

Ukrainian Media Landscape 2019

KAS Policy Paper 30



Ukrainian Media Landscape – 2019

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Ukrainian Media Landscape – 2019 is an analytical guide giving insight into Ukraine's media development trends in the years 2018-2019. It contains the overview of Ukraine's key structures and media market. Chapter authors are the leading industry media experts in Ukraine.

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The guide is intended for all interested in development of Ukraine's media environment.

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Cover photo by Kateryna Bilotserkovets: One of underground passages at the Vystavkovyi Tsentr (Expo Center) in Kyiv



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Foreword



Tim B. PETERS,
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Dear Readers,

Media behaviour and media consumption are changing worldwide. Information shared in social networks is increasingly replacing professionally researched news production. One's own Internet bubble is increasingly becoming a resonance point where one's own opinion is reinforced by like-minded people. Politicians are increasingly avoiding traditional media in order to be able to use social media to communicate seemingly directly with their constituents. The political discourse, which thrives on objective criticism and the engagement with those who think differently, is finding it increasingly difficult. Where leading media used to inform the public with well-trained journalists, mistrust and opinion-forming towards media representatives are becoming more and more common. These trends, which can unfortunately be observed in many countries around the world, are becoming even more explosive in transition countries, where journalistic quality standards are usually lacking and democratic traditions are often still young.

Since Euromaidan, the "revolution of dignity," Ukraine has committed itself to comprehensive reforms to move closer to its goal of good governance and possible membership in the European Union. Results can already be seen in many areas, even if the reform path is long and arduous. Independent and critical media have a dual function on this difficult path: they are - as in any functioning democracy - both indispensable facilitators of these political processes and a direct indicator of their success. Ukraine can also undoubtedly demonstrate success in the area of press freedom. In recent years, the country has made a significant leap in the global index of press freedom, and in 2019 it ranks 102nd in Reporters Without Borders Index (2015: 129th place). Reform projects have also been initiated in the media sector, such as a law passed at the end of 2015 to increase the transparency of media ownership. As so often in today's Ukraine, much depends on the successful implementation of these reforms. However, the Ukrainian media landscape is still characterised by problems and continues to face major challenges. Quality journalism requires independent editorial offices, but many media products are hardly economically viable and serve the purposes of their financiers. In addition, the Ukrainian media landscape faces many other challenges, which are discussed in this anthology: The relationship between media and politics in view of the super election year 2019, attacks and threats against journalists, the challenges for journalism due to the conflict in the eastern part of

the country and the propaganda associated with it, the prospects for local journalism, and the changes already mentioned through social media and the internet.

The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung has supported this biennial publication since 2010 and joins the worldwide activities of the foundation for the promotion of free and independent media as a basic prerequisite for the formation of opinion in a democratic community. The aim of the media work of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung is to strengthen the role of the media in democratisation and transformation. In this context, it is also about the media's own understanding of their role in a democracy. To further develop this understanding is one of the concerns of the Academy of the Ukrainian Press (AUP), with which this publication was conceived and realized. Special thanks are due not only to the authors, but also to AUP for their many years of cooperation in strengthening Ukrainian quality journalism.

This anthology with its contributions written by renowned experts gives Ukrainian and international readers an overview of the most important developments of the last two years. The overall situation of the Ukrainian media landscape may best be described by the term ambivalent. We hope that the contributions brought together in this volume will stimulate the discussion on the further development of the Ukrainian media landscape and enrich the discourse among journalists, but also in politics and the public in general.

Introduction



Valeriy IVANOV,
Professor, PhD,
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President

Ukrainian media are experiencing hard times for many reasons. A very small advertising market (comparing to European one), congestion of print and electronic media outlets, politicians' attempts to control media, the problems of media persons' safety, and a low level of keeping journalism standards by the journalists.

The world media function due to the advertising costs and direct sales of the informational products. Unfortunately, the production levels fall due to the war and occupation of Crimea and part of Donbas led to the income shortening from advertising. The situation is improving slowly, but the advertising market numbers are still just 1/3 of the 2013 pre-war year.

And here we have another problem that follows Ukrainian media during the years of independence. The audience does not need at all such a big number of media outlets. Approximately 4300 newspapers are being published now. Just to compare, in Germany, where the population is twice larger, and the advertising market is 93 times higher than in Ukraine, there are 400 newspapers (there might be also local editions preparing materials for these newspapers).

The logical question is – due to which costs do the Ukrainian newspapers exist? The answer is more than clear. Certainly, it's the money of founders. First of all, it's about television, the most popular media in Ukraine.

For most of the TV channels owners these outlets are not the business instruments of income, but of influence, with the help of which one can solve the problems of the main business and a good defense from the government pressure. The audience sees this political bias and reacts with a loss of trust. In addition, the declared print media circulation numbers are false, because they are exaggerated, the same is about the number of visitors of web sites. Hidden advertising became the main income for most of the outlets. It certainly leads to the audience to disbelieve.

While the economic situation is far from being good, the attempts of the politicians to control the content are still going on. They use various tools to accomplish this, such as presidential decrees, the decisions of the National Security and Defense Council, the decisions of TV and Radio National Council, and many others.

These non-democratic actions are very often explained in a simple way, like blaming somebody for being not patriotic, and playing on the enemy's side. At the same time these institutions are speculating with these notions, seeing their activities as the best for the country. With the new power there were some hopes for democratization and improving the situation with the freedom of speech. But it's not taking place yet. The new power continues the course of the previous one to gain the complete control over the media space. The rights of journalists are being violated and the thoughts that journalists are not needed at all are aired. Court power is not lagging behind. The bans of media outlets because of strange motives and matters surprise not only Ukrainian media experts, but International media organizations.

The problem of journalists' safety needs special attention. The monitoring of the National Journalists' Union shows the high risk of the journalism profession. Each year about 80 attacks on journalists occur. Unsafety and constant concerns of family safety is a powerful reason for self-censorship in Ukraine.

In fact, the inactivity of power leads to impunity, as the attackers on journalists are confident that they won't be punished. And, it leads to the bigger number of violence when journalists suffer. The crimes over journalists are not being investigated for years. Ukraine is one of the few countries where journalists perish. The last example is the murder of Cherkasy investigative journalist Vadym Komarov. After being severely beaten in May 2019, he died in a month later. The murderers are still unknown. The journalists do not suspect who is going to be next and feel very unsafe. The National Journalists Union strengthens its activities to overcome the crises.

Unfortunately, the big problem is that many Ukrainian journalists do not follow professional standards. Unchecked information, journalists' bias and biased materials, hidden advertising, and hate speech became the real curse of the content in many media outlets. It leads to very unfortunate results, as the audience will not forgive lies. As a result, the level of trust towards Ukrainian media remains low.

With the beginning of the war, the level of mistrust towards the media was 20 percent higher than the level of trust and it happened for the first time since independence. A sociological survey (Institute of Sociology, National Academy of Sciences) showed that every second Ukrainian does not trust Ukrainian media, and just every fifth trusts them. One more result, many bloggers have more audience than professional editions. The threat from 2.0 web existed in other countries too, but professional media remained strong due to the audience's trust. People were sure that journalists use fact checking, cover all the events, and care about real facts in the virtual world. Unfortunately, the Ukrainian audience is not as sure as the European one.

A strong factor is certainly the war, in the East of the country. Covering events in Donbas became a real challenge for journalists' society. A special problem is covering the events in the occupied territory. It's a kind of terra incognita not only for the audience but for many journalists as well. You can find the information about the events going on there in the media field in Oleksiy Matsuka's report.

At the end of this introduction I have to repeat the final part of the introduction to "Media Landscape 2017," which is still up to date – Ukraine has still to cover a big distance to be closer to the Western journalism standards of freedom of speech.

Media and Politics: 2019 election season



Piotr ANDRUSIECZKO,
“Gazeta Wyborcza” correspondent,
“Outriders” expert.

The last year was an election year in Ukraine. Unofficially the election campaign started in 2018 and was dramatic enough. Important events happened during the campaign. Two of the major events were the conflict in Kerch Bay (when Ukrainian military boats were bombarded by the Russians and Ukrainian sailors were taken prisoner, which then led to the introduction of the Martial Law), and creation of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and granting Tomos to this Church.

Peculiarities of the Ukrainian Media Space

In the 2000s I heard from one of the journalists that she earned enough money to buy a car while working for one of the political forces taking part in the elections. It means she wrote pre-paid materials. It looked almost unreal from the Polish perspective.

During my first longer business trip to Ukraine, (I spent two years in Kyiv) I watched political talk shows with great interest. There were no such TV shows in Poland at that time. But very soon such political shows like Savik Schuster’s “Freedom of Speech” looked like a source of manipulation and I started to feel critical towards such shows. Zurab Alasania expressed the same position and attitude and removed the program “Schuster Live” from the First National Channel. The main difference I noticed at that time was in the structure of the Ukrainian media market. In Poland the market was comparatively settled, strong public media (unfortunately starting with 2015 they were controlled by the power), strong private media with the transparent system of ownership and finance. More than that internet portals also had transparent financing and ownership.

The Internet market was developing very dynamically, and such portals like “Onet,” “Wirtualna Polska,” and “Gazeta.pl” became the big players in the Polish media market. The information on their financial data was open. Just to compare, in Ukraine even such editions like “Ukrayinska Pravda” do not have official information about their economic activities.

The Ukrainian media market was divided by oligarchs long ago. According to experts about 75% of Ukrainian media belong to oligarchs and politicians.

