions are repeatedly mentioning multi-national and bi-national agreements in order to ban right-wing radical websites from the web – even in case the server is located in the US. Those holding a very radical view desire a so-called "cyber police" which would only deal with those issues and discover illegal websites on the internet. Some even desire filters established by the government for blocking such sites. But here you have to consider that such filters may not only be used for banning right-wing agitation from the internet but for much more.

Finally it can be said that the following instruments could be useful in containing right-wing agitation:

1. Giving information on it and rising awareness of this issue in society
2. A simple cooperation with authorities – because active citizens must also be heard
3. The reporting must be followed by deeds that have to become visible for the active citizen, therefore multi-national agreements have to be concluded and kept in the future.

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Abbildung 2) Josef II. in Dragoneruniform. Gemälde von J. Hickel. Copyright by Kunsthistorisches Museum, Wien
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Abbildung 3) Profilfoto von der persönlichen Facebook-Seite von Barbara Rosen-kranz
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Abbildung 4) Profilfoto der Facebook-Seite „Bundespräsident Dr. Heinz Fischer"
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Abbildung 5) Profilfoto der Seite „GEGEN BARBARA ROSENKRANZ!!!!!!!"
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Abbildung 6) Profilfoto der Seite „Eine Million Österreicher gegen Barbara Rosen-kranz!"
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Abbildung 7) Profilfoto der Seite „Gegen Barbara Rosenkranz als Bundespräsiden-tin"
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Abbildung 8) Profilfoto der Facebook-Seite „Heinz Fischer NEIN danke wir Wählen Barbara Rosenkranz !"
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4 Politics & New Media in Poland

4.1 Preface

New media in Poland is constantly gaining popularity. This report wants to consider the way it can be used to help shape society. There is an opportunity to develop a fully democratic and civic society with high media and political literacy.

Society exists in a dimension consisting of multiple elements, three of which were taken into consideration, according to their importance to the topic: politics, history and media. They influence society in many different ways and on different levels: politics makes law and creates organizations and institutions that help society function in a democratic way, general history tells us how society has developed and how citizen have reacted to different situations. In turn media is a tool that spreads information and helps create a more civic and fair society. New media such as blogs, twitters and internet TV are redefining the current societal and political conception of media.

This report studies the people of three categories of who are associated with the following elements: politicians, journalists and citizens. According to this partition these relevant analysis on how new media tools influence the political decision making, were made. The analysis will shows that all three groups are connected with each other and the whole system cannot exist without one of them. It was also noted that some members of one group form part of another group, for example politicians often act as journalists and vice versa. There are three parts to the report, each concentrating on a different group and studying the specific correlations between the groups.

A very important part of the report is the analysis of political and media education and how they are supported by government and new media. Media literacy is seen as the crucial element of political opinion making. The critical parts of new media which are believed to have the most influence on political decision making are the blogosphere, websites of politicians and internet TV.

4.2 Brief history of Polish media

History of Polish press begins with newspaper which due of its long title („Merkuriusz Polski dzieje wszystkiego świata w sobie zamykający dla informacji pospolitej") was known as the „Mercure". The newspaper was quite popular. The expansion of Polish press took place between first (1772) and last partition (1795) of Poland, and correlated with a serious effort to reform political system. In 1795 everything got complicated. On former Polish lands three completely different press law systems were established.

On the 11th of November 1918 Poland came back on the map of Europe. Polish officers that previously served in the Austrian army (sometimes still in Austrian uniforms) used former Austrian field stations to experiment with Polish radio.

Despite many problems, the great crisis and anti Bolshevik war, Polish media kept on growing. Unfortunately, the 1939 war changed technical and political situation. The war time devastations were so big, that the first TV broadcast after World War

II took place no sooner than in 1952. Of course all media was a means of propaganda for the communistic government. Citizens preferred to listen to Free Europe Radio or to read underground newspaper.

The Year 1989 changed everything. New newspapers, free television, free radio. Not everyone was happy, especially journalist from old media. First of all many of them had problems with new technologies, secondly after the round table agreements no one wanted to cooperate with the former communist government or anybody who worked for them.

On the 17th of September 1991 a group of scientist from the Warsaw University connected with a server in Copenhagen. Until 1994 only the scientists used the web. In 1996 TPSA - national telephone provider gave everybody, who had a dial-up modem and a lot of money, a possibility to join the e-community. The same year, businessmen were able to use DSL (Digital Subscriber Line) modem.

First commercial television started broadcasting in 1992. "Polsat" immediately became popular, since Polish citizens wanted Hollywood-made entertainment.

1996 "Kurier Jarociński" and "Gazeta Dąbrowska" two local newspapers became the first local e-newspapers. Of course television was changing too. In 1997 first political party created political party TV. One year later Michał Marciniak created the first Internet radio.

In 2001 the first blog by a politician was written. The same year ITI group opened the first 24 hours news TV station which very quickly became quite popular.

2004 brought the first social network, 2005 gave us the first Internet TV. The time line finishes with 2010 event - launching of the first local social network.

4.3 Polish Internet users

This part of the report presents information about the Polish Internet users and their structure. The answer to the main question, which was – Who is an ordinary user of the Internet in Poland? – would not be possible without using various tools like, e.g., surveys and analysis.[91]

Prompt and accurate statistics are the key to proper understanding of the society structure and its development.

The essay focuses on the most important citizens' properties that include: age, gender, level of education, place of residence, the tendencies existing among Polish citizens and the relationships between people, government and politicians.

Keeping this section clear and understandable requires presenting the results by presenting at least one example of the charts provided to this material. The other tables, diagrams and charts will be, of course, explained and analyzed but their graphical content will be found as an attachment. The chart below presents the users divided into the age groups and the time (measured in hours) they spend on the Internet. It also exemplifies an average number of the websites entries per user monthly, average time spent on the Internet by single user daily. At the first

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[91] http://pliki.gemius.pl/Raporty/2009/02_2009_Polski_internet_2008_2009.pdf; date of connection 31.05.2010.

glance, what is the most evident, is the fact that the most active group of users are the ones from the age group between 15 and 24. Young people are not afraid of the Internet, they see it as the reliable source of information, entertainment and the place where they can meet new people. The least active group is the group of people aged of 55 +. Such an array is not an uniquely Polish phenomenon. It can be found in almost every European country. It is caused by the fact that the youth has been living in the technologically developed world almost since the day they were born. The elders, on the other hand, had to adapt to the new reality. If they want to be technologically literate, they have to take a step from the analog era into the digital era.

What is important is that the time spent on the Internet by users of every mentioned group has increased over the last few years. Nowadays, people are more active than they used to be in the past. In 2008 an average Polish Internet user spent over 44 hours monthly surfing the Internet, which gives a total number of 1 hours and 30 minutes a day. Comparing this result to the year 2004, we can see the growth of over one hour. This tendency can always be seen in the numbers of website entries. In 2004, statistic user generated barely over 900 entries. Four years later it was almost 3000. By examining these results, it is possible to say that Polish people not only started to use the Internet but also to appreciate its capabilities. Of course, it cannot be forgotten that the digital infrastructure has been strongly developed by the authorities and as a result of this process the great improvement in using the Internet can be seen.

INTERNET USAGE TIME

In 2008 a statistic polish internaut spent over 44 hours monthly surfing the internet, which gives a total number of 1 hours and 30 minutes a day. Comparing this result to the year 2004, we can see the growth of over one hour. Moreover, a statistic internaut generated about 2000 entries more than five year ago.
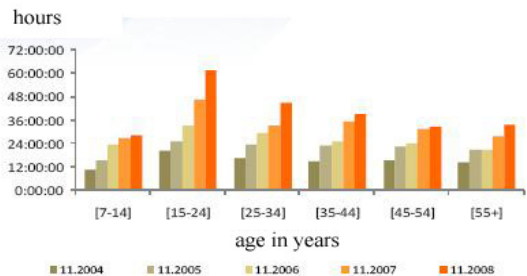
period	average time per user monthly,	average time per user daily,	an average number of entries per user monthly
11.2004	16:27:22	0:32:55	929
11.2005	22:27:14	0:44:54	1358
11.2006	27:50:03	0:55:40	1653
11.2007	36:37:38	1:13:15	2279
11.2008	44:20:20	1:28:41	2915

In the last few years the amount of time spent on surfing the internet was systematically increasing in every age group. At the moment, young people (15 – 24) spend the most time on the internet – about 2 hours a day. It is over 30 minutes more than the time spend on the internet by the statistic user.

Source: http://pliki.gemius.pl/Raporty/2009/02_2009_Polski_internet_2008_2009.pdf; date of connection 31.05.2010.

Next important factor is the place of residence. The Internet users were analyzed under the criteria of their place of living. As can be seen on the graph there are several categories distinguished such as countryside, cities from 25.000 to 50.000 inhabitants and cities over 500.000 inhabitants. The interesting thing is that within last few years the percentage of users living on the countryside has grown rapidly and at the moment it is the largest group in Poland, larger even than a group of people living in the city agglomerations. This situation raises a question – How is this possible? There are two simple answers.

Firstly, even that the people living on the countryside have the biggest share among the users of the Internet, the quality of their connection is relatively poor if compared to the connection used in the big cities. Secondly, we live in times where people prefer to work in the big cities and live in the small villages or small cities. The small area of such places makes it easier for authorities to establish the wireless connection, much easier than in the agglomerations.

Next point of this part touches upon the level of education. We distinguished all the levels that are achievable in Poland – from the primary school to master degree. Of course, situations where someone does not graduate from any kind of school was also included. In the last several years the state of affairs has not changed neither dramatically nor slightly. The usage of the Internet within all the groups has maintained more or less the same level. As it can be seen, people with an academic background go on the Internet more frequently, not only to find reliable information but also to socialize with people or to be entertained. The low usage of the Internet in the groups with the primary education is the same as in other European countries.

The reason of such situation is that people who did not even graduated the basic levels of education are mostly afraid of the Internet, do not know how to use it or even if they do, they do not find it necessary. All they want to know can be easily found on the radio, TV, in newspapers or by asking their friends or neighbors. It is a challenge for the government to introduce Internet to those people, teach them how to use it and show them what possibilities it gives.

Regarding the gender of the users, the state of affairs has always been more or less equal. The men have had a slight advantage, however if you analyze the changes over the years, it is clearly visible that women have blurred the difference.

At the moment the statistics show that Polish Internet users consist of 50 percents of men and 50 percents of women. This raises a question – how did the women catch up with the men in this field of life. The answer is not clear, probably it might be due to the raise of the type of the modern business woman. A business woman uses the Internet more often to be up to date with current events.

The last survey shows the civic journalism which is becoming more popular among the citizens. People have noticed that they do not have to be only passive receivers of the information. They connect to the Internet and can also comment on the information, influence it and even create it. This massive and powerful tool has become a social tube for the people. A tool that lets them express themselves and shows the world that they have their own opinion, their own voice and they want to use it. However, civic journalism is still in the phase of development. In 2008 the

monthly range of the civic news bulletins slightly exceeded 10 percents of all the Polish news bulletins.

If the situation in Poland continues to progress in the same direction as it has been over last few years, there is a real chance that by the next decade, Polish society will be fully computer and Internet literate. Polish people are at the stage of discovering the power of the Internet and the possibilities it gives them. Also, the authorities start to use it more often and what is important, braver than in the past. Even that there are still many things that must be improved, the Polish society is on its way towards development.

4.4 Media education and media literacy

Analysis of media education should be started with its definition, which says that educational media are various items, devices and materials, along with mass media, which enable people to seek and gather information, and are conducting particular information by means of words, images and sounds. This branch of education encourages a probing approach to the world of media: Who is this message intended for? Who wants to reach this audience, and why? From whose perspective is this story told? Whose voices are heard, and whose are absent? What strategies does this message use to get my attention and make me feel included?[92]

Education is performed mostly within institutions specially created for that purpose, like schools, however sometimes also by mass media and other institutions and organizations. In order to accomplish the target of education it is necessary to provide schools with necessary equipment. In Poland there are few important government projects connected with this problem. E.g.: a computer in every commune; a computer in secondary school; interkl@sa project. Appropriate level of media literacy and proficiency among teachers is the second requirement. They must be willing and able to utilize modern technology. Therefore it is necessary to educate teachers sufficiently in their profession.[93]

There are two main goals of media education. The first one is to prepare user to utilize media as a tool of communication, learning and intellectual work. This goal can be described as technological, because it consists of knowledge and skills acquisition that is connected with using media equipment. Second goal is a critical perception of information and media reports delivered to the user.

Media education is influenced by internal policy of the country along with appearance of new media. Evidence to support that statement may be divided by their approach: institutionalized, and non-institutionalized.

To the non-institutionalized classification belong:

- Polish National Bank website, where lots of materials connected with knowledge about monetary policy can be found: articles,

- films or games,digital library website, which offers electronic publications,

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[92] B. Siemieniecki, *Pedagogika medialna*, Warszawa 2007, p. 136.

[93] *Media Education. Materials from educational conference*, Warsaw 2000.

- computer at every school project which reduces price of computers for all schools,
- so far everyone gets Windows 2000 license for free, e-voting, an issue, which causes a large discussion in Poland, e-learning, e-learning regulations in Poland have been in force since The Act of Electronic System of 2003, possibility of studying via the Internet exists for 6 years and there are about 200 schools offering e-learning.

The institutionalized classification consist of:

- interactive TV programs; their main goal is to comment current events, so that observers can participate in them by standing sms, e-mail or calling to the studio,
- political services, discussion forums, interviews, galleries and quotations can be found, educational service PAP SA, website including interesting issues from all around the world.

In Poland media education was introduced into the program of general education in 1999 education reform. In general education program a branch of education called: „Media education" appeared. Its content can be implemented either as separate elements of various subjects, or as independent classes. At the University of Adam Mickiewicz at the Faculty of Education Studies a specialization of 'media education' was introduced. Graduates of that studies receive a title of master of media education and are certified to teach information technology and educational paths in elementary school or secondary school.

We would not be able to understand media news without media literacy, gained during the process of either general, or specialized education.

Media Literacy is a 21st century approach to education. It provides a framework to access, analyze, evaluate and create messages in a variety of forms — from print through video to the Internet. Media literacy builds an understanding of the role of media in society as well as essential skills of inquiry and self-expression necessary for citizens of a democracy. To be literate today people must be able to:

- decode, understand, evaluate and write through, and with, all forms of media,
- read, evaluate and create text, images and sounds, or any combination of these elements.