For many years the information about the ownership of TV channels was not disclosed. Only after 2014 the Ukrainian Parliament obligated media outlets to publish ownership information on their sites. But complete information on what part of the media belongs to a certain owner remained closed.

So Ukrainian media outlets controlled by oligarchs are operating not like in the West? Where are media outlets being regulated by the market (except public/state media outlets). Western media outlets should bring income, or at least work for their perspective in certain time period.

The situation in Ukraine is different. The task of media outlets is to serve to their owners' interests and their allies.

It leads to the growth of a number of media outlets during the election campaigns or political activities of the political forces affiliated with certain oligarchs. As a result, there are so many informational channels, and their activities cannot be measured by market laws. The Ukrainian media market has to be analyzed together with the oligarchs' businesses functioning in the Ukrainian economy. This system limits the real competition and rivalry in Ukraine and leads to many distortions in various spheres. Thus, such a system, and corruption prevent foreign investments into Ukrainian media. As Polish experience shows, the independence of some part of the media can be guaranteed by the foreign investors, especially since 2015, when new Polish power took control over public media.

But in the Ukrainian market we see the process of concentration of the media outlets in the hands of the oligarchs and political players.

Recently, such TV channels as "112 Ukraine," "News One," and ZIK changed their owners and are now a part of a media holding that belongs to Taras Kozak, affiliated with the pro-Russian politician and businessman Victor Medvedchuk. These channels played a major role in the "Oppositional Platform for Life" party's election campaign. Taras Kozak was included into the party's election list.

Though the social media market is growing rapidly, TV still plays a tremendous role in the information space. According to the survey "Detector Media" and Kyiv International Sociology Institute "total majority of Ukrainians" (86%) obtains its information on the situation in Ukraine and the world from Ukrainian TV channels. The second position is held by the Ukrainian Internet sites (27%), and the third by social media (24%). 57% of Ukrainians get information only from Ukrainian TV channels.

2019 Elections and Media: Major Problems

2019 was rich with political events. Besides the presidential elections, snap parliamentary elections took place. Still in the spring Ukrainian monitoring experts warned the media community about the risk of using media during the elections. “Detector Media” published a manual for journalists, titled “Media and Elections: self-regulation, safety, and laws.”

“We are fixing the highest rate of pre-paid materials in Internet media for the last five years. And officially the election campaign has not yet started” (Oksana Romaniuk, Executive IMI Director, Ukrinform Agency Round Table, September 17, 2018).

According to Romaniuk this is happening because of difficult economic situation and the owners’ growing pressure on media. IMI fixed the growth of the pre-paid materials in the third quarter of 2018 in their monitoring.

“We are fixing the highest rate of pre-paid materials in Internet media for the last five years. We distributed the results for the last two years, but we monitor the situation during the last five years, so we can compare. So now it’s at its peak, and the official election campaign has not yet started. I have an impression that “political packets” took all the 98%” Oksana Romaniuk said.

A major part of the pre-paid materials were found in the news of UNIAN Agency (35.5 materials a week), “Obozrevatel” (16 a week), and “112.ua” (12.5 materials a week) 112.ua often promotes Vadym Rabinovich and his party “For Life,” Victor Medvedchuk and his party “Oppositional Block.” Romaniuk also spoke about positive tendencies as IMI did not find pre-paid materials in the news of “Ukrainska Pravda,” Ukrinform Agency, and Liga Agency, though Ukrinform and Liga had materials that were not marked as advertising.

Foreign experts also expressed their concerns. Here is an extract from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, which evaluated the election climate in Ukraine in March 2019: ***“The Delegation is concerned that freedom of speech in Ukraine is limited by the fact that media, mostly owned by oligarchs acts more like public liaison for certain candidates rather than source of balanced election information”.***

The other element that influences the Ukrainian media market is the repeating of manipulative messages and conclusions from Russian sources by Ukrainian media outlets. It was especially obvious at the beginning of the official election campaign. Some channels, like “112 Ukraine” were distributing manipulative thoughts about possible total rigging of the elections results by the authorities. Most often it was seen in the answers of the persons affiliated with certain political parties without any proof. Much worse is that some experts supported them or even deliberately distributed disinformation or rumors.

Lots of information was oriented towards a so-called “general” or “mass” voter. Depending upon the channel the accusations were aired either on the President Poroshenko, or presidential candidate Yulia Tymoshenko. For example, “Priamy” Channel (affiliated with Poroshenko) spoke about the network of voters’ bribery by the “Batkivshchyna” party, and “112 Ukraine” spoke about the bribes of the retired persons by way of pensions increase by the Government.

Analyzing the presidential election campaign in the media one can admit that voters had lots of information, or even too much information to make their own conclusions, all the more reason, there were just a few analytical materials, subjective thoughts prevailed and in certain cases they appeared to be direct manipulations. Petro Poroshenko was the leading object of information among the candidates, but not always positive, as it depended upon the media outlets’ owners. At the same time media monitoring organizations pointed out that a larger part of media

remained under the powerful influence of their owners, who openly expressed their loyalty to certain candidates and political parties during the whole campaign.

We can find such an opinion in “Media Monitoring of the Presidential and Parliamentary Elections 2019” (conducted by Journalism Ethics Commission, Human Rights Platform, Ukrainian Media and Communication Institute, and StopFake): We found many materials with the violations of journalism standards, and also materials that were pre-paid by the politicians. Is this typical? During the first round all the candidates were mentioned positively. The pre-paid materials were found in all the media outlets that were monitored except for the “UA: Pershyi” TV channel and Hromadske.ua site.

Both TV and online media made violations during the announcing of the sociological data, the candidates’ ratings in particular. Also, many TV channels did not mention that their own live studio guests’ surveys were non-representative ones.

The parliamentary election campaign had similar problems, in fact they continued the presidential campaign because of the pre-term Parliamentary elections.

Just a few media outlets managed to remain neutral (UA: Suspilne and Hromadske). The monitoring organization fixed very many pre-paid materials.

“Oppositional Platform for Life” was a “champion” of pre-paid materials TV, while “The Servant of People” was an online “leader.” The detailed analysis of the election materials was conducted by the coalition of NGOs.

Before the parliamentary elections it was distinctly obvious how Medvedchuk’s channels (“News One,” “ZIK,” and “112 Ukraine”) were supporting one political force, trying to speculate on the so-called Russian issue.

It was an attempt to hold a TV bridge “We need to talk.” The idea of this TV bridge belonged to “News One” and “Rossiya 24” Russian channel. Dmitriy Kiseliov, a frontman of Russian propaganda announced this TV bridge to take place on July 7. But a big scandal burst out instead, politicians and activists initiated the protests, and president Volodymyr Zelensky said the bridge was “a cheap PR move on the eve of elections.” “News One” had to reject the idea of this bridge. On July 13 unknown persons made a hand mortar shot at the “News One” building. There were no victims and the investigation is going on. OSCE representative on media issues Arlem Desir condemned the attack and demanded a thorough investigation from the Ukrainian power.

On July 1, 2019 “112 Ukraine” channel controlled by Medvedchuk announced Oliver Stone’s film “Discovering Ukraine.” The film depicts a conflict in the Eastern Ukraine like a “civil war,” and the main heroes of the film are Medvedchuk and Putin. The producer himself interviewed them. This producer is the author of the film “Ukraine in Flames,” where he shows as if the America secret service agents took part in the protests against Yanukovich in 2013 – 2014. On July 14th the film was removed from the channel’s program. At the beginning of October Taras Kozak gave testimony at SBU, and according to his words he was interrogated on the TV bridge between “Rossiya 24” and “News One” channels.

New Tendencies – New Risks?

Presidential Candidate Volodymyr Zelensky did not want to communicate with the media and was refusing to take part in presidential debates with his opponent Petro Poroshenko. This factor influenced and formed the new way of media communication.

Volodymyr Zelensky defined the new tendencies in working with the media. The President and his close circle changed the way of communication with the information consumers, and social media played a major part in communication with the voters.

And it was not Facebook, it was Instagram, the most popular network among youth. About 11 million Ukrainians have accounts in this network. Some posts of Zelensky had up to million likes. During the last week of the election campaign Zelensky's team posted the information encouraging to take part in the elections.

Zelensky also had "1+1" channel, that belongs to Ihor Kolomoysky. Right on the eve of the elections, during the "Day of Silence" the channel broadcasted the films with Zelensky and also his comic programs

Zelensky was often accused that he evaded media during the election campaign, but for example Najib Bukele won the presidential elections in Salvador also neglecting media communication and not taking part in the debates. Though Bukele had a political experience while Zelensky did not.

The US president Donald Trump is also known with his somewhat similar and peculiar approach to media and communication with voters via Twitter.

Show Instead of the Debates.

The new style of Zelensky's election campaign influenced the debates on Public TV.

TV debate is an important element of democratic election campaigns, where anchors (usually journalists) play a significant role.

On March 31 president Poroshenko said that debates had to take place before the second round. The same day Zelensky replied he was ready to meet his opponent on TV.

"You are inviting me to the debates? You thought I would run away, hide, or tune out. No! I'm not like you in 2014. I'm accepting your challenge." Zelensky said meaning the situation in 2014 when Poroshenko did not agree to debate with Tymoshenko.

Zelensky demanded the debates to take place at Olympiysky Stadium in Kyiv. He wanted journalists to be present at the event and insisted that debates had to be broadcasted by all the channels. It looked like Poroshenko's close circle would not accept such conditions, besides, the debates rules and norms were part of the election law. The debates had to take place the last Friday before the election day, on April 19. Public TV had to organize the event and the debates had to be financed by the state.