'Media literacy' is the expected outcome from work in either media education or media study. The more you learn about or through the media, the more media literacy you have. Media literacy is the skill of experiencing, interpreting, analysing and making media products.[94]

On the Internet many services for children, which develop their media skills, may be found. These services provide education by means of: forum, games, news, articles, films and others. Poland takes care of children protection from harmful

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[94] http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/teachers/media_literacy/what_is_media_literacy.cfm, date of connection 18.04.2010.

media content. It is accomplished by websites, which in easy and friendly way inform them about threats connected with the Internet. This message is given in form of games, comics and other multimedia content.

In the days of informational society, preparation and ability to use information systems, sending and processing information became a necessary ability. That is why media education and media literacy has been becoming more and more important role in the Polish society.

4.5 Journalism and new media

Journalists are a significant part of Polish society. One of distinguishing features of this group is the situation of a journalist in Polish press law. According to Press Law Act a journalist is a person who edits, creates or generates press materials, is employed by editorial office or works with editorial office authorization. We have to admit that this Act comes from 1984 and it's not up to date. In Poland, press refers not only to paper magazines, but also TV, radio and Internet. For a long time in our country there have been discussions about the position of journalist. From the Press Law Act stems that a person who doesn't profit from working for editorial office can't be called a journalist.[95] Act's definition of a journalist is very wide and it concerns big part of a society.

In spite of an old law, journalists who works for new media are under much bigger society control, because the results of their work is exposed to constant criticisms. It has a big influence on new media journalists' working style, because now they have to be more resistant to stress. In Poland it has become very visible, especially in big editorial offices, journalists' working style changed because of the spectators control. According to these changes we can distinguish two types of journalists – traditional and new media.

Traditional journalist have many functions. One of the most important is informing. That's the base for creating social media society and to make better political choices.[96] Although it is very important, informing is nothing without the rest. Socialization and leadership, that can have huge impact on politicians by exit polls, made by Polish institutions testing public opinion – CBOS, OBOP, Pentor, Ipsos, GFK Polonia, published in press.

Politics is not the only one being influenced. One of the „soft" journalism functions is integration showing media as a multi-cultural bridge, by hiring foreigners in national media or simple culinary programs[97]. In Poland there is, for example, Omena Mensah as a weather girl, Briann Scott – a DJ in RMF FM radio and Pascal Brodnicki – the most famous cook in Poland.

An interesting case is the joining of old and new media taking place when an educational computer software is added as a bonus to a newspaper. It has an educational function – sometimes media supplements the knowledge not available at schools and universities. Journalism is a early public warning system and also per-

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[95] J. Sobczak, *Prawo prasowe. Komentarz*, Warszawa 2008, p. 328.

[96] M. Chyliński, S. Russ-Mohl, *Dziennikarstwo*, Warszawa 2008, p. 19.

[97] Ibidem, p. 19.

forms the duty of entertainment[98]. However it's reaching 19th century, that can't be the real media's function. The media in our understanding.

The last but not the least important is the function of control and censorship[99]. Media has been called the fourth power not without cause. It needs to be underlined that Poland has taken 32nd place in World Press Freedom Index in 2007. That is a huge progress comparing to the year earlier, where it took 59th place.

Now, when all the functions of a journalist in traditional media are known it is turn to introduce new media journalists and their functions. Firstly what can be noticed is the so called Infotainment.[100] It's the fusion of information and entertainment. Information on its own is not enough anymore. It has to be attractive and well-wrapped but not too complicated – it has to be told with simple language and should be rather short. Nowadays, journalists have to be closer to the audience. They have to talk about the issues concerning common receiver. That's why they focus more on social problems than on politics.

Journalist profession is not closed anymore, that's why the competence of a journalist is changing. Today journalists are less creative, often they copy others texts from the Internet or modify materials sent to the editorial office.

What is more journalists' opinions and comments are more often moving to the blog than to the column. Blogs are the place where we can know more about the profession of a journalist.

Psyched on splash is an expression used to describe a person determined to get news. Here we can see the journalists' assumption that 'bad news is a good news'. Huge, tragic events are what new media is looking for.

Features of journalists' work and features of information in traditional and new media are linked.

In traditional media, like paper press or radio, information was available only for journalists, who worked in an editorial office, because it was delivered there by Press Agencies[101]. This information had a structure of a pyramid. The basic part was body of text, then lead and the title on the top.

What's more, the information could be broadcast by text, sound or video under no-time pressure. A journalist could explain the reasons and consequences of the event. Today, we can say that the nature of information as a product is changing. Information is not exclusive anymore, there is a possibility of research 24/7. It causes many threats, for example a threat of misinformation, because news is controlled by people who have never before been active in the process of creating it[102].

The number of pictures and multimedia content forces information to become shorter and therefore shallow. On the other hand, the Internet gives us more

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[98]   Ibidem, p. 20.

[99]   L. Olszański, *Dziennikarstwo internetowe*, Warszawa 2006, p. 90.

[100] K. Wolny-Zmorzyński, W. Furman, *Internetowe gatunki dziennikarskie*, Warszawa 2010, p. 75.

[101] M. Chyliński, S. Russ-Mohl, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

[102] L. Olszański, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

space to place all the material and documents. Information is becoming shorter also because of time pressure, when a journalist has to deliver more and more fresh news items.

New media gives us a combination of three traditional media, which makes information more attractive. It is related to the horizontal structure of information, where articles are much wider, thanks to the links in materials or movies next to the articles, the audience can know details of the case[103].

Another important group next to the journalists are politicians. There's a common ground between them, namely the fusion of journalism and politics. We have journalists who act like politicians and politicians acting like journalists. In the first group there is Tomasz Lis – the most popular columnist and TV journalist in Poland. He resigned from his own show in one of the biggest commercial TV channels and created new program on the Internet 'What about Poland'. It was the first program of this kind in the country.

His behavior relates to politics, because in 2004 he was claimed a front-runner in the presidential elections. Opinion survey carried out by one of the organizations testing public opinion for Newsweek Poland showed, that he would receive 43% of votes. He was to lose only with Jolanta Kwaśniewska. It had a big influence on his career, because he was fired from Polsat.

The representative of politicians acting like journalists is Janusz Palikot. He is a Civic Platform MP and one of the most controversial politicians in Poland. On his blog he described the Law & Justice (opposition party) convention, which no one, except for L&J members, was supposed to attend. He depicted it as if he had been there. His notes were quoted by all of the news media – TV, radio, portals. He made it a show. Finally, it turned out that someone else had been inside, who pretended to be a journalist and provided Palikot with facts, photos and movies from the convention.

Another area, where media and politics rendez vous takes place is a political party TV. It is a kind of potentially dangerous, funny or pathetic mixture, because it usually happens when an unqualified person in journalism from party youth association, young politician takes over journalist functions.

X.X. Youth-oriented VOD: UPR TV

That's a VOD channel made by the party youth association. UPR means Real Politics Union and it's a party composed of conservatives, libertarians and monarchists. Today they're outside of the mainstream, but with a very strong youth association, which makes them one of the most active parts on the Internet. Their YouTube channel comes in suitable to party's logotype coloring and includes mainly material from events UPR participates in, interviews with its former controversial leader Janusz Korwin-Mikke and social manifestations etc.

X.X. Poor substitute for professionals: SLD TV

SLD is Democratic Left Alliance – social-democratic political party which is still in the mainstream, but only with 13% in the higher chamber of Polish Parliament af-

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[103] K. Wolny-Zmorzyński, W. Furman, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

ter last elections. Their YouTube channel appears on joyful cartoon background, when their official website (while still in red and white) looks more calm. It's because of different target users. SLD TV is an example of political party TV with its own news, including original colorization, intro, jingle etc.

X.X. Synergy type: PO MEDIA NEWS

Third one is PO MEDIA NEWS made by PO – Civic Platform, one of the biggest political parties in Poland. It's characteristic because top news are taken from the public service broadcasts; original videos made by PO TV covers only statements of PO's regular members. There's also space for social campaign spots. Their main platform is the official website with looks very archaic, so it's way different comparing to the modern VOD channels.

X.X. Civic journalism in Poland: Introduction

Point of contact of journalism and politics is fascinating, but what really interest us in the context of Erasmus IP content is civic journalism. First of all we have to quote the Resolution on the community media in Europe from The European Parliament. With reference to this act civic journalism includes those, who are:

- from non-profit organizations,

- responsible to the society to whom they serve,

- who are engaged in the processes concerning the society,

- obliged to inform their society about activity and decisions of the community media,

- in case of a misconduct punished by the society,

- obliged to engage the society.

Here it is important to remember Art. 7 of Polish Press Law Act from 26th of January 1984 which says: 'Every text or picture published or sent to be published in the press regardless of a way of convey, sort, form, purpose or author is considered to be a press material. Such text or picture must be of information, column, documentary or any other feature'. It's only out-of-date in reference to two main areas of civic journalism in Poland.

X.X. Civic Internet-TV's

First one is Internet television exemplified by lookr.tv. It provides daily live shows at 6:00 p.m. and any person can participate in by sending questions online before the show, commenting or chatting during the show. It is worth noticing that on the upper right of the website appear some blips informing about the incoming shows.[104] On their YouTube channel the best episodes can be found. However the key feature of lookr.tv is the number of programs created by users. What is interesting, site owners are widely using Blip and Nasza-Klasa to promote the project.[105]

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[104] Blip is a Polish equivalent of Twitter. Consequently, blips are just like twitts.

[105] Nasza-Klasa is a Polish equivalent of Facebook.

Second example of Internet civic TV is pino. The possibility of streaming live shows with a simple computer video recorder is characteristic of pino, but video podcasts are still the most important feature. It can be concluded from the site's typical VOD layout. This year on pinoTV there was an interactive chat with one of the candidates in the presidential elections, Andrzej Olechowski, who by himself had to read questions directly from chat window and then answer them.

X.X. Civic news portals

One of the thesis we want to prove is that journalists have lost their monopoly and control over information. To make it credible we can bring examples of civic news portals. The main one is wiadomosci24.pl. It is under the control of seven professional journalists who correct received materials and decline texts that include material forbidden by law. For now, over 3000 civic journalists have published there at least one article, photo gallery or video. The website has over 80700 individual visitors and over 2,200,000 entries monthly. In Symetria Agency research made in November 2007, Wiadomosci24.pl did better than Gazeta.pl, Onet.pl or Interia.pl (biggest Polish news portals) in usability and functionality. The site also publishes material from 'Polska The Times' and press agencies, to make it a complete and trustworthy news portal.

The last argument to support the importance of civic journalism in Poland can be the comparison of tvn24.pl[106] and Kontakt24[107] platforms that evidently show that ITI Group (owners) treats them equally. They look very similar to each other and the big media institution include logo of its main TV in civic news portal.

4.6 Blogging in Poland

The issue of relations between an individual and a group is one of the most important problems in sociology. It is connected to the constant changes in society, that are the result of modernization processes e.g. blogging[108].

Blogs became popular in the late nineties of the 20th century. There are different types of blogs: personal diaries (open to visitors and commented on), silva rerum

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[106] Commercial TV news portal.

[107] Civic journalism portal made by the ITI Group. In synergy with tvn24.pl.

[108] In analysis that deals with that problem two seemingly opposing views can be observed: one that emphasizes individualism (people look for a new forms of identifications in a individualistic way, they decide independently on each and every aspect of their lives and create their identity and biography on their own account); one that emphasizes the fall of individualism through participation in new communities (this approach is the reverse of F. Tonnies's classic conception of social bonds. It stated that European societies, influenced by the development of capitalism are gradually shifting from *Gemeinschaft* – community and *Gesellschaft* – society. Maffesoli maintains, that the direction of changes is quite the opposite. People living in a society dominated by certain social roles and positions want to go back to a society where there would be strong bonds among the members). D. Batorski, M. Marody, A. Nowak (ed.), *Społeczna przestrzeń Internetu*, Warszawa 2006.

(a compilation of various information, news items and websites links), specialist blogs (dedicated to academic and scientific issues), and other.[109]

Main reasons of writing a blog

Point the reason for which you write a blog:

- to express my emotions
- to voice my opinion
- to preserve ideas, experiences and feelings
- hobby, interests
- to establish new contacts
- to maintain contact with friends and acquaintances
- science and education
- to enhance my professional career
- others
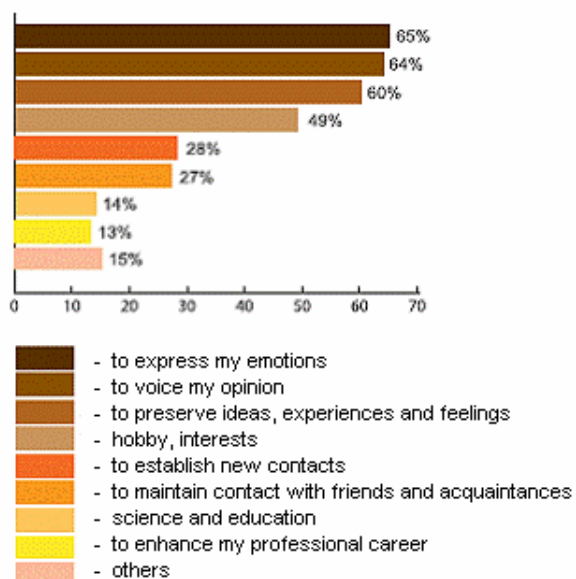
Source: http://www.pbi.org.pl/s/p/pliki/7/7/badanie_blogow.pdf, date of connection 5.03.2010.

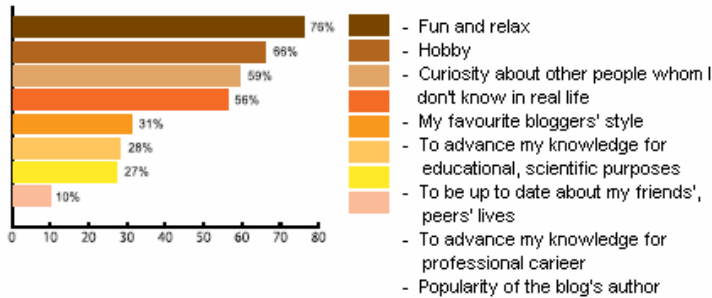[109] 'Blog – an English word that stands for a type of an Internet register - a diary written on the Internet, a kind of a personal website, on which the author posts his/her notes about his/her everyday life, thoughts, reflections and other, in his opinion interesting information'.

Elements enhancing credibility of a blog[110]

Point the reasons for which you read blogs:

76%	- Fun and relax
66%	- Hobby
59%	- Curiosity about other people whom I don't know in real life
56%	- My favourite bloggers' style
31%	- To advance my knowledge for educational, scientific purposes
28%	- To be up to date about my friends', peers' lives
27%	- To advance my knowledge for professional carieer
10%	- Popularity of the blog's author

Source: http://www.pbi.org.pl/s/p/pliki/7/7/badanie_blogow.pdf, date of connection 5.03.2010.