"Debates are not a show. The election campaign is the event that determines the future of the country for years. It's not a place for jokes. To be the president and a commander-in-chief of the armed forces is not a game. Debate is a serious discussion on strategic development of the

country, values, historical vector, and priorities,” Poroshenko said. The President pointed out that norms of the debates are the written law, but accepted Zelensky’s challenge, “Let it be stadium, waiting for you Volodymyr Oleksandrovych,” he said.

According to the Article 62 of the Presidential Election Law, the TV discussion (official aim of it is guaranteeing the equal rights) is financed by the state election budget. According to this article Public TV “UA: Pershyi” organizes the debates on the last Friday before the election day. But point 6 of this article mentions the possibility of organizing the TV debates cycle that could be paid by the rivals’ election staffs.

As far as I understand it’s not related to the debates to be organized by the public TV two days before the elections. From voters’ interest namely the debates on TV on April 19 could guarantee certain standards. But the topic of the debates became a tool of contention in the hands of PR experts from both sides.

The Central Election Commission confirmed that article 62 had nothing in common with the debates at Olympic Stadium, and if it would take place the Commission would consider it to be just election campaigning. The debates at the stadium occurred, but this show had nothing in common with thematic discussion. After the debates on the stadium president Poroshenko came to the TV debates on “UA: Pershyi” planned according to the Election law, but Zelensky never appeared there.

Media as a Moderator Between the Government and Society. Not Needed Anymore?

The practice of cooperation between media and power that was set up during the election campaign did not change. In fact, the president does not give interviews. Press conferences are measured with the limited number of questions. Instead of a press conference to sum up the first 100 days of presidency, Zelensky gave an interview to Stanislav Boklan, an actor who played together with him in TV series “A Servant of People.”

“There will be questions that worried society” – his press secretary Yulia Mendel said to “Ukrayinska Pravda.”

But this format has nothing to do with journalism and is very convenient for the president and his close circle. Would any question worry the audience, this staged show would never substitute a journalist, who is able to react depending upon the answers.

With just one exception (a visit to Germany) the president was never interviewed by the foreign media before the official visits to other countries. It’s a bad practice, that harms the interests of the image of Ukraine.

An alarming tendency was also revealed during Zelensky’s press conferences. The dialogue with journalists is measured with minimum questions. A good example is the press conference conducted on October 1. It was announced in haste (as if the event was not planned), when Ukrainians learnt about the so-called “Steinmeier’s formula” signed in Minsk from Russian media. And in spite of the importance of the topic, the conference lasted only fifteen minutes.

There was a lot of criticism of the president’s press officer. Yulia Mendel took this position due to the victory in official contest. This journalist had professional experience and wide contacts with Ukrainian and foreign journalists.

At the end of September, a big incident with Mendel's participation occurred. When "Schemes" journalist Serhiy Andrushko tried to put questions to Zelensky and the head of the President's Office Andriy Bohdan, Yulia Mendel started to push the journalist. Later on, it became public, that earlier she behaved in the same manner with Christopher Miller, Radio Liberty journalist.

The Ukrainian journalists' community blamed the work of the press secretary, and asked Mendel to apologize for her inappropriate behavior. "Initiative 34" media group demanded her dismissal for not being professional. And "Media for Conscious Choice" media group asked Zelensky to react publicly for "threatening" interference into journalists' work.

But the president and his office ignored all the demands, and during the press conference of October 1, Zelensky jokingly asked Mendel – "Yulia, did you push anybody today?"

Finally, Zelensky's team decided to react and improve the relations with the journalists. The big October 10 press conference or rather press marathon with the president had to be the answer to the criticism after the incidents and mistakes in communication with media.

The president devoted the whole day to the journalists. The marathon started about 10 am. About 300 journalists received accreditation and were divided into groups, and each group had 30 minutes. The place of the marathon was also unusual, it was the "Kyiv Food Market."

Very quickly it became obvious that the press office is not able to finish the marathon in time, and it lasted 14 hours. Journalists had ambiguous impressions from the event. And it's worth admitting that president recognized that the authorities failed to set up sufficient communication with civil society. The president showed that he is not afraid to communicate with journalists; it's a pity he did not do it earlier. It was positive that journalists could ask any questions and any of the accredited journalists could do it. But this format led to the repeating of many of the same questions.

Still after the marathon there is no answer to the question of if President's Press Office will build up a normal communication with media. It's possible, that the press office could decide that marathon was enough and will return to the previous format of the short press conferences with the limited number of questions. If it happens the marathon could be evaluated just as an attempt to improve the image of the authorities.

Manipulations in Social Networks and Fake Media

In September Facebook decided to remove 168 accounts, 149 pages and 79 groups related to coordinated misinformation of the Ukrainians. The accounts were related to Ukrainian PR company "Pragmatico." The company worked for various political clients and for the stars of Ukrainian sports and show business.

Facebook emphasized that these groups' organizers redirected the users to the sites "Znaj.ua" and "Politeka," which position themselves as informational ones.

It's a big problem as there are many web sites that position themselves as media. Their activities grow when elections or various political campaigns take place. They often post fake news, that are being shared in social media.

Most of the pages show no signs of being edited. Sometimes the authors of the publications are unknown, and there are doubts if they are real people. According to the IMI survey of 2018 only 14% of the most popular internet media published the contacts of the owners and chief editors.

Both resources “Znaj.ua” and “Politeka” denied the accusations but at the same time recognized that was cooperation with an agency that consulted them on social networks activities. Yet, it’s just the peak of the iceberg.

Not Everything Is Lost

The majority of journalists say freedom of speech is OK in Ukraine in spite of all the problems that journalists face. Democratic Initiatives by Ilko Kucheriv supported by Freedom House conducted a survey (May 30 – June 14, 2019) at the request of ZMINA Human Rights Center. 127 journalists took part in the survey.

One of the questions was “What are the major threats to the freedom of speech and journalists’ work in Ukraine?” The survey had several variants of the answer and 70% said it was owners’ censorship, 53% said it was the low level of journalists’ professionalism, and 41% chose the variant “Personal threats, related to journalistic activities,” while 39% chose “Self-censorship.”

The majority of the journalists pointed out that censorship existed, and 94% said that media owners is the source of the censorship, and 48% insist that it’s self-censorship.

The other question was “Which forms of pressure were used in your journalism practice when censorship was introduced or motivated?” 35% chose “Explanations that such a position is not popular in our society.” 30% chose “Explanation that it’s not in the country’s interests.” 30% chose “Because of war.” 65% of journalists say the war is the reason of self-censorship cases growth.

35% from the questioned journalists do not hide the real information, if they believe it was for the country’s safe, while 53% failed to answer this question.

84% of the journalists emphasize they cannot share untrue information, even though it would help to dismiss a bad official.

Also, 59% of journalists stress that there are no topics which cannot be covered, and it’s a positive trend. There are media outlets that do not avoid complex problems and cover any topics. And many journalists work according to Western standards. A good example is “Hromadske” TV and “Hromadske” Radio. Public TV and radio are still independent, though they criticize the authorities’ activities. The independence of these media outlets will be a test for the new power.

In Poland public broadcasters are completely under government control since 2015, while Poland has very strong private media. In Ukraine powerful media are under the control of oligarchs and their political allies. Independent public media and the development of new independent media projects could be a good counterweight to this situation.

Each attack on journalists is an attack on human society



Serhiy TOMILENKO,
Head of the National Union
of Journalists of Ukraine
European Federation of Journalists
Executive Committee Member

In spring of 2019 Volodymyr Zelensky, still a presidential candidate signed a Declaration to defend the freedom of speech, which was worked out by the National Journalists' Union of Ukraine together with the International Federation of Journalists. Today our task is to control the newly elected head of the state, to make the words under which his signature is placed to become real deeds of Ukrainian power.

The specific of the journalists' work is that our activities are directly related to the whole of society.

Thus, the conditions of this work are far from being just a problem of media representatives.

Each attack on a journalist is an attack on the freedom of speech, which is oxygen for democratic society. It's an attack on the citizens' right to be informed to make conscious decisions. An attack on a journalist is an attack on the main rights and freedom of the individual. Thus, it's discordant with the civilizational choice made by Ukraine.

International media organizations, such as the International and European Journalists' Federations, OSCE Office of Media Freedom Representative and journalistic communities are concerned with the situation of physical safety of Ukrainian journalists.

The index of physical safety of journalists (Ukrainian Journalism Association defines it with the partner organizations, Academy of Ukrainian Press in particular) shows the high level of aggression towards media representatives, including women-journalists, which is especially revolting.

According to the Index of physical safety of Ukrainian journalists 89 cases of aggression against journalists were reported in 2017, and 86 cases in 2018. In 2018 the attacks on women-journalists grew by up to 50% (During the 2019 OSCE Conference on Human Index Development in Warsaw), the US delegation representative emphasized that such attacks were inadmissible.

Lots of incidents were reported when the attackers were the officials, deputies, policemen, and representatives of law enforcement. The murder of Vadym Komarov in June 2019, a journalist from Cherkasy, proves the excessive state of physical safety of Ukrainian journalists.

It's difficult to remember the cases of real punishment of the attackers on journalists or editions. The impunity for the crimes could be followed at all levels, from villages to big cities.

The investigators deliberately delay with the opening of cases on journalists' attacks, or even reject to open the case. Even when cases are opened, they are very often delayed, or the investigation fails. Just a few are brought to court, and finally very few come to a guilty verdict.

Politicians and high officials act aggressively towards journalists and sometimes try to blame media representatives.