Blog is usually a complex combination of text, pictures, films and voices. To express their ideas properly and to enrich their websites Polish bloggers often use blogrolls, permalinks and multimedia.

A blogroll is a typical blog element. It is a set of permanent references placed on the right column of the website. In spite of the fact that blogroll is a crucial blog feature, our studies showed a majority of blogs lack this element.

Permalinks are a reference point to websites mentioned on the blog. According to our research such links are posted by 55% of the bloggers. In most cases they relate to professional or world-describing blogs, what could lead to a conclusion that there is a growing tendency to quote and link the source of information.

Other multimedial contents are audio material that is podcasts and video materials. There is a clear correlation between the number of videos imported and the site's popularity measured in the number of readers and comments posted.

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[110] http://www.pbi.org.pl/s/p/pliki/7/7/badanie_blogow.pdf, date of connection 5.03.2010.

How does it look in Poland?

USING BLOGROLL AND PERMALINKS ON BLOG
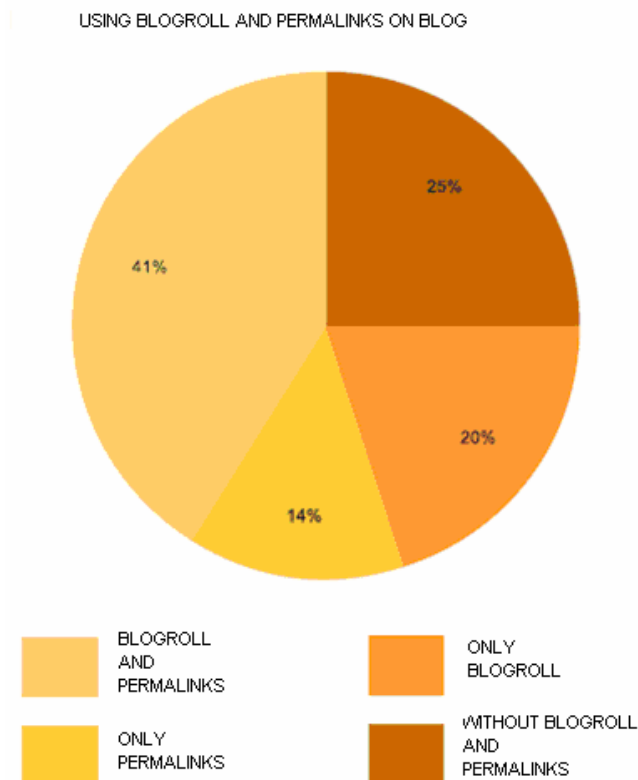
Source: http://www.pbi.org.pl/s/p/pliki/7/7/badanie_blogow.pdf, date of connection 5.03.2010.

Apart from being popular with the youth, writing blogs attracts intellectuals and artists. People whose way of life is closely connected with the Internet, such as IT specialists also adopted the blog style on their sites. One of the more interesting examples is a reliable blog on the connections between the Internet and the law by Piotr Waglowski (http://prawo.vagla.pl), where the author presents his personal selection of legal matters. At times highly specialized information on "trade" blogs (mostly IT blogs) might be incomprehensible to laymen.[111]

Political Blogosphere

Political issues are widely discussed on the Internet also within blogs. It is not only the politicians who communicate in such way but most importantly the citizens, whose political activities online are gaining importance. In this report politicians' blogosphere and civic blogosphere has been looked at and analyzed separately.

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[111] L. Olszański, *op. cit.*

Politicians' Blogosphere

The first blog by a politician in Poland was written in 2001. Ever since then numbers of such blogs have been multiplying reaching a number of 123 in August 2007. It is estimated that if the pace of increase (about 1,063 blogs a month) continues, by December 2010 each politician will have a blog.[112]

An Internet service that monitors the blogs by politicians distinguishes the most widely read blogs. This report uses the ranking to analyse how the popular bloggers use interactive features in their online diaries. The aforementioned features can be seen at the top of the chart below while the names of the bloggers are placed in the left column.

Blogs of Polish politicians

Interactive features / Author	comment option	link to the author's e-mail	search	archive	links to other blogs	links to the author's websites	links to websites created by others	guest book
Janusz Palikot	✔	✗	✔	✔	✗	✔	✔	✗
Lech Wałęsa (videoblog)	✔	✗	✔	✔	✗	✗	✗	✔
Ludwik Dorn	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✗	✔	✗
Marek Migalski	✔	✔	✗	✔	✗	✔	✔	✗
Stefan Niesiołowski	✔	✗	✔	✔	✗	✗	✗	✔
Janusz Korwin Mikke	✔	✗	✗	✔	✔	✔	✔	✗
Waldemar Pawlak	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✗
Marek Borowski	✔	✗	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Joanna Senyszyn	✔	✗	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✗
Leszek Miller	✔	✔	✔	✔	✗	✔	✔	✗
Wojciech Wierzejski	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✗	✔	✗

Source: own resources

Some conclusions have been drawn from the analysis. First, it should be noted that the most popular blogs are not necessarily highly interactive. Janusz Palikot's blog lacks three interactive features including link to the author's e-mail address and Lech Walesa's videoblog misses out on four important features. Waldemar Pawlak and Marek Borowski whose blogs are the closest to the interactive ideal come respectively 6th and 7th in the ranking. Link to politicians' e-mail addresses and links to other blogs are the most neglected features among Polish politicians, hence the conclusion that they are reluctant to post such information online.

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[112] P. Kolodziejczyk: *Blog jako instrument komunikowania politycznego*, *czyli raport z sejmowej blogosfery*, in: M. Kolczyński, M. Mazur, S. Michalczyk (ed.), „Mediatyzacja kampanii politycznych", Katowice 2009, p. 265-284.

Another point worth making is the fact that the popularity of a blog does not equal the electoral success of the author. However, it does to some extent reflect the controversy around some of the authors (Janusz Palikot, Lech Walesa, Marek Migalski, Stefan Niesiolowski, Joanna Senyszyn, Janusz Korwin Mikke, Wojciech Wierzejski). Moreover, the chart speaks volumes about the Poles themselves. They rather read blogs written by 'political outsiders'. Politicians who remains outside the mainstream of the politics.

Citizens' Blogs

Polish civic blogosphere recently has been actively used on various occasions and gradually has been gaining importance. In 2009, according to Onet.pl the best political blog was written by a citizen while just a year ago a blog by a politician was given the title. Blogosphere also plays a significant role in activating society. It is the platform for the citizens to express themselves and engage in so called wars of bloggers – intensive discussions and exchanging ideas and opinions. Interestingly, wars of bloggers are more likely to take place in the civic blogosphere rather than in the politicians' blogosphere. It could mean that the citizens would sooner discuss politics with other citizen than with politicians.

Lately there have been some moments that expressively showed the influence that the civic blogosphere has on the politics.

The case of a female blogger – Kataryna is a perfect example of such event. Kataryna's comments of disapproval on the Minister of Justice gave rise to a discussion about anonymity online, but most importantly placed her in the center of the political scene. Her voice, voice of a regular blogger was treated equally to an opinion of an influential journalist. She was invited for an interview to a public TV and offered a job for a serious Polish newspaper.

Another occasion on which the bloggers hogged the limelight was the debate on the registration of blogs. The government wanted the blogs to be registered, the same way as the newspapers are but the bloggers afraid of losing anonymity strongly opposed to that idea. The plan of introducing the Index of Prohibited Websites (name coined by the Internet users in relation to the governmental idea of monitoring and censoring some websites, especially those connected to gambling) met with similar reaction and at the same time resulted in online discussion between the PM and the bloggers. It has to be underlined that in both cases the project has been postponed which makes it a tangible case of bloggers' influence.

Apart from the blogosphere there are a lot of places on the Internet, namely websites or discussions forums where the users can take actions. Save the Kids! is an online initiative that aims to draw focus on the problems in Polish schools especially the project to send the children of 5 to kindergartens. It seems to be too early for many parents and the schools are under prepared, what makes it even more difficult. An active role of the Internet users in boycotting the Polish Football Association or collecting signatures for the Rospuda Valley petition or parities for women also should be mentioned. Another interesting example of Polish society getting involved through the Internet is the emerging phenomenon of micro-societies. Micro-societies are formed around discussion forums or any other social network that allow local people to discuss issues that concern directly their housing estate like roadworks, development plans or safety in the neighborhood.

4.7 Politics and the Internet

Politics 1.0

Although the Polish society swiftly shifts towards web 2.0, Polish politics still remains in the 1.0 version. The problem has been taken up by a young scientist from Warsaw University, Albert Hupa. Hupa analyzed political discourse online focusing on what the Internet users say and who they say it to. The study shows that a great majority of websites of political institutions or political parties does not suppose the users' participation and and does not involve them in the process of creating such websites. Moreover he stresses that hardly ever a political party offers an uncensored discussion forum.

The thesis of a lamentable level of interactivity is confirmed by the studies carried out by the Polish weekly newspaper-Polityka. It examined the websites of all the Polish ministries in several categories and rank them in terms of their interactivity level and user friendly qualities. As the chart below shows in e-mail response time MoD was ranked first taking just 2 minutes to answer an e-mail. Sadly most of the ministries needed more time and some of them did not bother to answer at all. The other chart shows a general ranking of the websites. Factors such as website layout, design, language and style clarity, meeting requirements of the visually disadvantaged were taken into account. The websites of the Ministry of Justice is believed to be the closest to matching up to the expectations.

Source: http://www.polityka.pl/nauka/286627,1,resort-online---czyli-ranking-stron-rzadowych-.read
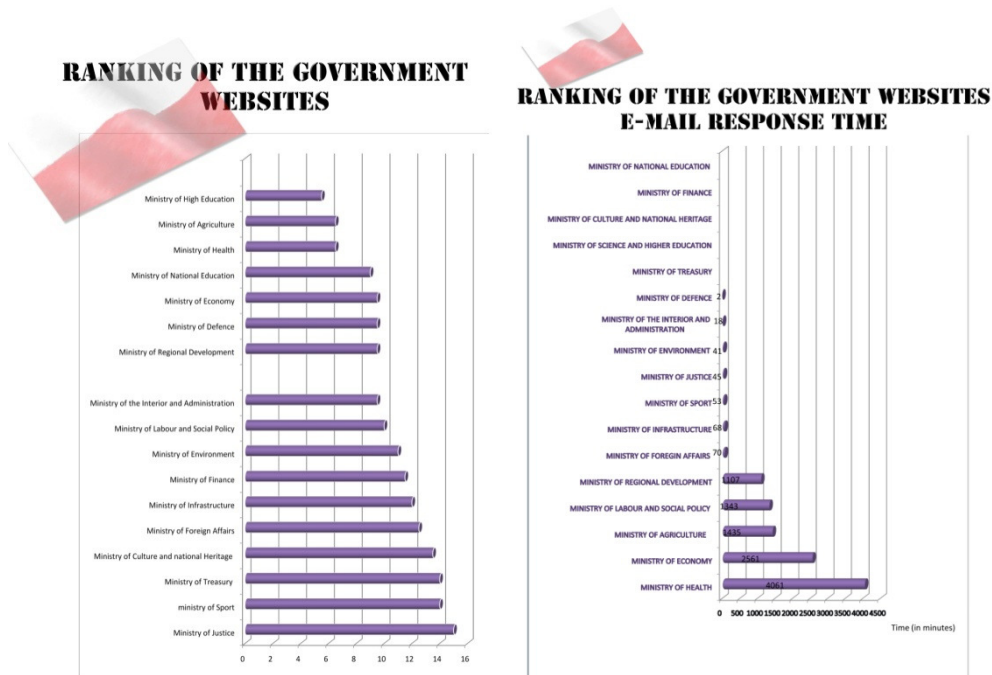
Another document that shows the condition of the Internet in Poland is Global Information Technology Report drawn up by World Economic Forum.

The Report uses the Networked Readiness Index (NRI), covering a total of 133 economies, to measure the degree of preparation of a nation or community to participate in and benefit from ICT developments.

The NRI id composed of three component indexes which assess:

The environment for ICT offered by a given country or community

The readiness of the economy's key stakeholders – individuals, businesses and governments

The usage of ICT among these stakeholders.[113]

Internet Revolution

Luckily the government notices that the opportunities that the Internet gives could be exercised more efficiently. Hence a lot of promises herald the Internet revolution in Poland. The first step was to make the self-governments the Internet provider. To some extent it solves the problem of digital divide because now the places where the private provider would not go, will be the governmental responsibility.

The ambitioned project of e-Poland supposes an introduction of some revolutionary solutions by 2013. For example electronic documents and signatures are to be validated. In turn a informational database is where the personal data of all citizens is to be collected and the PESEL number is predicted to be sufficient to be identified and successfully go through any red tape process. Such changes would imply replacing the old ID cards with new ones containing among others the electronic services. There are also some changes promised in the educational system: e-registers and e-books are seen as a next stage of development.

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[113] http://www.networkedreadiness.com/gitr/main/about.cfm, date of connection 31.05.2010.

5 Swedish Politics and the New Media

5.1 The Swedish media market

Introduction

In 2007 the biggest media company in Sweden had a turnover of more than 30 billion Swedish Kronor (about 3.2 billion Euros) and by then has for 200 years been run by a family named Bonnier. The Bonnier family owns not only one of Sweden's biggest publishing companies – namely Albert Bonniers Förlag – but also major daily newspapers as for example *Dagens Nuheter* and *Expressen*. The second biggest media company is *Schibsted,* publishing daily newspapers like *Svenska Dagbladet* and *Aftonbladet*. The third biggest is *Stenbeckssfären* which mainly owns pay TV channels like TV3, TV6 and ViaSat but also Metro International, a gratis newspaper financed by advertisements. Moreover there are many other companies as well as the state-run and foreign media companies which are due to their variety great competitors for the Swedish media companies.

Media companies – who are the owners of Swedish media

Quelle: Sundin, 2009
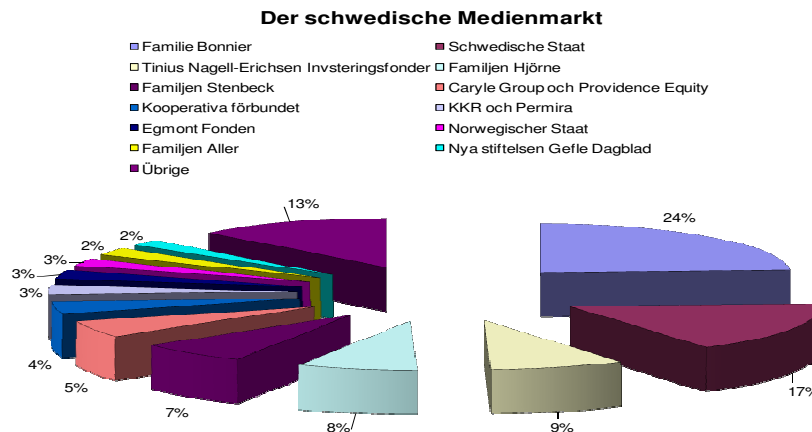
Print media were established in Sweden in the first half of the 19th century. The families who have succeeded in maintaining their companies on the market very often are successful media conglomerates acting in many different market segments. Since the early nineties the conditions on the media market in Sweden have changed. Until then the state controlled media had more or less a monopoly position respecting the TV programs. Afterwards there have developed more and more private companies, and competition from abroad has begun to establish itself. In the course of time new opportunities and challenges for this branch of economy developed. The above seen graph shows the segmentation of Sweden's media market.