One of the major concerns for Ukrainian journalists are attacks by radicals, who express their disagreeing with the media policy of the outlet, journalistic material, or "bad" source of information.

All of the above are signs of the systematic impunity for the crimes against journalists that threatens the free and independent functioning of the press like a key institute of democratic society.

One of the real things that could be done to move the problem from the "dead point" is to make all the cases of the attacks on journalists public with real reports by the heads of the law enforcement, and attracting the attention of all the Ukrainian political elite and International partners.

The most effective place for this is the Ukrainian Parliament, as the highest legislative body of the country, and the most real and effective mechanism is conducting the parliamentary hearings on Ukrainian journalists' safety.

Parliamentary hearing is the instrument of journalists' defense, and thus the instrument of Human Rights, freedom of speech and democracy, as the basis of Ukraine's civilizational choice defense.

The National Union of Journalists of Ukraine lobbied parliamentary hearings on Ukrainian journalists' safety for more than two years.

For the first time the Union announced this initiative in July 2017 a year after the murder of the famous journalist Pavel Sheremet, whose car was exploded in the center of Kyiv.

Only in September 2019, the Verkhovna Rada (new parliament) demonstrated attention to the problem of safety of journalists and announced a special Rada hearing on journalists' safety issues to be held on November 6.

NUJU has several key points to turn to the new power in Ukraine (with the election of the new president the parliament and the government was reloaded): politicians must respect the freedom of speech and expression. People at power should not act to limit freedoms, and attempts

to do so have to be blamed publicly. Politicians should not interfere in journalists' work, not to make pressure on journalists and media. It's not admissible to use law enforcement structures to persecute journalists. Police, the Prosecutor General's Office, Security Service of Ukraine, National anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine, State Bureau of Investigation, State Fiscal Service, National Agency to Prevent Corruption, National TV and Radio Council, and other state structures cannot be the instruments of pressure on editorial policy and journalists' work. The persecution of journalists for their materials is not admissible.

We are convinced sure that open yearly reports on investigation results of crimes against journalists should become a traditional practice in Ukraine.

Politicians should respect journalists, not treat them like "ours" and "bad," not to attach labels on them and not to encourage hate speech. Current laws in the sphere of freedom of speech have to be respected and practiced by responsible power bodies. New legal initiatives in the sphere of media should be reconciled with media society during the wide discussion.

These major principles became the key element of the Declaration to Defend the Freedom of Speech, which UJJU together with International Federation of Journalists claimed to be signed by all the presidential candidates at the beginning of this year's election campaign.

For politicians it's a mechanism of public obligations to guarantee the freedom of speech in Ukraine, to fight against crimes against journalists, and for society and the professional community it's a kind of litmus paper for the leading politicians of their attitude to the problems of the freedom of speech and journalists' activities in Ukraine.

Honestly speaking, we were concerned with the presidential campaign this year, as this campaign started without the direct administrative pressure ban. For the first time the moratorium on media inspection during the election period was not approved.

We believe that the political forces which concentrated major power in their own hands were not interested in supporting or helping journalists, or at least not by way of their actions and not by their commitments to international partners.

But in fact, we went through the presidential campaign and parliamentary campaign more or less painlessly. Fortunately, there were no large violations of freedom of speech or pressure on independent media. Though we must admit that there were cases of black PR, manipulative news, and informational "special operations." Still at the beginning of the election campaign, NUJU alerted the professional community that it could happen. Some listened to us, and some unfortunately ignored. It means that the worst things did not occur, but we still have a lot of work.

Thirteen candidates to the presidency and the elected one Volodymyr Zelensky in particular signed the Declaration for Freedom of Speech defense that was offered by NUJU together with International Federation of Journalists. Thus, they supported the principles for which we stand together with our European partners. Altogether these politicians received 50% of votes, so we can say that the main political players and the majority of Ukrainian citizens support our position. We have a cautious optimism about this fact.

On the other hand, we are not going to give overtures to the new power, which only started working.

The newly elected president Zelensky has to confirm his support of freedom of speech in Ukraine with his practical activities. Only then his signature under our declaration will have weight.

We insist on the equality of all journalists under the law and professional community not depending on their political affiliation, party of the owner, or his biography.

All the accusations or allegations towards journalists and media managers must be in the legal field in the official bodies, not in the format of a “masked show” in editorial offices, or pickets or barbed wire, which was ignored by the police, and possibly even encouraged by the authorities.

We insist on investigations and the punishment of all crimes against journalist that were not investigated yet, and we demand the punishment to organizers of Viacheslav Chornovol’s murder, Georgiy Gongadze’s murder, and punishment of those who committed crimes against journalists during Euromaidan. And certainly, to those who killed “Ukrainska Pravda” journalist Pavel Sheremet right in the center of Kyiv.

This is not to mention “the trifles” when journalists were “just” beaten, or their equipment was damaged or ruined, when they were pushed, when they were threatened, or when the attackers were not found and not punished. All these cases were placed in the Index of Physical Security of Journalists, which NUJU is filling in together with the partner organizations and regularly makes all the facts of interference into the journalists’ work public.

We expect the relaunch of the Presidential Council of Freedom of Speech and Journalists Defense from Volodymyr Zelensky. This Council was not working publicly, gathered irregularly, and its work was ineffective; it essentially existed only on paper.

We see these public platforms first of all as a place where officials, in particular the team of a new president, MPs, NGO representatives, and International community could join their efforts to stop and overrun the systematic impunity for the crimes against journalists, and improve the information law, related to journalists’ activities.

Journalism or “Journalism” on occupied territories of Ukraine



Oleksiy MATSUKA,
journalist, Donetsk Institute of
Information Director, Donbas Media
Forum organizer

The Donetsk region media landscape has changed radically since 2014. Journalists turned from the information messengers into targets with the beginning of the military conflict in the two eastern regions. And all five years until today our work is under the target of the self-proclaimed powers in Donetsk and Luhansk.

Media outlets controlled by groups of separatists are under constant pressure. So called “ministries of information” with dozens of departments were created to suppress them by way of direct censorship of all media content.

The aim of such a practice is the forming of the political reality by way of picking up the facts, phenomena, and processes that are being interpreted in a certain way. The unrecognized power bodies and their curators try to harden the public opinion, artificially promoting just one position that is favorable to them. Mobilizational functions prevail in the media outlets of the closed societies of the occupied territories of Luhansk and Donetsk. Just to compare, in democratic systems the balance is reached by different centers of production of the so called “political text,” or the centers of influence, which allow the media to work in a competitive and free environment.

In 2019 Boris Sizov, a chief editor and anchor of the separatist channel “Union” said that journalism is defective in so called “DNR”. He said this in his interview to “Redaktsiya” YouTube Channel. Introducing himself he showed with his fingers that he is doing “journalism” in quotes.

“We have a special type of journalism here, probably, like in many places. It’s not fully adequate, it’s a juncture to some extent. It has certain limitations and conventions, but I think there’s no sense to talk about it”, he said.

Providing an answer to the question “How did he manage to become chief editor at 28,” Sizov said **“Maybe it’s a problem of the staff deficiency. A major part of the people, who had tremendous experience and could occupy many positions are looking for places because of such situations as war, military actions, coup d’etats, and other things. So, people go away, and a vacuum appears, and it’s being filled with the principle: whoever came to apply – he wins the position.”**

He compared Donetsk with a tacky swamp. **“Those cities, which were on the same level with Donetsk are now five steps ahead. Here everything is stuck and the revolutionary regress is going on. Here we have a tacky swamp, because the situation is not changing, the economy is not changing”** Sizov stressed.

To show the media work model in closed societies with mobilizing function we (together with the media expert Halyna Skliarevska) analyzed a number of events that were showed on pro-Russian separatist TV channels and variously interpreted.

We have chosen the programs of “First Republican” channel (Donetsk), “Oplot TV” (Donetsk), “Novorossiya TV” (Donetsk), TC “Union” (Donetsk), and TC TTRC LNR (Luhansk), all in all 72 programs, where Ukraine was mentioned in any context.

The law on Donbas reintegration was an issue of discussion on “republican channels” for a long time. But the main subject of the emphasis of the discussion was made on speculations, that the law had the only aim to legalize the “use of the army” against civil population and “mop up Donbas.”

According to the program’s participants, up until now the Ukrainian Army and Battalions of volunteers were fighting without a legal basis. Also, the program participants said that the law was needed to “blame Russia, which likely was fighting here.”

Andrey Babitsky, Russian journalist and anchor of “Politinformatsiya” program at “Union” channel was the main author of these messages, and he was repeating them in several other programs, where he was taking part as a guest.

“After the so-called reintegration law adoption, we were all announced as either occupants or occupation victims, and the war in Donbas is depicted as an conflict with an outside aggressor,” he said to his spectators. Other reporters insist that the law is not constitutional, though in all the programs where Ukraine is mentioned we can hear such words as “fake state,” “under president,” “as if elected parliament,” “as if power,” “the state that’s in the process of running,” “terroristic state without courts,” etc. So, saying that the law is not constitutional does not look logical in this context. The law is being criticized for not corresponding with the Minsk Treaty, and also refers to “some kind of pardon” for Donbas people, which they don’t need? Maybe they mean amnesty.

Poroshenko’s attempt to involve international peacekeepers to solve the reintegration problem was severely criticized. The peacekeeping action is depicted as a way “to gain power” in Donbas with somebody else’s hands, and then transfer it to the hands of Ukraine. But as the local audience is assured by the channels “there are no fools here,” and this mission is possible only when Russia will participate in it.