The five biggest media companies

Sweden's five biggest companies according to turnover (in million SEK) are:

1. Bonnier AB   15.655
2. the Swedish State   10 775
3. Schibstedt   5 661
4. Stampen   5 057
5. Stenbeckssfären   4 666

(Sundin, 2009)

The companies have stated the following sales numbers for 2007:

Bonnier AB (24%)		
sales in:	amount:	percentage in Sweden:
Sweden (in millions SEK)	15.655	52 %
Scandinavia (in millions SEK)	23.823	80 %

The company is active in many different media segments. The largest are broadcasting and entertainment, among which the Swedish subsidiaries *TV4, Svensk Filmindustri, SF Bio* and the Finnish *MTV Media* are the most important. The company started in 1837 as a book-publishing house. But today this segment is only the second most important, to which for example *Albert Bonniers Förlag* belongs. The company runs large publishing houses in Sweden, Finland, Germany and also in Norway. By making business in the segment of newspaper publishing the company expanded to the USA, the Baltic countries and Eastern Europe.

the Swedish State (17%)		
sales in:	amount:	percentage in Sweden
Sweden (in millions SEK)	10755	100%
Scandinavia (in millions SEK)	10755	100%

In the media market the influence of the Swedish state is limited to the Swedish borders. The state is responsible for the public service in radio and TV. It runs the two radio programs *SR – Sveriges radio* and *UR – Utbildningsradion* (which also offers educational TV programs). *SVT- Sveriges television* is responsible for TV broadcasting. Everybody who owns a TV or a radio has to pay a radio and TV license fee of 2.076 SEK (about 200 €) per year. The offers of Swedish public service are managed by a foundation being financed by an annual contribution of its users (Sveriges Radiotjänst).

Terracom is a company being responsible for the distribution of radio and TV programs. It also offers digital TV.

Further state-run companies dealing with media are Swedish Mail AB (distribution of newspapers), and the Swedish Rymdbolaget (concerned with satellite traffic).

Schibstedt A/S (9%)		
sales in:	amount:	percentage in Sweden:
Sweden (in millions SEK)	5.661	37%
Scandinavia (in millions Euro)	1.364	81%

The Norwegian company is the second largest on the daily newspaper market in Sweden owning the renowned newspapers *Aftonbladet* and *Svenska Dagbladet*. Schibstedt is one of the leading companies of the advertising market on the internet, e. g. Blocket.se.[114]

Stampen AB (8%)		
sales in:	amount:	percentage in Sweden
Sweden (in millions SEK)	5.057	100%
Scandinavia (in millions Euro, 2008)	532	100%

Stampen is a Swedish company. Its main seat and major field of activity is Göteborg and West Sweden. The company owns many local newspapers and is only prevalent in Sweden and so far has no media interests abroad. The main share holders of Stampen AB are Peter Hjörne and his family who own about 60 percent of the company.

A major part of the company's turnover is made by business activities in the print sector, namely by V-TAB who has printing plants in several cities.

They have a 55% share in two different websites: Bröllopstorget (wedding market) and Familjeliv (family life*).* A third one is odla.nu. [115]

Stenbecksfären (7%)		
sales in	amount:	percentage in Sweden
Sweden (in millions SEK)	4.666	32%
Scandinavia (in millions Euro, 2008)	1.066	64%

The company is active in the following sectors:

- TV (by its main company *MTG – Modern Times Group*)
- newspapers (by its gratis newspaper and advertising medium *Metro*)
- telecommunication (by *Tele2*)

The company mainly focuses on the telecommunication segment as it makes three times more turnover than all the other sectors of the company. Metro International is common in 18 countries in which these gratis newspapers are distrib-

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[114] Sundin, Staffan, Den svenska mediemarknaden 2009, MedieNotiser Nr.3, 2009

[115] Ebd.

uted. In the TV sector the company is not only active in Scandinavia, but also in Russia and Eastern Europe. (Sundin, 2009).

Further media companies

There are several smaller companies who have a share of 13 percent in the market. They are mainly Swedish, an exception is the Dutch company Woters Kluwer and the Canadian Quebecor Printing Inc. Often foundations take over the administration, but as already mentioned, family companies are also very common. The rest of the media companies have a share of less than 5% in the market.

Who is owning the internet?

The top domains making the internet using possible are „.se" or „.nu". They are providing servers upon which the according homepages or websites are based.
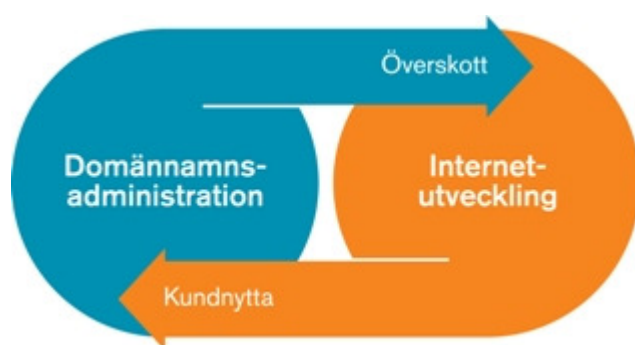
The Swedish companies tend to prefer .se-domain names to others like .org or .net. The .se-domain is managed by a foundation, *Stiftelsen för Internetinfrastruktur* (foundation for internet infrastructures). The graph shows, how .se uses the surpluses of its returns

The surpluses are used for the further development of the internet. So the internet users also benefit of them. (Stiftelsen för Internetinfrastruktur, 2010).

5.2 The media literacy of the users

Social and cultural conditions are enabling us to receive information.

We are born in a democracy. Living in a democracy does not only mean having rights but also carrying responsibility. In order for a democracy to function the citizens have to be politically informed and involved. It is our duty to be informed, but in today's society this is not always easy.

We are living in a society providing more media than ever before. Although the supply of information has increased, the day still has only 24 hours. Regardless how much we want, the time for the use of media is restricted, thus creating an increasing imbalance between the supply of information and the level of perception. In other words, there is a surplus of information and a deficit of perception. This demands more engagement and competence of the people. Everybody has to choose what to pick. The more media exist, the greater is the freedom to choose, what we want to learn. The greater the freedom, the more the people are forced to renounce something. Someone who is interested in politics and economy probably chooses other media than someone who is interested in entertainment and/or sports. There are many needs, conditions and factors that are crucial for our reception of information and our being influenced by them.

The users of media have the following needs:

- **cognitive needs** – cognition deals with how people receive and process information and how they use their memory, their thoughts and speech by the procession of their perceptive senses (seeing, hearing, sensing, tasting and smelling). Out of these processes are arising cognitive needs: being informed about society, orienting oneself in society and understanding our environment and the world around us.

- **need for entertainment** – the people need and want to relax, to be entertained and distracted in various ways

- **need for identity** – Man is a social being and wants to identify himself with many other people and happenings.

Apart from these needs there are three factors that play a role in which media people use and which effect they have on us.

- **activation** – Everybody has different principles and views. Normally they are not actively remembered, but the media make us aware of them and activate them.

- **reinforcement** – The media reinforce our views and principles.

- **transformation -** The media are able to influence our thinking and thus change our views.

In order to protect us from the vast amount of information to which we are daily exposed, the brain has developed a cognitive protection mechanism. This mechanism sorts out information in order to protect us from excessive demands; it possesses four selection processes:

- **Selective reception** - the free choice to be exposed to certain information. Example: we prefer soap operas like "How I meet your mother" to news programs.

- **Selective attention** – this deals with the fact to which information our attention is drawn. We prefer reading some newspaper articles to others which we do not read.

- **Selective perception** – dealing with how we interpret information. Example: different people interpret statements of politicians differently.

- **Selective memory –** which information do we really remember? This also has to do with our short-term and long-term memory. The short-term memory stores information that we can remember here and now, the long-term memory, however, is able to store information for a long time bringing it forth at some time when it is needed. In order to store information in our long-term memory we have to process it. As a rough guide we have to spend at least 8 – 10 seconds of our attention to the particular information.

Men's access to information and media is different. The reason is that we have different needs for orientation due to our insecurity and what is relevant to us. Do the media inform about facts that are relevant for the person and how insecure is the

person about the information and does he/she need more information about something.

If a person is interested in something and wants more information about it, the need for orientation is big and thus the person exposes himself/herself to information and becomes more accessible. The probability that the cognitive selection processes sort out this kind of information has become smaller according to the greater accessibility of the person.

Now, there are many different things that are essential for which kind of information people receive. Due to today's vast supply of information nobody can say that he/she has a lack of information. One great problem is tied to the vast supply of media. The search for information takes a lot of motivation and time. Men are lazy. When they lack motivation, they are actually not interested in understanding an issue. It is not the most important thing to really understand something or to be informed about it, but just to have the feeling of understanding and being informed. If this feeling is reasonable or not, will not be important for other people.

All these factors protect men from being overcharged by information and they can have a part in our decision not to receive certain information e.g. political information. But without this protection men could not survive in this media society.[116]

5.3 History of journalism

Over the years journalism has always adapted to the latest technologies. The most important changes were the invention of letterpress printing in the renaissance and the development of transmitting information during the 19th century as well as the invention of TV and radio broadcasting. Internet journalism developed due to the emergence of the internet in the nineties.

In the early fifties opinion journalism (= reports greedy for sensations and sometimes fictive stories) was booming. At the same time investigative journalism was also booming focusing on mainly political subjects. This was the reason so many scandals could be disclosed.

The advantages of online journalism are that it is possible to publish a nearly unlimited amount of text in real time, but also that it is possible to integrate multimedia information like videos or sound documents.

However, there are also disadvantages: The borderline between professional journalism and dilettantish writing is blurring. It is said that blogs and this kind of opinion journalism spreading personal opinions is threatening the status of objective reporting. Siegfried Weischenberg states: "Der professionelle Journalismus ist auf dem absteigenden Ast" Even worse: "Er verliert im Prozess der digitalen Revolution seine Identität und ist durch Selbstkommerzialisierung auf dem besten Wege, sich selbst abzuschaffen."[117]

According to an investigation of *All Academic Research* journalists and editors are using the internet to an increasing extent. This causes the problem that much of the information found there is used without further examination. The survey shows

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[116] Strömbäck, Jesper, Makt, medier och samhälle, Kristianstads Boktryckeri Ab, Kristianstad 2009

[117] http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geschichte_des_Journalismus

that more than two third of the journalists get their information directly from the internet, but only one fifth is also controlling it.

5.4 Classical media on the internet and their use

Newspapers

In Sweden the first newspapers were already published in the middle of the 17th century. At that time the Swedish Crown used this medium to entertain the people. The consequence was that the reporting was not very objective. The idea behind it was that a content society would be more willing to pay taxes and wage war for the country.

One of the first Swedish newspapers was Ordinari Posttijdender. It was first published in 1645. It rather was an instrument of propaganda.

In the beginning the king's newspaper had a monopoly status, but at the beginning of the 18th century new newspapers were launched, e. g.

1. 1745 Stockholm's Weckoblad (until 1779)
2. 1758 Norrköping's Wecko-Tidningar (is still published today as Norrköping's Tidningar)
3. 1769 Dagligt Allehanda (until 1849, new edition called "Nya Dagligt Allehanda" 1859-1944)
4. 1778 Stockholms-Posten (until 1832)

Extract Skrifwelſe vthur Feldtmar-
ſkalkens Herr Guſtaff Horns Hufwud-
Qwarter Vſtede den 4. Januarij.

Wi liggia här ännu ſtilla/ och äre Regimen-
terne fördeelte här om kring/ närmeſt in til
Malmöö och Chriſtianſtadh/til at refrai-
ſchera ſigh något/ Effter ſom ingen Fiende
nu meera är til at ſpöria på denne ſidan om Sundet.
Lyffzmedel på denne Landzändan äre tämmelige/ och
kunne medh Gudz hielp wäl förſlåå/til theß Tyden til-
låter at gåå i någon Action igen. Siukdomen vnder
wårt Folk tagher dageligen meera aff/ ther emoot i
Köpenhamn och annorſtädes i Danmarck/ taga al-
lahande Siukdomar meera och mera öfwerhanden/
och berättas i Sanning at halffparten aff the Sol-
daterne ſom hafwa warit på denne ſidan om Sundet
icke ſkola wara meera widh Lyffwet. Wij hafwe haffte
i theſſe daghar en Trumſlagare i Malmöö til at inkö-
pa dår några nödiga Saker för Sal. Her Johan Kru-
ſes Lyk/hwilket ock honom tillåtit bleff. Han berättar
elieſt at han för denne gången myckit bättre är tracte-
rat

Edition of Aftonbladet , 1830   edition of Aftonbladet , 2002

Most of these newspapers are not existing anymore, nevertheless Aftonbladet was first published in 1830 and is today one of the major newspapers of the country. Its success is mainly due to the lack of competition during that time. This only changed 100 years later in 1944 when the first edition of Expressen was printed. Today Aftonbladet and Expressen are the most sold tabloid newspapers in Sweden.[118]

By the new media – radio and TV – the monopoly status of the newspapers changed. This transformed the media scene and demanded new strategies for the print media. In 1994 Aftonbladet was the first Swedish newspaper that was published on the internet. Other newspapers followed the example and today almost every newspaper is found on the internet.

We interviewed Bosse Vikingsson (BV), who is a reporter of the south Swedish local newspaper *Smålandsposten* in Växjö.

1. In which ways does your newspaper use the internet?

   The employees use the internet for almost everything. They search for information and send e-mails into the whole world. The editors and

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[118] Http://www.bgf.nu/historia/6/tidningar.html

journalists also use the internet in order to communicate with other organizations and sources. Today it is much easier and quicker to find information. Sources are often safer and information better accessible.

2. Do your journalists need a special training for writing articles on the internet?

    The journalists do not get a special training for online research. Online and print version are designed with the same software.

3. When was your newspaper first published on the internet? What did you have to consider and how has it developed?

    The preparation for the website was quite simple. After some internal discussions Smålandsposten went online in 1998/9. Web designers set optical highlights.