Finally, the fact of “joining Ukraine” was mentioned just once in 72 programs by Dmitry Kulikov. Though he said it was possible only when “Ukraine would be reorganized on new principles, and there will be lands that would create some kind of upper structure” meaning the ruining of the state in favor of federalization. Though he said it was a hypothetical variant, and according to him Ukraine will be involved in “full scale civil war” and as a result Ukraine will be ruined as a state.

Arsen Avakov’s program of Donbas reintegration caused the use of sarcasm in studios and there were lots of hints on the drugs addiction of the Internal Affairs Minister, who was going to realize his political ambitions as a candidate to the presidency.

And still the discussion about the reintegration is very active, but they talk about the territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions as “temporarily controlled by Ukraine.” They speak a lot about the “humanitarian missions” to the grey zone, about helping people that live near the front line. Half of the programs report on the aid to different villages, renovation of the ruined houses, etc. They tell their audience about the active work in this direction.

First, it is being reported that a joint (“LNR” and “DNR”) humanitarian program on the reintegration of the people of Donbas exists, and it welcomes young people “on both sides” to cooperate actively. Sixty people from Ukraine were reported to take part in the Forum, and 4,000 people more were visiting “sport patriotic events” during the last two years.

Secondly, there is a 'civic organization' “United Donbas,” working within this humanitarian program that offers free medical services to the people living in the territories temporarily occupied by Ukraine, they also offer free education in Donetsk and Luhansk universities and so on.

The head of the foundation reported that the foundation satisfied more than 2,000 applicants.

Other media outlets reported that this foundation offered 5,000 hryvnias to the veterans of World War II. The program is being actively advertised on the channels of both “republics.” The second line of “integration” already without the prefix ‘-re’ is cooperation with Russia in all possible ways. The tours of circuses, theaters, exchanges, training of “young politicians”, participation in multiple Russian regional programs for young people, creation of various movements within the “republics,” creation of trade unions, and volunteer movements is widely advertised.

They are especially proud with sports cooperation, according to the “ministry of sports, youth, and tourism” there were “90 tours of “DNR” teams.” Amateur theaters, poets and media representatives, who conduct trainings come from Russia and vice versa media representatives from Donbas visit Russia for trainings (a meeting with Irada Zeinalova from NTV was organized). Many meetings were organized with the assistance of the “Russian Center” in Donetsk. As vice-chief editor of “Donetsky Chas” said, “Russian Center” is a structure, made for deepening of the integration with Russia.” Perhaps, they are going to integrate fundamentally, but mostly in the cultural sphere, as economic integration was hardly mentioned, and they were regretting the ruble was going down after the new sanctions. One of the guests openly said, “It’s a pity, the ruble is going down,” and the topic of Russian assistance was not raised.

During the last four years local power representatives started to use clichés that are being retransmitted by the local media.

For example, the speakers very often use the word combination “multinational people of Donbas.” The obvious reason, why they do not want to call themselves “Ukrainians” neither by citizenship, (though the passports of “DNR” were received by just 180,000 people, and local power recognizes dual citizenship), nor ethnically. At the same time, they claim themselves “one and the same Russian people,” or simply “Russians.” Speakers, both local and Russian constantly remain their audience that they are the “same nation,” “Russian nation,” the keepers of “Russian culture.” As the identity feature of “multinational Donbas people” they offer Russian language. That’s why the voluntary dictation was so important for them and it was the main topic of discussion in several programs.

In one of them called “Point of View” with Igor Faramazyan, the background of the “republic” goes to the matter of language: ***“Now what we have in Donbas started with the language.”***

And Russian language unites a multi-national conglomerate of Donbas. It gives people a possibility to coexist peacefully, and cooperate keeping their self-identity,” he said.

Different arguments are being used, like as if Lev Gumeliov’s words ***“as soon as a Ukrainian becomes smart and clever, he becomes Russian.”*** They blame Ukraine in violation of the Russian speaking population, cite the poems of Yunna Morits, who is proud with the “vatnik” presented to her by the local poet Skobtsov, and they are very sorry that Gogol and Bulgakov are “banned” in Ukraine, and praise the “mild power” of the language.

In one of the programs it was even said that a ***“Russian person is a multi-national creature.”*** At the same time when they mention the Ukrainian army, they say that “Ukraine is shooting at its own citizens,” “goes against its people,” and they also claim that the war in Donbas is a war against Russia.

The second topic that is as much widely discussed in connection with the identity of Donbas people is the topic of the orthodox church in Ukraine. Certainly, it’s caused with the attempt to create autocephalian church in Ukraine. At the same time nobody is trying to explain why Bartolomeo’s tomos is important exactly for the inhabitants of the region, which does not recognize Ukrainian jurisdiction.

The danger is in violation of the canonic right of the Russian Orthodox Church according to Russian journalist Sergey Babitsky. It’s not clear, how it applied to the worshipers of the Russian Orthodox Church, who live in the territory that is not controlled by Ukraine.

Babitsky speaks about the upcoming religious rebellions in Ukraine, connecting it to the appearance of the autocephalian church and says that Bartolomeo is dependent on Washington in his decisions. At the same time, he emphasizes that the Russian Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchy in Ukraine is independent and is not Kirill’s jurisdiction. “False Patriarch” Philaret is being criticized and Farmazyan threatens him with the “personal burning bowl” at inferno. He also says that nonconformity of the Russian Orthodoxy is worse than split Russia and Ukraine, without any explanations.

The other speaker Gennadiy Mishko, Donetsk vice administration head says that Ukraine will never get autocephaly, and Poroshenko simply uses this topic as a part of his election campaign. He said, ***“It’s just a deception of his people with the aim to deepen and widen the whirlpool between Ukraine and Russia.”***

The other speakers, including foreign ones, like two Serbian representatives also discuss the importance of orthodoxy. Philosopher Vladimir Kolaric and sociologist Zoran Milosevic share such a statement, that if a Serbian is not orthodox, then he is rather Turk or Croatian. Though they did not mention the existence of the Serbian independent church. At the same time, they said that Ukraine was found out by Jesuits and those who are fighting against Donbas are Uniates, and that’s why orthodoxy is extremely important part of Russian and Serbian identity, and “Donbas people” identity.

By the way the other speaker, deputy Vladislav Berdichevsky promoted this thesis at the Donetsk channel, ***“This Unia which created Greek Catholics is the result of what we see now in Western Ukraine. Five hundred years passed, and Russian people regenerated there.”***

It means that the thesis of appearing of Ukrainian nation as a result of “regenerating of Russian people under the influence of Unia” is common at the “republican” TV channels.

This small content analysis proves that the main message of “senses” or interpretations on occupied territories is pro-Russian political elite (journalists and “deputies”), which appeared recently. The communicational process is under total control of the self-proclaimed power and their Russian curators, and they engage a wide circle of electorate thus forming the political reality.

According to their idea the elimination of independent and pro-Ukrainian media on the occupied territories will lead to a new civil understanding and accepting the idea that “Donbas has always been a Russian land” the “people of Donbas” really exists, “Kyiv is an aggressor,” etc.

I deliberately simplified the senses mentioned above, trying to show how the final consumer gets them and how they become a new civil idea and norm.

Three Targets for Local Media. Trust, Activeness, Effectiveness

Oleksiy POHORELOV,
Ukrainian Media
Business Association



Digital transformation changes the media landscape in Ukraine and worldwide. Local media are the part, where transformation is going on by way of delivering information to the reader (print, digital) and in content (under the influence of many factors, the most important in Ukraine is privatization and decentralization). The changes do not always lead to better results, and people do not like changes. That's why the level of trust in the media is going down, and lack of trust is a world media problem.

Ukrainian editors and journalists understand this problem, but can not always find effective solutions for their media outlets, especially at the local level. There are many reasons for that and lots of ways to solve the problem. I will offer my vision of the situation and will sum it up for all the media players – media experts, civil communicators, and donors. I would like to pay attention to the fact that 40% of media subscriptions in Ukraine are local ones (in 2019 it's 42% according to Ukrposhta). That's why it's important to talk about the local media in this analytical material.

First. Trust

There are about 4,500 print media outlets in Ukraine. This number is slowly going down, but the number of digital media is growing. There is no information on the exact number of internet media outlets, but it is considered that the number is approximately the same, because a major part of print media outlets has their own sites, Facebook page and YouTube channel. The number of various media keeps on growing. That's why the problem of trust is the main one. The readers have a limited time to consume information, so they will choose the most useful for them. And

it's a matter of trust to information and its source, the price of access, and the question of timeliness and convenience of newspaper delivery or the site upgrade.

In other words, trust is not only a synonym of information quality, but also the result of several factors implemented simultaneously: information quality, timeliness and convenience of its delivery to the reader, and price.

Certainly, the information quality and timeliness of its delivery might vary for various people. But we will omit these problems as they are not the matter of this analysis. Media economics is much more important for us, because the materials' quality depends upon it significantly.

If a media outlet has many materials created at advertisers' request and they are not marked like advertising, the reader will not appreciate the quality of such media.

It's the same, if materials are weak, even if nobody paid for them, and it's even worse when advertised materials are of low quality.

It becomes critically important to take care of the readers, learn and predict their informational needs, and provide them with useful information. And it's not only a Ukrainian problem. Thus «Edelman Trust Barometer» survey in the beginning of 2018 showed that media became a social institution with the lowest level of trust during the decade. At the same time, we have to remember that Brexit referendum took place on June 23, 2016, and presidential elections took place in the U.S. on November 8, 2016, where Donald Trump won. You might think, "What's the connection between these events and trust to media?" So, let's remember, that during the elections PR managers widely used anti-elite moods to promote Trump. Their efforts were directed not only against the elite but also against media. Thus, people started to consider media to be part of the elite, who make decisions. It all helped Mr. Trump to become the U.S. President.