4. Is the internet version different from the printed edition?

    In the beginning there were only few differences. But we soon started to reduce the number of online articles.

5. Has the circulation of the printed version decreased or increased since the newspaper was published in the internet?

    The printed version lost readers, but the number of online user is at the same time increasing. About twice as many are reading the online version. The website is not cost-effective but necessary for our staying competitive.

6. What do you believe, how will the newspaper of the future look like? Will it be printed on paper or will it be online? Will it always be free to read the online newspaper?

    He believes that the printed version of *Smålandsposten* will disappear in the far future, but not during the next 50 or 60 years. The main obstacle will be the financing.

7. Are there special laws or regulations that restrict what you can write and publish on the internet?

    No, the same laws have to be applied.

Dr. Tobias Olsson, who is a media scientist at Jönköping University does not believe that the printed newspaper will disappear totally. The circulation will probably decrease, but will never be substituted by the new media. He mentions one example, a local newspaper called Jönköpingsposten that has no online version but nevertheless great success.

TV

In 1956 the official TV broadcasting in Sweden started. However, it would have already been possible several years before. In the beginning mainly politicians of the social democratic government immensely criticized it. TV was supposed to be financed by license fees instead of advertising.

In the late sixties there was an increasing demand for new TV stations. The middle-class parties wanted to introduce new TV stations to secure competition. The social democrats, however, wanted to impede this. The consequence was that in 1969 TV1 and TV2 started broadcasting free of commercials.

Only in the late eighties the stations subject to public law, SVT (Svensk Television) and SR (Sveriges Radio), lost their monopoly in TV programs. This was due to the development of cable TV. The first private TV stations were TV3 and Nordic Channel, later called Channel 5.

Since 2006 it has been possible to view programs of SVT on the internet (called SVT Play). According to a survey about 10% of the Swedish population aged 15-74 is daily watching web-TV. The most attended pages are Aftonbladet.se, Expressen.se, YouTube.com, TV4.se and Svt.se.

Most TV stations are using their internet platforms to provide their viewers with details about broadcasted programs or reports. Looking reruns of already broadcasted programs in the internet is also very popular.

Swedish Radio Programmes

The idea of public radio had its origin in America in the year 1920. Only three years later Sweden followed this example. In 1922 „rundradio" began to broadcast in Sweden on a regular basis.

The public Swedish radio station, Sveriges Radio, started broadcasting in 1925. During the first years they only broadcasted several hours in the evening on one channel. Already in the early thirties they started to produce programs for about eight hours per day. In World War II Sveriges Radio played an important part in reporting about the war. In 1955 the station extended its range by introducing a second station, P2, and in 1977 P3 was started, broadcasting local radio programs. After the assassination of Olof Palme in 1986 the radio station decided to introduce the broadcasting of news programs all day long. One year later their fourth channel P4 started. The internet invaded the radio stations in June 1996. Since then programs have been streamed on the internet. In addition Sveriges Radio is offering podcasts and news for German speaking listeners (http://www.radioschweden.net/).

Currently 75% of the Swedish population listens to the radio at least five minutes a day. This makes radio the second most used mass medium in Sweden (most used is TV with 85 percent). Only 4.4 million Swedish regularly listen to the radio online (at least five minutes per day).

Interview with Ulf Reneland (Sveriges Radio):

1. How does your radio channel use the internet?

   The channel uses the internet in many ways. On our website you can find information on our programs, our organization and you can also listen to the web radio. Almost all of the programs are broadcasted via radio.

2. Do you need a special training for producing radio programs on the internet?

No, it is only a different way of distributing information. Of course the employees have to learn something about publishing articles, texts and images on the internet.

3. When did your radio channel start broadcasting via internet?

In 1995 the first program was broadcasted.

4. Has the number of listeners increased or decreased since you started with web radio?

The number of listeners of Sveriges Radio has increased during the last years. One reason therefore is our offer in the internet.

5. How will future radio look like in your opinion?

30 days after broadcasting all programs of Sveriges Radio can be listened to on the internet. Some of our programs can be downloaded as podcasts. Even today many people choose to listen to programs afterwards on the internet. I believe radio broadcasting will decrease as most people want to decide on their own when to listen to their favorite programs on the internet or on their mobile phone.

6. Does your radio station think about raising fees for listening to web radio?

No, the activities of Sveriges Radio are financed by a radio and TV license, this also covers our internet activities.

5.5 New social media

Which features do the new social media have and what are their differences?

Facebook

Facebook is an American website used by people and organizations all over the world. Facebook is mainly an online network of contacts and the number of users is steadily increasing. Today facebook is used by more than 400 million people and translated into 70 languages.[119] Most people on facebook use the website for staying in contact with their friends or finding new ones. All friends are collected on a personal list of friends.

There are many possibilities for being politically active or for spreading one's political opinion, e.g. it is possible to form fan groups of your favorite party or of a popular politician. All major Swedish parties have such groups, many of the party members possess an active profile and most party leaders have a fan club on facebook.

248 out of 349 members of the Swedish Parliament are active on facebook[120]. They all use Facebook, but not as a political tool.

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[119] http://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics

[120] Sociala medier ny PR-Kanal, Tobias Brandel, SvD, 4. Januar 2010.

Blogs

The word „blog" is a short form of „web blog", it is like a logbook on the world wide web. However, the term "blog" is hard to define, as there are so many types, subjects and systems of blogs; e.g. a blog may look like a normal diary, another one looks totally chaotic and is overcrowded with pictures, movies, texts and links. All blogs have three things in common: they are websites, they are updated regularly (more or less) and they have a comment area where the readers can comment on the articles. The most useful issue of blogs is getting quick comments and having dialogues with the readers. Above all it may be a great opportunity for politicians to reach people.

Twitter

Twitter is actually a shorter version of a blog, a so-called micro blog. As blog articles may be infinite in their length, Twitter is restricted to 140 letters per article. Twitter has two big advantages:

1. You can, but you do not have to, sit before your computer in order to twitter. If you have a modern mobile phone or a hand-held computer it is very easy to work with twitter and to actualize it depending on your technical know-how.

2. You do not need much time to follow twitter as the articles are rather short. The readers can also follow twitter on their mobile phones. All twitter blogs are stored on a big data base on the website twitter.com. The starting page of twitter is a searching engine for searching key-words. If you are filling in "Chile", you will get all hits of twitter articles containing the word "Chile".

On twitter there is also the possibility of commenting on the articles. Due to the brevity of the articles many editors are using web links combined with their texts in order to give the reader the possibility to get deeper into the issue.

YouTube

YouTube is an internet video portal in which you can upload , look and comment video clips. In order to look videos it is not necessary to be a member of the site, but if you want to upload your own videos you have to register.

Like blogs or twitter you can comment on the video clips, but there is also a ranking system you can use in order to give 1 to 5 stars (5=super) to a video. The stars make it easy to find the most popular clips.

Like twitter, YouTube offers the possibility of searching for key-words. If you like to look a clip by Iron Maiden you have to write "Iron Maiden" into the searching engine of the website. Then you will get all clips containing "Iron Maiden" either in their title or in the tag (tag = internet slang for keyword or category).

If an editor wants to upload various videos he can form a channel. Channels work like a little website on the website. Members of YouTube may subscribe to the videos of a channel and then get a mail if a new clip has been uploaded. Here are also possibilities of commenting and discussing them.

Only two of the big Swedish parties have an own channel on YouTube, the Social Democrats and the Pirate Party. All parties of the parliament have various videos on the site and will probably have more there before the next elections in September 2010.

FlickR

FlickR is derived from the English word „to flick through something". Here you can flick through pictures.

FlickR is working in a similar way as twitter or YouTube. Here you are sorting the articles according to tags. You can also look up keywords if you want to find specific pictures or categories. The making up of FlickR is similar to blogs, twitter and YouTube using comment areas, links, friendship lists etc.

iPhone

The iPhone is the Apple version of a smartphone. It is not only a mobile phone but also a media player, a digital camera and has access to the internet. This access to the internet makes it possible to surf but also to personalize it according to ones's demands. You can download so-called web apps. Some are only superficial as for example a digital clock or an animated cat, others go deeper, e.g. the YouTube-app, twitter app and facebook app.

You can use the twitter and the facebook app everywhere in the world where mobile phone networks are existing. Many radio channels can be downloaded, too.

Summary

The new social media cannot be separated. They complement each other by links, apps and people. The new social media are different from the traditional ones as they are no one-way roads but offer possibilities for dialogues between producer and reader/viewer by being directly interactive.

The Pirate Party

By using blogs, facebook-groups, twitter, YouTube, message boards and other, the Pirate Party has succeeded in mobilizing a high number of members within a very short time.

The Pirate Party was founded in Sweden on January 1, 2006. The party stands for personal integrity, liberal culture (the right of distributing and changing works) and the restriction of copyright and patent laws.[121]

The Pirate Party is considered as a party of only one question as it focuses mainly on questions of civil rights. The most important question for them is personal integrity on the internet.

With more than 50.000 members it is Sweden's third biggest party, but not yet represented in the parliament. Its youth organization is the biggest one in Sweden and the party also has two seats in the European Parliament. This success is mainly due to their using of the internet.

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[121] Die Homepage der Piratenpartei, http://www.piratpartiet.se

The majority of the members and sympathizers of the Pirate Party is young people because the party is focusing on internet political questions. On the internet the people got involved with the problem of "file sharing" in combination with the razzia at the file sharing giant thepiratebay.org.[122]

The reasons why this party got so many members have to do with their target group. They accomplished making people interested in a political question who actually are not politically interested at all. As there are mainly young people on the internet, the issue is to protect the "home" of the young people – the internet.

The organization of the Pirate Party has always taken place on the basis of their homepage. According to their increasing number of members they published their viewpoints at political experts or amateurs via the internet often using references on the homepage of the party. The Pirate Party is probably only the first political party founded on the internet.

The new social media facilitate the foundation and success of new parties. Strong finances are not necessary for publishing viewpoints. The Pirate Party is an organization without an actual budget.

It is easy to use facebook-groups, blogs, twitter, FlickR, YouTube and other social media for inviting other people to participate in a discussion. In combination with a website you will have a strong foundation for a new party that is not only founded on the internet but has also the opportunity to flourish there.

Not in all respects politics and social media are a lucky combination.

The lack of proof-reading as used in the traditional media gives ambiguous methods a greater chance to infiltrate politics. Social media also advance gossip and scandals, and so untrue issues may spread quickly.

Politicians get more and more public, this is menacing their private life. It also includes a risk for the politician himself, as his image could be used in an unfavorable way. An example is the Swedish social democrat, Mona Sahlin, who purchased an expensive Gucci bag. This led to writings in the media[123]. They wrote it would be a problem that the leader of a workers' party purchased something that a worker could never afford.

Coverage and target groups

Who is receiving the information and whom do the parties want to inform? While only 37% of the Swedish aged between 66 and 75 use the internet on an average day, 88% of the young people do this. The better educated use the internet more than the less educated. For older people the internet means to use a new technology and to learn something new what continues to be developed. It is a problem for them and they probably think it is not worth while as they can get enough information from TV, radio and newspapers. The same is true for the less educated. Even a worse eyesight may contribute to the fact that they are not interested in it.

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[122] http://www.piratpartiet.se

[123] "Gärna lyx - utan debatt", Elisabeth Marmorsten u. Johanna Klaasen, Aftonbladet, 23. Januar 2010, http://www.aftonbladet.se/nyheter/article6476634.ab

Although the internet has created possibilities to avoid traditional news media and to obtain information directly from important politicians only few make use of this possibility. Swedish surveys show that the internet has not brought great changes with regard to the political interest. The same 7% of the population – about 500,000 persons – that receive political information on a regular basis are the ones who are politically interested anyway.

The accessibility of the internet has become much easier and therefore there are tendencies that show an increasing number of users of political websites. Nevertheless, these numbers are not very high and although 33% have attended a homepage at any time, only 8% take notice of political information at least once per week. [124]

If people are looking for information, they first "google" it, which then leads them to wikipedia where actually everything is well summarized. People rarely attend political homepages as they need motivation in order to find detailed information being spread on various sites. Recently many new homepages have been created that are able to explain political issues and summarize them in a better way. But the people must be made aware of them, otherwise they will not find this kind of information in the vast worldwide web. **So we can state that in Sweden the internet has been an important meeting point for people who are politically interested anyway, but so far it has not caused an increasing political interest.**

Politicians often talk to the citizens instead of having a conversation with them. The use of the new social media is an attempt of reaching and meeting the citizens, where it is possible, in order to be in a dialogue with them. Only the fact that this is possible does not mean that it is also carried out. Actually, it is not important if there are one million blogs, if only few people are reading them and the media do not make us aware of them. It is also not an issue if the parties invest a lot in their homepages and their virtual presence if the people are not interested in that. [125]

As already mentioned young people are those who spend most time with the internet. But it has also been known for long that they are the group of people who are the least interested in politics. One could assume that politicians are mainly going online for them. But a survey carried out by PricewaterhouseCoopers (2009-2010) [126] shows that the youngsters do not want to interact with the politicians on the new social media. They probably want to have their privacy and do not want to let in some "authority"; e. g. how many are friends with their mother on facebook?

The politicians have so far achieved that they are further deepening their relationships with the people who are politically interested anyway and that they can be reached in a better way. If politically less interested people would spend time on attending political homepages and deepening their knowledge it would be easier for them than in former times. But so far they do not do this and this is a fundamental problem of political education for democracy. It must be emphasized that

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[124] World Internet Institute, Svenskarna och Internet 2009

[125] Findahl, Olle, Svenskarna och Internet 2009, World Internet Institute

[126] http://www.pwc.com/se/sv/publikationer/egeneration-2009.jhtml

the citizens are responsible for themselves to get informed about political issues in order to develop solutions and suggestions and so to revitalize democracy.

The new social media working as backing for political actors

During the last years the new media have developed very quickly and now politicians try to use these media. The great example for using social media in politics is the American President Barack Obama. It has never been easier to get informed about politics. Politics are everywhere where the people are. During Obama's election campaign he offered the citizens the chance of having direct contacts to the politicians, and the possibility had been greater than ever to articulate an opinion against a political mainstream. Surveys showed that it had been Obama's web campaign that won the election. But it was not only his presence on the internet but also the way he made use of the media. He offered the voters a possibility of obtaining further information on the internet and during his political debates often mentioned the most important websites that represented his interests[127].

It is clear that an election cannot be won when only sympathizers and already politically active people have a share in the particular information. For winning an election you have to reach the voters that do not yet know which party they are going to vote for. Politicians standing on the marketplace of a city may talk to 20 persons and some more that are passing by. But on the internet they have the chance to reach thousands of people. This possibility offers them even more time to spread their ideas compared to the time they could get in the traditional media. Above all they have a greater chance to reach the young voters.

81 out of 349 members of the Swedish parliament are using blogs, but only 59 of them use them frequently for communicating their ideas, they are writing new articles at least four times per month.[128] Social media make up a third of the Swedish media scene and there is an interest in politics but the politicians have to learn to notice it in a better way. For example, politicians have the chance to teach the people something, as the political knowledge among the voters differs a lot. They could use them for explaining to the people what politics actually are and which part they could have in the lives of the citizens. Wherever there are people, politics are pursued. But politicians should learn to write about relevant issues and not about what they like for breakfast. Many politicians do not pay enough attention to having a dialogue, e. g. they are only writing their own opinions on the internet without reacting to comments. Without a reaction of the politician there is no communication. Politics must be communication with each other, in order to acquire people. The people's trust into the party policy has decreased recently. One reason is that politics have become rather a game. Political debates are often much too complex for the citizens and therefore cause only little involvement. People who are not so politically educated often cannot understand at all what politicians are telling. One consequence of this will be that the interest in mainstream politics will decrease, especially among young people. Another reason is that politicians only use social media to the extent they themselves can benefit of. This means that criticism of the politician does not reach the general public. Politicians try to

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[127] [14] www.internetworld.se/samhallet nr5/2009 "Så ska svenska partier göra en Obama"

[128] Svenska Dagbladet 04.01.2010 "Sociala medier ny PR-kanal" Linus Fremin

convey an impression with the people that they are involved. But actually there is no dialogue, as already mentioned, and therefore no chance for the individual to express his opinion.[129] It seems that many politicians have to learn to use the new social media as a natural means of communication. But everybody needs time to master and use a new means of communication in a clever way.

Here are some guidelines which politicians should pursue:

- Developing ideas to political platforms, not using only one website, but various
- Writing quick responses and taking part in discussions in which their political ideas are discussed
- Filling the platforms with new relevant facts

Each Swedish party has its own website and offers opportunities of sending information and protocols to their members and of leading online debates helping interested persons to improve their discussing ability. The first thing you can see on the website of a party is a calendar on which you can see which future plans the party has and when they will have meetings and what they will discuss then. They want to show that politics do not only deal with ideological questions but active involvement is also important.

The websites of political parties still do not qualify for this and they are still only a small issue for spreading political information in Sweden.[130]

But there are politicians who master the new media excellently. Lately local politicians making their election campaigns in order to get into the Swedish parliament are very successful. They are using twitter as well as facebook to show their everyday life and mix it with their political ideas and opinions. They are writing about their everyday life in order to show that they also lead a "normal" life, have a family, work and have problems and they try to explain what politics on a local level can mean. Six out of ten local politicians are planning to back their election campaigns by using social media in the future.

Why do local politicians often use the social media in a better way?

- It is easier for the individual politician to articulate and communicate his own ideas than those of a big party.
- The parties have not yet understood how important the dialogue between voter and politician is.
- If a party is starting a dialogue it is usually addressed to those who are already politically active.

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[129] Tobias Olsson, Dozent und Leiter des Instituts für Medien und Kommunikation an der Universität Jönköping bei einem Vortrag an der Linnéuniversität am 5.3.2010.

[130] Nord Lars, Strömbäck Jesper (editor), Väljarna partierna och Medierna, SNS Förlag, 2009

5.6 The new journalists – the people

Probably the most important issue in this time of the new media is the opportunity each person has to publish his or her ideas and opinions on the internet. If politically interested people get no feedback by the politicians they have the possibility to create their own message board. On this websites the so-called citizen journalism may develop. There the people can write about politicians and try to unveil their secrets. In Sweden there are two really great examples of this phenomenon. The former minister of economic affairs, Maria Borelius, has been exposed by a blog article. In a TV program she told that she barely had enough money to pay her babysitter. After this program a sympathizer of the opposition wrote in a blog that this minister really is a multi millionaire. This blogger published the information before the big newspapers could do this. Another example was when a blogger discovered a counterfeit graduation certificate of a parliament politician on the internet. Citizens have always examined such issues, but now the individual can also publish his discoveries very easily. By mobile phone cameras, internet and blogs it is possible to unveil all sorts of things and the politicians have to be cautious as it is easier than ever to find flaws. You could say that the people are becoming more "armed".

D Reports of the Workgroups

1 Democracy 2.0?

1.1 Discussions with politicians

Definition: 'a two-way relationship in which citizens provide feedback to government. It is based on the prior definition by government of the issues on which citizens' views are being sought and requires the provision of information' (OECD, 2001).

For example, in Belgium there is 'kleurrijk Vlaanderen', which is focused on the future of Flanders. They want to involve the whole population in the policymaking. There was a debate concerning 14 fixed themes via a website. Of the different online debates a report was sent to the Flemish parliament (Van Audenhove, Lievens, & Cammaerts, 2005, p. 48).

There are some strengths linked with discussions with politicians. For example politicians can know what people expect from them and on the other hand people can get more accurate information about the politicians, their actions, their policy. They can also make suggestions or even have a chance to influence them in some way.

The costs of participation are lower. Moreover, when they discuss online, people can stay in their own environment and so they feel more comfortable and dare to speak more freely (Van Audenhove, Lievens, & Cammaerts, 2005, p. 70).

Obviously, there are also some weaknesses. The people mostly discuss via ICT-devices, so they are confronted with the problems of the digital divide. This kind of intensive interaction brings along a high workload for the politicians, as already pointed out in the different lectures of politicians we followed during the IP.

Most of the time people only react one time on a topic and there are no profound discussions on one specific subject. These discussions rarely lead to clear results. The opinions are often very different and they do not come to a consensus. Therefore, the statements in such discussions are seldom adopted by politicians (Dijk). There is also the problem of the size of the groups, when do they become uncontrollable and how can they be moderated so there is a real discussion that can be used for the policy (Van Audenhove, Lievens, & Cammaerts, 2005, p. 71)?

Online discussions also create some opportunities. Citizens are able to attract the attention of politicians for problems they are confronted with in everyday life. So there is a possibility for a bottom-up approach. Another opportunity is the possibility to evolve to a more direct democracy.

Participation in online discussions can broaden the view of citizens on politics. These discussions can bring the citizens in contact with new ideas and alternative sources of information. Certainly the language used in the discussions is more like the language people use in their everyday lives, so the communication is more smoothly (Blumler & Coleman, 2001).

1.2 E-petitions

E-petition is the online translation of the classic petition. Through the internet boundaries for citizens become lower (considering anonymity, great accessibility). Mostly online petitions are informal petitions. Citizens get the possibility to initiate a petition and invite others to sign too A few years ago, internet was flooded by spontaneous petitions, emerging in the form of a chain of e-mails. A citizen or organization sends an e-mail with a specific argument, which recipients can add their name to and then forward it to others. At for instance, each 250th respondent / signer is requested to forward the petition to the aimed organization. Today there is also the possibility to sign into specialized websites to take part in a petition.

Example

In Germany there is since 2008 the possibility to start an online petition, when you have suggestions for changing legislation. When one is able to collect 50.000 online signatures in 3 weeks, you have the right to address parliament to express your opinion. Parliament is not obliged to follow the recommendations of the e-petition neither to consider it or treat it in parliament.

Strengths

- Low threshold
- Often enormous response

Weaknesses

- Authenticity and sincerity of the petition are not always obvious. Example a petition that is actually used for commercial reasons.
- Low threshold (are people aware of what they are signing? Are they aware of the impact and awareness of the petition?)

Opportunities

- Verifiability. Through registration, there is an easier way to verify who subscribed to the petition. In Germany for the formal e-petition is verified by e-mail address so you can subscribe only once.
- Information spreading. A wider range of information on the petition's subject can be offered and ICTs offers the opportunity for gaining additional information on the issue from the participants or interested
- Opportunities for participation. The e-petition linked to a discussion forum. This can contribute to awareness on the subject and increase the engagement

Threats

- Information overload (too much information do people have the right information?)
- Quality of the information (for example people get the wrong idea of the subject of the petition)

1.3 E-voting

E-voting or electronic voting refers to the use of ICTs in casting a vote in elections or referendum. There is a clear distinction between electronic voting in the polling booth and remote electronic voting. The finality of both is different. In the first case, the use of ICT is a substitute for casting a vote in traditional elections. This changes little to the electoral practice. In the second, the citizens can vote via internet through new ICT-based channels, such as , mobile phone, Internet, digital television, so they can cast their vote from a distance. This form has potentially important implications for the electoral and political practice.

In our countries (Belgium, Germany and Poland) e-voting as in distance-voting-during elections, this system is to be considered in the nearly future, but at the moment it not in use yet. For example in Belgium the devices and technology are available through a chip inserted in the electronic identity card with the Public Key Identification-technology which is an E-signature). Although this technology it isn't translated into electronic voting yet, it is possible. In Poland e-voting is going to be used in the presidential pre-elections within the main party: civic platform.

Strengths

Electronic voting technology can speed the counting of ballots and can provide improved accessibility for disabled voters.

Weaknesses

Implementation of the necessary technologies and it's cost.

Opportunities

E-voting can increase the participation of citizens, and in particular young people, to go voting. This could be especially interesting in countries without compulsory voting It can improve the attractiveness of the electoral process itself by giving citizens access to alternative channels for them to vote.

Threats

There are some concerns, that electronic voting could facilitate electoral fraud. People could hold back, because they are afraid for the secrecy of vote (hacking).

1.4 Restrictions by digital divide

Finally, we want to point out some threats. Because of the digital divide an elite-policy could be formed because only a small group will be able to influence the policymaking. A logical consequence is that the policy will be only in favor of this small group.

There is a risk that citizens will only participate one single time and not on regular basis. So the question is whether this phenomenon will become institutionalized in the attitude of the average citizen. There is also the risk that the process of the discussion will be controlled by the politicians, so there could be a problem of credibility (Van Audenhove, Lievens, & Cammaerts, 2005, pp. 72-73).

1.5 Literature

Blumler, J., & Coleman, S. (2001). Realising Democracy Online. A civic commons in cyberspace . Opgeroepen op 03 23, 2010, van www.ippr.org

Dijk, V. (sd). Digitale democratie. Illusie en realiteit. Opgeroepen op 03 23, 2010, http://www.gw.utwente.nl/vandijk/research/e_government/e_government_plaatje/digitale_democratie1.pdf

OECD. (2001). Citizens as partners. Information, consultation and public participation in policy making. Paris.

Van Audenhove, L., Lievens, B., & Cammaerts, B. (2005). E-democratie in Vlaanderen, stand van zaken. Brussel: Vlaams instituut voor Wetenschappelijk en Technologisch Aspectenonderzoek.

2 New Media as a Challenge for Journalism

2.1 Relation between an old and new media

Traditional media refused to use new media for a long time, which made it possible for new players offering information to compete with the old media. This change, along with the low cost of new media, pushed the traditional media towards accepting the new opportunities offered by these new media. While the old functions of the media were: giving information, mobilizing, entertaining, and coordinating, new media have added some other characteristics: interactivity, customization, hypertextuality and multimediality. With interactivity, a reader can now discuss with a journalist, it's no longer a one way stream of information. Customization makes it possible to select which articles you want to read, which diminishes the coordination by traditional media. Therefore, the power balance between journalists and readers has shifted: new technologies have brought along individualization and globalization. The first changes a journalist's public from a uniform to a many-headed readership and the second constructs communities which spread information among themselves without a role for the old media. By using hypertextuality the journalist offers an expansion in the amount of information for readers, while multimediality enlarges the amount of entertainment by combining different forms of media.

If we compare the news sites of newspapers, TV, radio and online media, we can see that back in 2001 there was a clear distinction between the different media. For instance, TV and radio stations had a high levelled multimediality news site while newspapers mainly focused on interactivity. Looking at the news sites now, we can see that news sites of TV, radio and newspapers have caught up with standards of the new media: e.g. a big newspaper in Sweden, 'Aftonbladet' is now offering more multimediality than in 2001. On the other hand, the Belgian public broadcaster VRT has caught up with the possibility for users to react on their news website www.deredactie.be. However, the multimediality on independent online news sites is rather limited, as you can see when you look at www.apache.be and Rue89.

By comparing the structure of old and new media, some important differences appear. The first main difference is about the speed in which they offer news updates. Obviously a newspaper can only be updated once a day, while a news site can be updated every time something comes up. This implies that online news articles are less funded with facts because the immediacy of reporting. Further on articles published in newspapers should be converted before being published online. There should be a better structure; the articles should be shorter and containing eye catchers because online readers are easily distracted. Videos can also support the article.

Looking at the size of news rooms, the number of journalists working for an online news room is smaller than the number working for a traditional news room. Besides this, online news rooms have to cope with technical problems; low budgets and their cooperation with traditional news rooms is poor.

Online news sites belonging to corporations, only focus on things which are important to the company. Most professional news sites are linked to a traditional media company, while the independent news sites are mostly based on citizen journalism, unless users have to pay for their content. Nevertheless, citizen journalism, as well as blogs, is becoming more important for traditional media. Professional news sites are aware of their capabilities and are implementing them on their own sites. A very recent example is E-Report from CNN. They have created a new tab on their website where users can post articles, videos or other forms of media about a certain event. It was used frequently when the earthquake took place in Haiti. Of course, blogs and citizen journalism are forms of User Generated Content (UGC). There is no real agreed definition of UGC, but the OECD proposes three components being: the creative effort, the publication requirement and the creation outside of professional routines and practices.

2.2 Journalists and new media – traditional media facing economical problems

More and more papers come under considerable strain due to deficit of consumers of *traditional media*. Since there is a disproportionate competition about telling the latest news to as much as possible users with the *new media*, especially online services, traditional media is running out of options and resources.

While blogs like *newspaperdeathwatch.com* or *demiseofprint.com* prophesy the doom of press, other business models rise: Foundations are becoming increasingly popular likewise public-law organized press. Are these instruments a solution for maintaining a high quality and independent *traditional media* landscape?

In France, one method is going to be realized in in the next two years. In the context of the *Etats généraux de la presse*, there will be spent about 900 millions Euro for moneyed assistance for French newspaper publisher. The question is of course, whether a free press can afford to be financed directly by the state or even by one political direction. For the public benefit, this question has to be answered no.

Second possibility may be foundations like the *Scott Trust* or *Poynter Institute* which bankroll press releases like the British *Guardian* or the *St. Petersburg Times*. They grant high reliability in times of massive upheaval in media landscape. Obviously, they are no alternative for financially weak publisher.