Approximately the same technology was used in Ukraine. Ukrainian politicians used the so-called civil thought leaders and "bots" to dissolute journalists-investigators and their work. As a result, we see a lack of trust towards media.

On diagram 1 you will find Kyiv International Sociology Institute survey data (11.30.2018 – 12.14.2018). As you see the trust in the media went down almost to the level of trust in the Police and Security Service of Ukraine (SBU). Just five years ago the trust in the media was among top five positions.

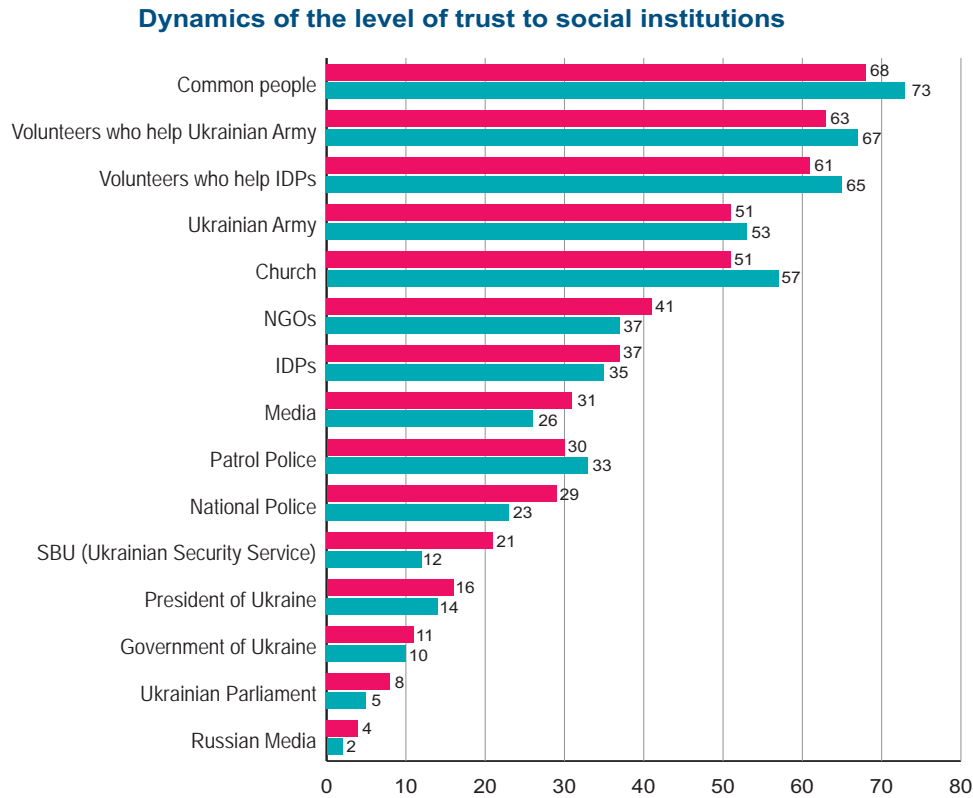


Diagram 1.
Source: Kyiv International Sociology Institute (KISI)

This situation is evident of the systematic model crisis, because the story goes back to 2008, when the world was in a big financial crisis, and the audience started asking, "Why did the media not warn us? Why did not they write about the bubble on the US real estate market? Perhaps the media is in conspiracy with the dealers!"

At the same time social networks started to grow, especially Facebook. A bit later the situation changed further. Social media during Maidan became a powerful source of information for media. Journalists legitimized the information from the social networks and published lots of news from Facebook and Twitter without checking them. And it appeared that social networks can be also powerful instrument of manipulations and sharing of lies.

I speak about the model crisis because media, I mean traditional media (newspapers, radio, also TV) stopped being the source of information that forms the data, does it qualitatively and is worthy of trust.

According to the KISI survey, the first in the level of trust is information from the neighbors, common people, who live nearby at the same town. The good thing is that the level of trust to media is slowly being renewed. (See Diagram 2) We are behind the world trend, but we hope we will catch up. But what should Ukrainian media do today to return the audience's trust?

A MODEST RISE IN TRUST

Percent trust 2018 vs. 2019

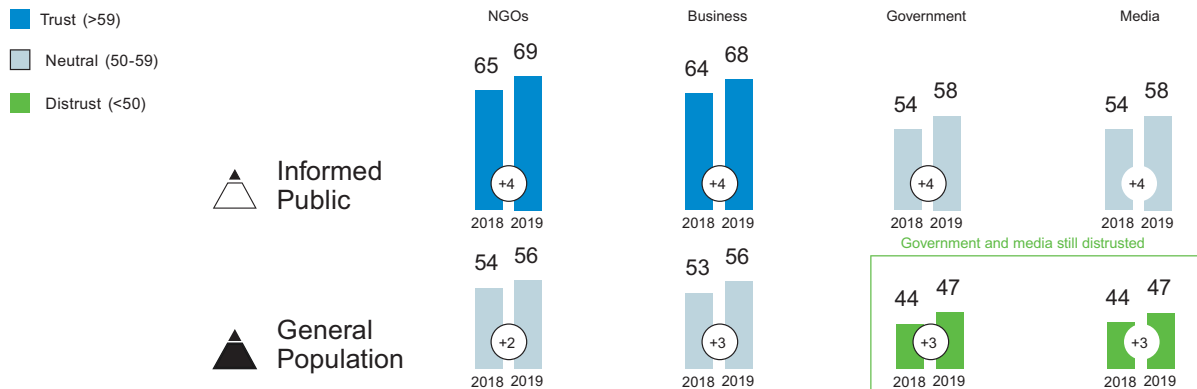


Diagram 2.

Source: «Edelman Trust Barometer».

Second. To Be Needed

So, how can Ukrainian Media overcome the high level of mistrust? What should they do to be useful to the audience? In 2018 the sociological company “In Mind” conducted a survey “Attitude to Media and Consuming of different media types in 2018” at “Internews” request. We can see three important moments here.

First: the main news source for Ukrainians are local news from local print media (See Diagram 3).

Second: these are the main reasons of the mistrust to news. In Diagram 4 you can see that the main input to this mistrust is done by the one-sided information and unprofessional delivery of the information. In other words, people feel when somebody wants to manipulate and influence their thoughts and when journalists’ work is not done professionally. People want to buy the information that helps them to live better, will provide them with the answers to hot questions and when the newspaper or a journalist will be the “clever storyteller.”

People stop using their regional editions when they stop trusting them, when they no longer find the answers to the questions that concern them, and when they feel lies and manipulation. Diagram 5 shows the fall of the editions number during the last years and how the number of editions’ copies is going down.

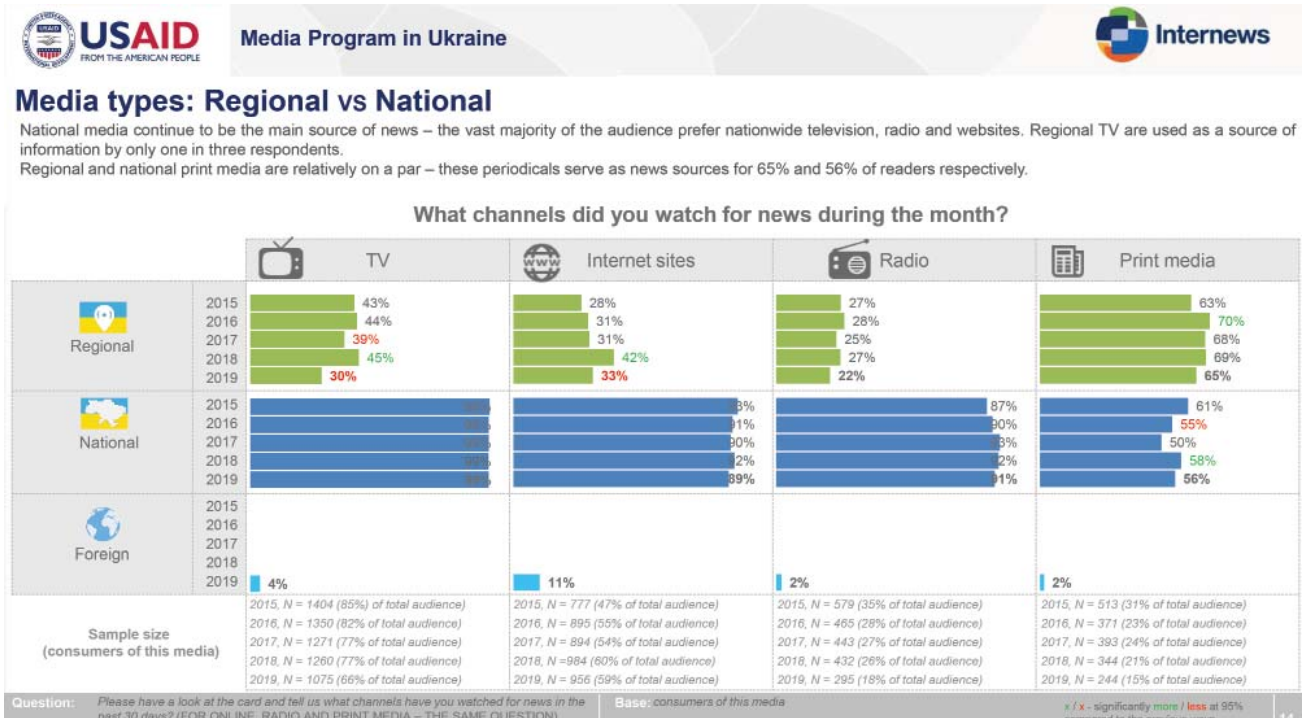


Diagram 3. Source: «Internews Network».