Third and in favor of authors chance is a public-law press sector. Archetype for this handling with finance problems are for instance the German TV stations *ARD* and *ZDF* or the British *BBC.* By reason of the indirect funding through dues, there will not be the danger of loosing independence like there is in direct money from administration. Main problem is the lack of acceptance in population to pay by force for information you may not want to achieve.

Either way, traditional newspaper publishers will have to take action in order not to disappear in media landscape of 21st century. Concerning the overriding public interest in high quality and diligent investigated journalism, even societies and governments should think about the constitution of future media.

2.3 Citizen journalism and its impact on traditional journalism

Citizen journalists can be very helpful to renowned media corporation in some breaking news situations. Although citizens took no relevant pictures on September 11, 2001, the London bombings on July 7, 2005 marked a tipping point in mobile phone pictures and video news. It was the first time that a domestic news story was mostly visually covered by citizens.

Definition of citizen journalism

Instead of giving a theoretical definition of citizen journalism we are going to highlight some of its most essential features. An obvious, but nevertheless crucial aspect is that the content is made by ordinary citizens instead of professional journalists. Secondly, the spread of such a piece should be interesting and significant for a wider audience, meaning that it bears some importation information and does not consist solely on opinions. Mostly it is then interesting to a wider audience if the piece of the citizen journalist has an impact on the micro cosmos the audience is living in. The content made by citizen journalists is therefore often characterized by local stories or sudden happenings which they cover by chance like an accident or a spontaneous brutal demonstration. In these two fields lays the power of citizen journalism. Since traditional journalism often do not cover local events in a sufficient way for the community there is a niche where citizen journalists can become active. The other point – the coverage of sudden events – has a lot to do with being at the "right place at the right time". Journalists however can't be everywhere or even don't have access to some area as we were able to see during the protests in Iran. Traditional journalists were not allowed to cover the demonstrations after the presidential elections last June, so all the big news agencies depended on content made by citizen journalists.

Motivation of citizen journalists

There are several reasons why a citizen becomes a citizen journalist. Often they want to spread their first-hand information, get their opinion across or make the public aware of problems within their community. Some people also use citizen journalism in a therapeutically way, e.g. if a catastrophic flood destroyed their house, they can write about it. Generally it is not the intention of citizen journalists to cover events in order to receive money for their content, but it is possible that they get money for exclusive material they made by chance.

Differences between citizen journalism and traditional journalism

Citizen journalism does not follow any structural, legal and ethical requirement. They do not have the duty to be objective. Since they are often covering local events, they have a different target group than most media departments. Furthermore it is not as professional as traditional journalism, since citizen journalists did not get any training, technical equipment or assistance from a journalistic outlet. They are not paid on a regular base so it's their own decision if they cover an event or not. Citizen journalists are also not protected from prosecution, as there is no media company liable for them.

Important advantages and disadvantages

As a result of its defining characteristics, citizen journalism can fulfil some of the shortcomings of traditional media. The biggest advantage is that citizen journalists can provide better 'first hand info', such as eye-witness reports, because they are usually on-site before the traditional reporters (e.g. eReport CNN, London bombings of 2005). Another advantage can be a greater independence, e.g. there is no editor nor owner of the distributing medium that can influence the content. Therefore commercial pressure is reduced. Furthermore citizen journalism can be used by ethnic minorities to speak up against negative coverage in the media or make journalists aware of their problems. There is one point which can be either a chance or a blessing for citizen journalists: Since there are no gatekeepers who check the material everything is published. On the one hand this is good, since each "journalistic piece" can get at least a little audience. On the other hand, the content – especially on citizen journalist websites like NowPublic or OhmyNews – overstrains their audience, since there is too much material.

Citizen journalism has its limitations as well. Due to the fact that citizen journalists can provide a one-sided, personal and polarised view, the credibility and accuracy is often lower than traditional media. The quality of a piece depends on the individual source, this can lead to extremist views that are hard to counteract, due to the relatively uncontrollable nature of the internet. A second deficiency is the lack of structural analyses and the over-isolating of events, e.g. the first small car-fires in the French 'banlieues' would probably have been treated as isolated events instead of the structural phenomena they were. A third and more practical problem for citizen journalists is the shortage in resources. Established media have more funds, contacts, access to translators and better insurance whereas citizen journalists work with their own limited budget, without insurance and are personally responsible for their actions.

Citizen journalism and its impact on traditional media

Citizen journalism can offer mainstream media three things: deeper relationships with the audience as we can see for example with the project of CNN (E-Reports). Traditional journalists can also get an idea of what kind of stories the audience is interested in or which topics are not covered properly by the mainstream media. Secondly the mass media might be able to reduce costs, if media outlets are able to incite citizens to send in material which they need. Thirdly they might be able to get eye-witness reports by citizen journalists. These three aspects could enhance traditional media enormous. Another aspect which could ameliorate traditional news coverage is that bloggers (some of them can also be seen as citizen journalists, see the criteria above) can function as watch dog. If the mass media makes mistakes there are often bloggers which disclose the information. Since traditional journalists know that they are under permanent surveillance, they should have the entitlement to get things right.

Mass media does not have to fear citizen journalism, but should rather see it as a supplement. There is no threat that citizen journalists can replace traditional media, since citizen journalists mainly cover local topics.

2.4 Ethics in the 'new reality'

In this part we're going to discuss the relationship between ethics and journalism. Because this is a theme that is so widespread, we have chosen to discuss 2 main points that we think are the most important. First we're going to talk about the consequences of giving people the opportunity to react on articles and second we're going to talk about copyright violations.

Giving users the possibility to react can sometimes imply negative effects. These reactions are often irrelevant, contain rude language or are inappropriate. Because of this, there is a vivid discussion about the possible benefits of users' reactions. Some websites have replaced the possibility to react to an external part of the site dividing the reactions from the article itself. Another option is to hire journalists who work on readers' reactions only. When they delete the inappropriate reactions and support the useful ones with background information, a constructive dialog about the subject may appear.

Some organizations demand that the media take their responsibility by pre-monitoring, actively moderating or post-monitoring. Pre-monitoring means that incoming messages are tested on terms of admissibility for publication. When they do this by using active moderation, they reread the submitted reactions and publish selectively. For post-monitoring they create techniques to delete unacceptable reactions as soon as possible. There are also other recommendations to avoid inappropriate reactions, like only giving a chance to submit reactions by registered users, obliging websites to clearly mention terms of use and to use electronic philters which refuse inadmissible terms.

A very common criticism on the Internet is the lack of protection of material on which it appears. There is very little control on the reuse of information on the Internet, as it often happens that news websites use articles from each other without watching if there is a good reference of the origin. There is also discussion about which rules to apply and which not. Some find it useful to tighten the rules on copyright and that greater protection should be provided around the copying of online reporting. Others find it not feasible because bloggers are not always aware of the regulations and information dissemination should be free. In Belgium there was a big case around copyright violations: the Central Station case. Central Station was an electronic clipping service founded by newspaper publishers who offered articles on the net, and for these articles you had to pay. They did not have permission of the journalists, they were not compensated for this and their name was not mentioned. They took this case to court and won because converting an article from an analog form to a digital one is reproduction, and thus falls under copyright.

But the problem is sometimes presented bigger than it really is. Research has shown that the same rules are applied to the Internet in privacy rights, copyrights and commerce rights as in traditional media. Often the online counterparts are even stricter in the application of the rules because they want to lose the stigma that there are no laws on the Internet. Because of all the negative coverage of the Internet and its dangers, there is the wish among the Internet journalists to do everything by the book. Demands for collective agreements, privacy statements, draft-

ing statutes and behavior codes are growing. Despite the desire to get rid of the stigma, there are always individuals who care nothing for the rules that are applicable in traditional media. Cutting and pasting when a competitor comes with a novelty is a trend which is very often used, about 50% does not use a source when there is a new item and it is often combined with rewriting a paragraph, an addition of a news agency or some extra links. Another thing is said about illustrations. A majority of the respondents uses them well, including consent and acknowledgment, but there are quite a few moral intermediate forms. Everyone is aware of the existence of copyright, but still there is a minority that regularly uses images from the Internet without permission, even if there is copyright on it.

2.5 Functions of journalism in new media

New media make journalists being under higher control of society. It creates a possibility of criticizing and commenting, what causes greater pressure on them. Otherwise, thanks to the chance of commenting, journalists can engage a society in describing reality. All the portals and more significant websites have capability to put up some notes or points of view next to the article or other press material. For example in Poland the most popular portal is the one which has the highest percentage of comments – onet.pl.

In the end we have completely new media, new journalism, new audience, new society. Where do we go from here, it is up to us, because today we can be the audience and the authors simultaneously. That's the open question, but since we can be sure, that every single news might be covered by these or other media, the quality of information and the proper commentary are the things we should focus on, to minimize the threat of misinformation and manipulation.

Nowadays the Internet is a fast and growing source of information. It requires from journalists realization of new functions. Main one is to deliver information from the inside of the events. In the world of new media, society expects knowing not only about last events, but also about what is happening in present time. It means that journalists are not supposed to receive information from the others, but they have to be on the place of the event and to comment topical news using instruments of the new media: iphones, mobile phones, the Internet etc. Thanks to them they are able to describe all the details as soon as possible.

The most important goal of this function is to publish the news rapidly on the Internet during continuing the event. For example, journalists can get into the places which are not available for cameras, audio recorders, but they have possibility to put the detailed account of what happened there. Of course they have to be skilled in specific way. Such information should be shorter than traditional one, but with option to expand it. The structure shouldn't be pyramidal, but more horizontal right now. Also the title is more important than ever. This function is connected with necessity of creating more realistic news. It means that on the Internet they have no restrains like on television or in the newspaper, they can show the whole true which is desired by society. It was quite significant while observing Haiti case by CNN. On its website with multimedia there was a possibility to watch Haitian street after earthquake with ability to steer the video camera all around. That way of delivering information attained a huge spectrum of visits at their website.

In the other hand, those broadcasters have published a material, where two men were shot on the crossing. The crew was been looking for a good display frames instead of helping wounded victims. The reporter tried to make interview, while one of them were dying and the second bleed on the street.

2.6 Conclusions

The Internet has changed traditional media. You can see this in many areas including organization of the newsrooms (cooperation between traditional and new media journalists), news gathering process, the role of materials provided by citizens (first-hand materials, videos from witnesses) that might be included to professional journalists' articles.

The Internet may be perceived as threat by some journalists, but on the other hand it can be just an additional source of information and perspectives.

Since we as the audience are exposed to more and more information, we still need a gatekeeper who will be able to select and explain the events. In future we may assume that they will be even more important because of the information flood.

3 Possibilities, limits and dangers of political mobilization in democracies and dictatorships by the new media

3.1 Possibilities

The digital revolution of the last years has led to a rapider development of social networks and information possibilities that carry the chance of political mobilization. The effects on democracies and dictatorships may be quite different.

Democracies

An almost unlimited distribution of important and costless information to a multitude of people also creates new possibilities of political mobilization. The exchange of information and mutual communication cause new possibilities of political participation which the particular actors (parties, politicians, citizens) use in a very different way (see examples in the individual reports of the countries).

The citizen is offered the opportunity to be profoundly informed about political subjects and aspects and to make his/her own mind. At the same time he/she can react and express his/her opinion on different platforms. Due to the high usage of new media by young people this mainly concerns the young generation. However, research has shown that the level of mobilization has hardly risen and that in the countries represented by us there is still only little interest in politics. Politicians and political parties try to counteract this disenchantment with politics for invigorating it and making it more interesting again. From the vivid and attractive design of political homepages via interactive ways of communicating like *facebook* and *twitter* through to playful online tools like the German '*Wahl-O-Mat'* for improving the participation in elections, everything is present.

By means of these and other innovations the political actors are expecting a higher chance of reaching young voters and at the same time the new media offer politicians a bigger creative leeway and more time for spreading their ideas.

Web 2.0 expands the political parties' possibilities of presentation remarkably and offers new ways of self-display. Besides, politicians can receive information about present moods, trends and opinions by the reaction of the citizens and act accordingly. Due to this big supply of information each individual has much more possibilities to compare and thus to choose more easily. Not only the bigger supply of information on the internet creates stimuli for political opinion making, but also the improved service facilitates the accessibility of political information. It saves the citizen not only ways and time, but the higher transparency and comprehensibility could improve the trust into the information found on the internet. Furthermore, everybody can decide on his own, which information to receive, and inform himself/herself specifically of particular subjects.

On the other hand citizens have new ways of acting, e. g. creating new message boards, initiating e-petitions or getting organized in meetings like flash mobs or the Viennese operation "Uni brennt". This leads to networking and is a contribution to the evolvement of a lively civil society.

The significance of citizen journalism, also called the "fourth power", is steadily increasing. For example users are using these platforms for exposing politicians and

disclosing scandals that otherwise would have remained undetected. At the same time there is the danger of making their private life more and more public and restricting their personal freedom.

One example for successful citizen journalism is the forced demission of former Swedish Minister of Economy, Maria Borelius. A blogger proved the fact that in spite of her high income she had employed service personnel on the black market, thus forcing her to dismiss her office after only seven days.

Such possibilities do not only exist in democracies. Social media are improving the chances of opposition movements in dictatorships, but are an increasing challenge for their rulers.

„Semi-Democracies"/Dictatorships

Citizens in dictatorial regimes rarely have the possibility of obtaining independent information on the conditions in their home countries. For this purpose they have to rely on foreign media or new technologies.

By using various information channels, the last create excellent conditions for spreading information about non-published deficits and scandals. This makes many people able to better understand democracy and to call their own governments to account. Furthermore they can be effective instruments of expressing political protest and supporting the forming of citizen resistance movements and fighting against totalitarian tendencies. *„Diese digitalen Dissidenten, […], führen ihre Kämpfe jetzt online, ersetzen Flugblätter durch Twitter-Updates und lassen Faxgeräte für iPhones stehen." (FAZ, 18.03.2010)*

One of the most renowned examples (2002) was the Iranian blogger Salam Pax (pseudonym) who searched for his friend Raed under Saddam's regime. This blog was picked up by Western media and contributed to awaken the interest of the "outer world" in persons and groups of people who have disappeared as well as to react in the media (e. g. New York Times, The Guardian).

Another case was the female student Neda Agha-Soltan who was killed after the election fraud of 2009 in Iran. Via video this case spread like a virus and by this "snowball effect" became a symbol of the "green revolution". But it is difficult to say how much this operation contributed to the political mobilization against the regime.

These new channels of information are also a threat for the appearance of dictatorships and „semi-democracies". Some of them will not care about this (e. g. Northern Korea), but others like Belarus will due to their geostrategic location in Europe not stay unconcerned about their negative appearance.

3.2 Limits and dangers

Opposed to the discussed chances of the new media are the partly remarkable limits and dangers in democracies and dictatorships. In the next paragraph we will mention some of them.

Data retention

In the last years data protection specialists have been up in arms against data retention. In Germany since 2008 all connection data of telecommunication and computer networks have to be stored for six months.

It has been recorded who called whom when and where. These data were stored with the respective providers. Deutsche Telekom stored 19 terabyte of data, being up to 4.85 billion pages in A4. This already makes one problem of data retention evident. Data are not stored decentralized but by individual providers.

The data retention is justified by the threat of terrorism and the fight against organized crime.

Critics regard this measure as a further step towards the surveillance state. Besides it bears a great risk of misuse and a massive interference into individual privacy, since the data admit detailed conclusions that are reaching into the private life. Furthermore jurists are arguing that data retention violates the fundamental rights of communicating persons.

The verdict of March 2, 2010 abolished this law. The First Senate regards data retention „*einen besonders schweren Eingriff mit einer Streubreite, wie sie die Rechtsordnung bisher nicht kennt*". The existence of stored data could „*ein diffus bedrohliches Gefühl des Beobachtetseins hervorrufen*" and this „*unbefangene Wahrnehmung der Grundrechte in vielen Bereichen beeinträchtigen*". (*taz.de, 02.03.2010*)

Web 2.0

With respect to web 2.0 technologies massive concerns of data security are arising. Social networks are becoming more and more popular. The possibility of networking with friends and acquaintances in an uncomplicated manner has led to a drastic growth of the networks in the last years. According to *facebook's* own statements it has about 400 million users worldwide.

Many users are not aware of the fact that they make it easy for foreign people to gather knowledge about them. In Germany messages within social networks are not protected in the same way as e-mails or phone calls which are subject to the Telecommunication Law, the so-called "Fernmeldegesetz". Social networks are considered as internet sites and are therefore subject to "Telemediengesetz" which offers less protection of privacy.

State surveillance

The police and Interpol know how to use the personal profiles and guest books as well as the photo galleries and the messaging of social networks for their purposes. In this way they have no problems making virtual personalities accessible to statistical evaluation. Photos and videos are used for evidence of personal identification. Often only a little suspicion is sufficient for starting an intense screening of a person.

Non-state usage

Not only the police is making use of the new web 2.0 technology. Companies, institutions and businesses are using *facebook, twitter* & co as well for their benefits: More and more companies are using web 2.0 for seeking information about their applicants. A survey made in 2009 (*Die Zeit*) shows that 25% of the companies do not invite their applicants for an interview if they have had a negative digital impression of them. But on the other hand digital impressions can also have a positive effect. Some hobbies and social engagement go down well with several companies.

Another example shows how web 2.0 can penetrate the privacy of internet users, a case that occurred at the English elite university Oxford. As the cleaning costs after big students' parties are often immense, the university recently employed extra staff for finding digital evidence of the students' bad behavior. The respective students were cautioned afterwards. Per e-mail they were sent "evidence" in form of party photos that students put online on social networks, e. g. f*acebook*, and then they were requested to pay a fine and threatened with the repudiation of their studies. This shows the insecurity of the students' privacy and that maybe it would be wise to adapt or even delete one's profile on social networks during the years of studies.

A survey called „Gaydar" shows another case of misuse coming to the point that someone is considered to be homosexual if his/her friends list on *facebook* declares that more than 1.89 percent of the friends are being homosexual. This means that if 4 out of 200 persons on the list are confessing homosexuals, the person is considered homosexual, too (*taz.de, 11.10.2009*). This may influence the employment policy of companies decisively.

Dictatorships

In dictatorships the technology of web 2.0 opens up the possibility of using it as a weapon against the state and facilitating the development of a critical counter-public, e.g. by blogging. At the same time social networks make it possible for the rulers to acquire knowledge about activist networks and thus to react accordingly by using repressive methods. Many dictatorships already commissioned special data mining companies with helping to identify "troublemakers". Due to the new technologies e. g. in China ten internet policemen are replaced by only one.

The police in Belarus has used web 2.0 for its benefit by comparing photos taken and put online by activists to photos made at a demonstration. So "troublemakers" could be identified and threatened with suspension from university or even worse. The state's attempts of intimidation succeeded and instead of bloggers and flash mobs revolutionizing the freedom of press, the new digital realm was used as a new possibility of keeping the population under surveillance by the state.

In order to go against censorship of the internet, especially in dictatorial states, "reporters without borders" initiated the "Universal Day against Internet Censorship" in 2009 and they annually compile a list of "internet enemies". On this list are twelve countries, led by China, Iran, Burma and North Korea. These governments massively go against bloggers. These internet users are persecuted systematically and much effort is spent on censoring their undesired comments. In order to im-

pede the access to information on the internet the authorities also reduce the speed of the internet.

In Russia and Turkey already thousands of websites were closed due to their undesired contents or reports on taboo subjects like for example minority rights. Besides censorships and closing of websites bloggers have even been arrested. At the moment nearly 120 internet dissidents are imprisoned, 72 of them in China, 17 in Vietnam and 12 in Iraq.

Thus the great advantages of social media, like anonymity, "virality" and networking, at the same time are their greatest weaknesses.

3.3 The European Agenda and the internet

The European Agenda 2020 of the European Commission demands *„Förderung des Internetzugangs und der Internetakzeptanz durch <u>alle</u> europäischen Bürger, vor allem durch Aktionen zur Förderung der digitalen Kompetenz" (Mitteilung der Kommission Europa 2020, 03.03.2010).* The Commission's *Directorate-General Information Society and Media* runs a series of programs and projects for overcoming hindrances in this way.

4 More information – less knowledge?

The new media in general and web 2.0 especially provide a nearly countless amount of information. The availability of information is not generating knowledge per se. It is rather more essential to identify the relevant and reliable information for each problem respectively. The way of managing this will be presented as follows. The first issue is coping with the information overload; in the second part we will show how the new media can contribute to acquiring knowledge and competence in the solution of problems by e-learning. The third part follows up the question in which way the new media advance individualization or political participation on the contrary.

4.1 Information overload

We are usually talking of an information overload, when we have too much information in order to come to a decision. With respect to universities this means that students have difficulties in writing their dissertations as the searching engines used by them provide too much information. A lot of these data come from unreliable sources, since on web 2.0 every internet user has the possibility to put something online. It is often difficult to determine the authors and receivers of internet sources, according to which criteria the information has been composed and which interests the authors have had with it. Besides the internet information could be distorted by a third party.

For overcoming the information overload you can consult professors who can give you advice on central key words, authors or basic literature. Further aids are the bibliographies of hornbooks and relevant online data bases.

Checking the credibility of internet sources

After first selecting the sources a further check of their credibility is necessary. For this purpose Cornell University Library has worded various criteria according to which one can check: 1.) the author's identity, 2.) the company details (are there data about the company/person who runs the website), 3.) the objectivity and 4.) the topicality of the website. In addition it is advisable to always compare information of a website with other websites dealing with the same subject for clearly discerning contradictory statements of the sources.

Usability of information

After checking the credibility of a source one has to question which information is relevant for the personal research interests. In a first step one should clarify what is the actual research interest – in other words which events or actors have to be examined during a particular time period and in a particular place.

For being able to ask exact research questions one has to consider in how far they can be answered by using the selected sources. Finally one has to ask, if the information of a source can be put into a common context with information of other sources.

Conspiracy theories on the internet

Book author Michael Schetsche is of the opinion that the increase of conspiracy theories in the internet age are directly connected to the increased significance of „information" as a factor of power. Besides, the information overload on the internet contributes to the environment of many people becoming more and more complex and unmanageable. The consequence is that many people are longing for simple and reduced explanation patterns as frequently provided by conspiracy theories.

Schetsche mentions various characteristics of the internet that favor an enormous increase of conspiracy theories. He speaks of the "annihilation of the separation between producer and recipient" leading to the fact that knowledge spread on the internet is not subject to critical and editorial review. Furthermore Schetsche also mentions "any blending of facts and fiction" – in other words that the uncontrolled and often quite unstructured spreading of information on the web leads to conspiracy theorists composing their theories out of profound knowledge and fiction at the same time.

4.2 E-Learning

In view of more and more information that can be processed, the requirements on graduates and students are of course increasing, too. At the same time the new media, e. g. internet and networks in the area of universities facilitate a versatile, structured and mainly quick way of working. The future has found its way into more and more universities and colleges and facilitated a new form of learning – e-learning.

Platforms are called e-learning platforms when they provide electronic and digital media like e. g. presentations and text documents. Not only documents are provided and spread by these platforms but they also serve as a foundation for message boards and as a suggestion for communication among the users. So each student can have comfortable access to knowledge at home. Part of the steadily increasing activities of universities and colleges is the simplification of the traditional ways of administration.

The organizing of studies plays an important part with students. There were times when they had to submit a certificate of university entrance qualification each time at each term. Thus the student had to prove his right to exist every six months. Today you can settle everything online. Every student has the possibility, in parts also the duty, of organizing his studies online. Among the duties is the registration for courses and for the participation in written and oral exams as well as similar things. The platforms also provide insights into upcoming tuition fees and performance records and their grading. They make up the foundation of e-learning, since with the course registration the students are linked to the e-learning platforms of the universities. As examples we would mention the systems used at HWR Berlin, which is FINCA in connection with CLIX, and at the University of Vienna, which is UNIVIS in connection with FRONTIER.

The e-learning platforms CLIX and FRONTIER are for lecturers providing data for their students. Otherwise the students can also use them for providing documents that can be seen by other course participants. Furthermore there is the possibility

of participating in message boards or forming study groups. But there are possibilities that reach far beyond this. The students can combine and coordinate the deadlines of their assignments and term papers by making use of the schedule book. They can also do their exams online. The possibilities of interactive usage are nearly unending and make it possible for students to communicate with the lecturers beyond the plenar halls. Since these possibilities of usage are quite new they are also accompanied with complications. At the moment the biggest problem is the usage of these services. Are the users capable of using these new possibilities? What benefit do we have of these new ways if no one can pursue them?

Every lecturer knows about these possibilities of providing documents for all participants of a course, but only few make use of them. The reasons for this are mainly rooted in the handling of e-learning platforms, since many lecturers do not know how to provide and upload documents. If we follow this thought we will come to the result that there will be no knowledge transfer via e-learning if it is not used. The upcoming question is: Who will teach the teachers?

In this context the University of Vienna has a requirement profile for professor assistants. Every assistant has to be capable of handling FRONTIER. The first advantage is that costs can be saved as the teachers have not to be especially trained, the second is that soon-to-be scientists are supported in handling these services and thus a new generation of scientists develops.

But the students do not know all the knacks of e-learning either. UniVPN is a database that is not existent at HWR Berlin and only little known at the University of Vienna. The University of Vienna provides this data base for its students to work on their papers and thus facilitates to combine the necessary with the useful. Nowadays you cannot abandon internet searching engines like *google*, if you want to acquire knowledge and be it only to get an overview about the subject of an assignment. But as already said, the sources found there are not always reliable in view of credibility and quality. This is the point at which UniVPN starts. The data base contains newspaper articles, books, comments and other written documents sorted according to subject and if required also according to sections. If you search *google* for a key word and are simultaneously logged in to UniVPN a cross reference with the data base is made and you get all hits of the key words that are within the data base. The working out of such a paper and the starting respectively can be as short as just mentioned.

E-learning is making steps into the right direction by using such possibilities. But what is possible beyond that? In many households there are webcams. Why could a webcam not be installed at a lecture hall to record the lecture as a video and afterwards the video could be put online? The lecture could also be broadcasted via online streaming. Thus students worldwide could participate in lectures. So-called lecture series could be held by different lecturers at different places. The physical presence in a plenar hall would not be required anymore. There are approaches to software that would make it possible to store documents online and make them accessible everywhere on the world. The participants could also edit them. The change of a document would become visible in real time for every participant and so, for example, an Australian, a British and an Argentine could commonly complete a paper sitting on their sofas at home. In view of education the future still has

several things ready. Many issues are not yet researched or developed, but e-learning shows just now what is possible.

4.3 More individualization or more political participation?

Today the new media offer us many different ways of finding information. At the same time the filtering becomes more and more significant. Filtering is the selection of certain information while editing out other information. The reasons could have to do with time, interests or perception.

The range of information is enormously big nowadays. We therefore need selective processes that are critical for which information we receive. These processes vary from person to person by receiving certain information, since it is of interest or one can identify oneself with it. But everybody has certain views that can be activated and that can lead to us receiving the information. So by selecting the sources everybody can create his/her own world of information.

One problem of the new possibilities, however, is that not all sources on the internet are reliable. This may lead to wrong views. In order to avoid this each individual has to be critical and to check if the information is really based on facts. In this time of unlimited information it is not always easy to be critical, since you can easily lose track. If you do not have any knowledge about a certain subject the risk is very high to rely on the wrong facts or at least to get influenced by them. However, new media do not only have negative aspects. The numerous message boards where people of different views can communicate with each other in order to broaden their horizon, are a positive example. This could lead to a more objective thinking.

W*ikipedia* is such an example of a web 2.0 platform that may lead to a one-sided opinion making since there is sufficient information available. *Wikipedia* offers the possibility of finding information quickly, additionally there are hyperlinks in the articles about which you may obtain further information. In this way *Wikipedia* makes individual as well as mechanical filtering possible. Mechanical filtering is a filtering carried out by computer systems, individual filtering however is when you can choose on your own which websites you want to activate.

Limited time, however, often leads to a one-sided research, since you have to choose on your own between reliable and rather unreliable sources. Giving a specific example, in former times you rather went to collective political party meetings in order to exchange opinions and to receive information. The information then had already been filtered by the parties. Today mainly young people use the internet for gathering political information. But on the internet is much more information accessible. Thus everybody has to choose on his/her own which information to use and which to trust.

The above mentioned aspects are conditions that have to be observed for forming a conscious political opinion. When they are met, a world full of possibilities opens up for creating a personal political agenda. Nowadays it is much easier to find political information. The consequence could be that it is getting more and more difficult to identify oneself with a political party. As you may identify yourself with a party in only a few aspects, it will become more difficult for the individual to bring himself/herself in line with a political party. That is the origin of swing voters. An-

other consequence may also be that you cannot identify with the views of any party at all, so you may develop a totally independent ideology. The internet also provides the possibility of finding followers of your personal ideology and of communicating with them via different networks. So the internet facilitates the making of contacts between people who would in real life never come together.

Individualization can mean expansion as well as minimization. Real life contacts are minimized while expanding virtual contacts. The consequence may be that the interest in politics will disappear totally or grow on the other side and create personal involvement. The result of individualization depends totally on the person's character, needs and views and the form he/she is influenced by the new media