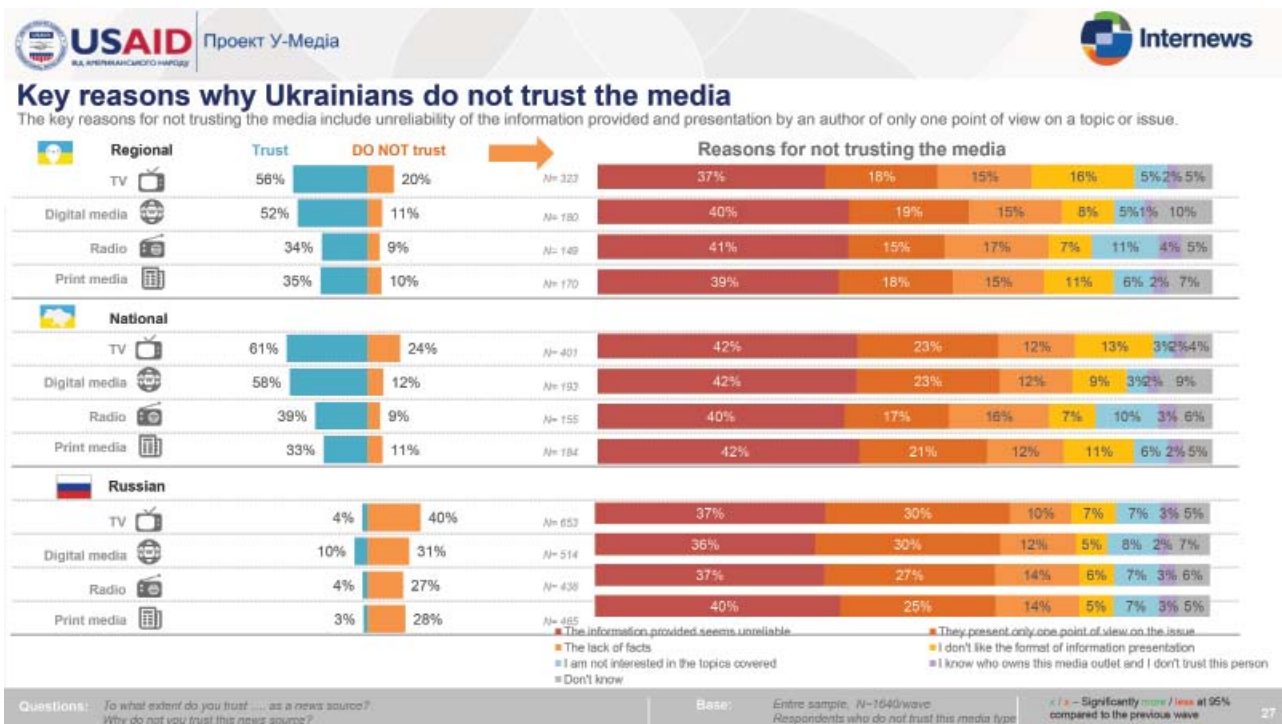


Diagram 4. Source: “In Mind” survey “Attitude to Media and Consuming of different media types in 2018” at “Internews Network” request

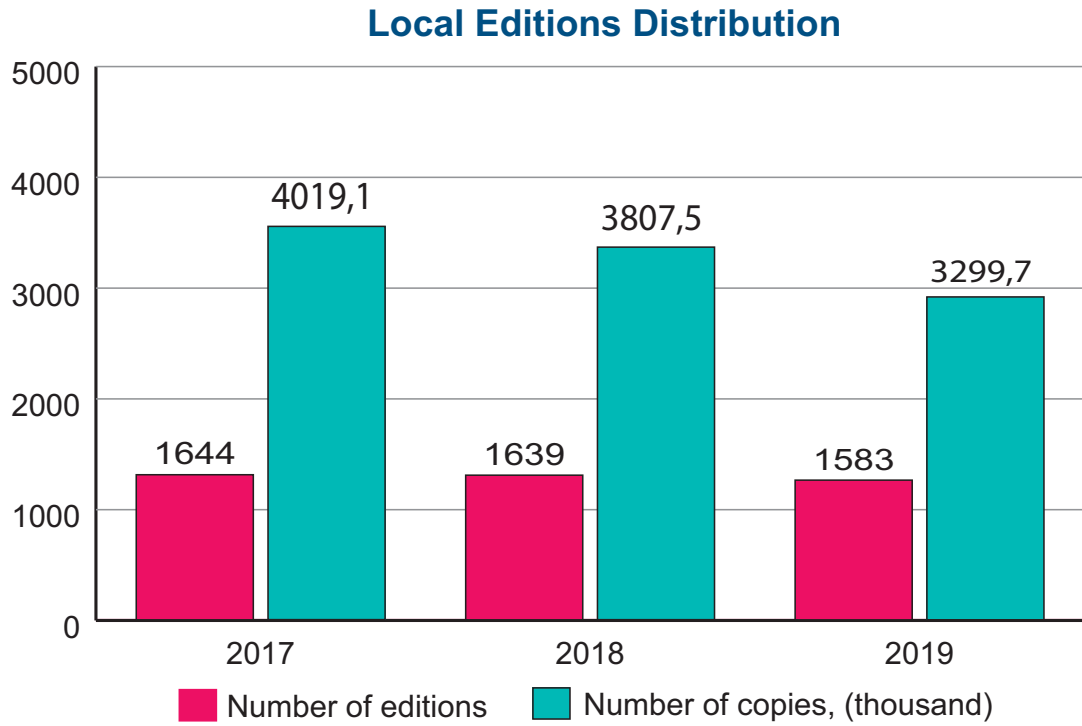


Diagram 5.
Source: Ukrposhta

Readers do not need weak media with weak editorial standards, boring content and large amounts of advertising materials. They are not interesting for the important players on a local level, particularly for those who have many and ready to pay for the qualitative work. Local media have to conduct unique functions professionally, unite people to solve the burning problems, to discuss sensitive and important topics, find common decisions, persuade, and encourage people.

That is why, in my opinion, local media have more opportunities. Decentralization and communities' development create new circumstances, where local media became needed in solving many local problems.

The major part of local editions are so-called "rayon" newspapers, which are distributed in regional centers and regions. These editions belonged to the local power for a very long time, with the power financing them, and they were the "official source" of information about the local power activities.

For a long period (70-80 years, and sometimes even 100 years) the editors and staff used to work in the format of "depicting of power activities." Today, a major part of the editions of this type have serious difficulties, as the process of privatization is over, the elections are over (only local elections are ahead, and we hope we will have several years without elections) and now privatized former "rayon" newspapers have to earn money on their own at the free media mar-

ket. It means to work with the reader (to have subscriptions and sell the products), to work with local businesses (to have advertisements), to work with local manufactures, communities, power (to have treaties to write about their activities). In other words, it means to be needed. The editors have to be more attentive to their partners, to come out with the new projects for local businesses and community. Old “rayon” newspapers have to become modern media companies and centers of information exchange in the communities. We success stories, let’s talk about them.

Third. To be Convenient

Three lessons for local media editorial offices

Case 1. Local newspapers a convenient communication channel for local citizens and power

Two territorial communities were created at Troyitsky region of Luhansk oblast in 2017 – 2018. They were Troytska with the population of 14,151 people, and Pryvilka with the population of 1,511 people. The distance between the villages of that region and the communities center is about 30-50 kilometers. There is no bus transportation, most of the population does not have money to buy computer equipment to have internet access, thus they do not have a possibility to address their problems and questions to the local authorities or experts to get answers.

It was a part of justification of the project submitted by “CilskiNovyny” newspaper to the contest organized by Ukrainian media Business Association with the help of the US Embassy Media Development Fund.

The solution offered by the editorial office was to set up paper boxes in every small rayon to get questions and propositions from the community to the authorities, communal services sector and others. The editorial office was planning to pick up the letters every week and send them to certain structures, and further on, prepare the material on the basis of these letters and place it in a weekly column “Community Life.” The editorial office’s expectation was that this work would raise the trust to the local edition and will improve the effectiveness of the authorities, journalists’ and local community cooperation. “The newspaper will become a media platform for communication between the community and the power, will raise the level of transpareness of the local power bodies and the responsibility of the self-government bodies. It will also provide the local citizens with the information on the solving local problems of the community and will raise the demand for the newspaper and will help the editorial office financially.” That was the plan.

To realize this idea the site and a Facebook page of the edition were created to support the dialog online.

For those without Internet access they offered “boxes” for their letters and applications. Journalists made 35 boxes with their own hands for these purposes. The journalists worked with the communities and advertised their project “Making an open dialog between the communities and local self-government bodies through the local newspaper.” They made announcements in the newspaper and on a newspaper’s site, distributed letters and bills within the communities and in the places often visited by the community members.

In April there were 51 letters in the boxes, in May already 68, and in June they had 45. Out of these 165 questions and proposals approximately 60 were repeating ones, and journalists grouped them to send to certain institutions.



Many people were complaining about the lack of roads repair, water supply services, internet absence, there were questions on employment, cemeteries repair, street lighting, bus transportation, post office work, etc.

At this time the answers to 57 requests were received, and 46 are still pending. The answers of the experts have been published in the newspaper's rubric "Community Life."

First it was planned that it had to be the newspaper's column twice a month, but the answers now occupy more than one page of the newspaper almost in every issue, so the rubric has become the most expected by the readers. For two months only two journalists' requests were not considered. It was the question about the road R-66 repair, and there was no response from the Automobile Roads Service of the Luhansk oblast and Ukravtodor.

Maryna Zhyvotkova, Silski Novyny Newspaper and Troyitske.city site chief editor says, "We did not pay much attention to our readers' requests and promoting their ideas within community before the project started. This process takes a lot of time and efforts, and we do not have many resources in our newspaper. But now due to the Media Business Association and US Embassy Media Development Fund we have the possibility to embody this idea. And, also, we can prove to our readers and to ourselves that we are strong. Another profit we have is the newspaper's popularization. Our newspaper becomes more and more popular because it has become twice cheaper (print edition subscription is 30 hryvnias per month and digital one is only 15 hryvnias), though the newspaper is in color. But common people and retired persons do not have expensive gadgets, and the newspaper remains the only source of information for them. That's why those responses to their requests that they put in the boxes became accessible for them at the pages of the traditional print newspaper.

Local community trusts printed word more than sites or social networks. When we started the project the newspaper circulation was 2,000 issues, now it's 2,700."

Victoria Ryzhuk, newspaper distribution manager says, "In market-places, where the newspaper is being distributed, the sellers ask for the issues with "Community Life" rubric. So, this project is very cost-efficient for us. We need to keep working with it. But we have even more achievements. Now we are considered to be trustful partners in business ideas and public initiatives promotion exactly due to the appearance of the "live" word from the village people, our readers. If people trust the newspaper "their joys and sorrows" they will accept our advice and will read the advertisement."

Case 2. Cooperation is the way to fantastic media outreach

The editorial office of "Khotynski Visti" rayon newspaper was looking for the ways to improve the product for their audience, and to improve media outreach. The experiment overestimated all the expectations, the audience of one of the topics reached "television size" of more than 1.3 million persons.

It all started with the privatization, and it pushed the editorial office to find the ways to be more modern and more useful for its audience.

They decided to offer the community to reveal the abilities of organizers and discussion moderators. There were countless problems and issues, so discussion had to give the opportunity to fully analyze the variants of solutions and look for those eager to be involved in the solutions' realization.

The idea was supported by Mykola Holovliv, the Khotyn Mayor, "It's a really modern and up to date innovation, because we are lacking space and platform, where indifferent and interested community members could gather, and not only discuss, but also look for the solutions of the burning problems, that exist in towns and villages of the Khotyn united community. The editorial office of the "Khotyn Visti" newspaper could be such a platform, and due to multimedia would provide the involvement of the large part of the community members of different age."



Three Targets for Local Media. Trust, Activeness, Effectiveness

You can read about the analytical material about the experience and life hacks of the discussion organizing at “Redaktorsky Portal.” That’s why I’ll tell you about the fantastic results that good cooperation can achieve.

Tetiana Koval, (editor of “Kotynski Visti”) says, “We had an interesting story of the Khotyn and the nearby villages garbage problem. This topic raised big interest, maybe because people want to live in a clean town/village, but just a few people are ready to do something for it.

The majority of local residents simply complain about the poor quality delivered by the communal services of the local authorities. As Khotyn Mayor M. Holovliov said during the discussion, it’s easier to push away the aggressor in the East, than to overcome people’s indifference.

So, we decided not to measure ourselves with traditional functions and applied to the local young people. We made a video clip with the popular life hacks about the proper sorting of the plastic garbage not only to preserve nature, but also not to drink milk bought in the market place from the bottle picked up in the garbage can, as they sell milk at the market place from the plastic bottles, and nobody knows where from these do they get these bottles. And not everybody uses the special containers for PET-bottles. And not everybody presses the bottle to diminish its size before throwing it away.

In order to do in a really modern and extraordinary way we joined our efforts with the students of the Khotyn Gymnasia (Secondary School). Tetiana Yurchak heads the school ecological project “Zero Waste School” funded by the Klitchko brothers. The project is being conducted to improve the ecological situation in Khotyn, so our purposes coincided. Gymnasia students appeared to be great actors: one of the girls was made up as granny, who picked up the bottles from the garbage can and then sold them at the marketplace. It was appreciated by the audience, when we explained the situation simply and in a humorous way.



45-seconds video clip named “Tasty Milk?” really worked out. It was shared by children and grown-ups, and there were very many comments. We had more than 200,000 views during the first two days, and after the third day more than 750,000. Overall number of views reached up more than 1.3 million. We were amazed. It was obvious that our work broke the limits of Khotyn with the population of 9,000 and became popular all over Ukraine. We are grateful to gymnasia students, our wonderful actors and their manager Tetiana Yurchak. The video clip would not be that great without them.”

Going back to the discussion topic and its effectiveness for the editorial office I'll give the floor to Tetiana Koval again, “We are proud of our results. People thank us for raising the burning issues of the community, explaining everything in detail, and help solving these problems. It's the best proof that our work is really meaningful.

Besides, we raised our online audience of “Khotynski Visti” Facebook page subscribers in particular from 3,700 in April up to 6,500 in July. We already have 53,000 page likes, and page views is never going down under 100,000. For example, we had 135,000 views this week, and during the last wuthering our reports had 400,000 views.”

Case 3. People need local TV

The application of the “Slovo Trudivnyka” newspaper from Yakymivka, Zaporizhia Oblast, was very interesting and not ordinary from the very beginning. Maybe it was not very well written and had some drawbacks in its plan. But who could expect that the editorial office of the recently privatized newspaper would submit an application according to the demands and standards, common to donors and experienced participants of the grant projects? So, UMBA helped our colleagues at that stage of the project. Now, when we have the project results for three months, we are glad, that we did not miss this project, and will gladly share their success story.

“Slovo Trudivnyka” newspaper had the following project justification in their application form: “In the time of decentralization of the country it is very important to keep and multiply the glory of our beloved land, its people, and historical places of Yakymivsky region. Video reports and short news blogs are very popular not only in social networks. They are widely used during various events, and it's a visiting card of the region, that raises the tourists' interest, and it's a memory for the upcoming generations.

During the last two years “Slovo Trudivnyka” newspaper released more than 20 informational video clips about the main events of Yakymivsky region. We showed the opening of the mini football field, we had a story about the new agricultural equipment, shared our impressions on Independence Day, etc. The blogs were placed on “Slovo Trudivnyka” site, on our official Facebook page, and other social networks. The blogs became popular, and thus the idea of “Community Blog Visiting Card” project appeared. So, the essence of the project is creating the video stories about Yakymivsky region. The project target audience is wide - school children, retired persons, farmers, teachers, medical workers, businessmen, local power, students, in fact, all the population of the local communities.”

According to the plan the bloggers team had to go “in the field” once a month to create a video clip (12-14 trips). A video story (3-7 minutes) about the life of the village, its people and events there had to be the result of each trip. The spectators of the visiting card blog could get acquainted with the local inhabitants, learn about their social and cultural life, gain and share their experience of work. It was also planned to involve local population in more active work with media, participation in news reporting and achievements, which were not highlighted in media due to the lack of expenses. Thus, the media literacy level had to be raised due to these

Three Targets for Local Media. Trust, Activeness, Effectiveness

activities. The newspaper made it possible to place video clips produced by the local community. These clips had to be moderated and edited according to the project criteria and then archived. It was planned to create 14 video blogs. 18 blogs were published during the first 3 months of work. Each video was expected to have 1,000 views, but already in April there were up to three thousand views, and up to seven thousand in June.

Tetiana Belymenko, (“Slovo Trudivnyka” Media Center Director) said that the stories about the exhibition of the disabled people, about Horky orchard, young people’s media hub and Tavria field workers had just a few views, “These first videos were made on a new and unknown page. The Muslim Holiday had the largest number of views, because it was up to date. And also, our communities are friendly, so when the video blog appeared, people watched it in Henichesk, Melitopol, and local people were also sending links to Turkey. When the project started people were reluctant to cooperate with video journalists, as they were expecting provocative materials, often shown in Internet. But when they saw their neighbors and friends and that we show the material “as it is” and in a positive way started to work with us.



Now it happens that the village head calls us and says, “We have a talented boy with very good hands, do not make a story about me, tell your audience about Andriy.” And she arranges our meeting with Andriy herself.

And in Shevchenkove village we were invited to lunch, though when we were arranging our first meeting, they were looking for the reasons to avoid it. So, time is needed for everything.

We are proud with the big circle of friends we found during our work. And this circle is growing constantly. And our project “Community Visiting Card Blog” I personally dreamed about came to life at last. We are proud with our victory in grant competition, that donors heard us and trusted us.

Our audience grew significantly. We have UAMB, head of Yakymiv State Administration, MP, and the leaders of local farmers' companies as our partners.

Maybe it sounds a bit pathetic, but we work for the sake of the community together with the community. We found our new friends during the last three months. How can you evaluate the telephone talk when a person thanked to us with the tears in her eyes for the video clip, where she was a hero? Trust and respect are much more important than money.

We have very many appreciations not only from the blog heroes, but from the officials, communal services representatives, national minorities representatives, and common people. It happens when somebody stops you in the street to say thank you."

Fourth. Perspectives

These examples are very good illustrations of the old truism – no pain no gain. These three stories show that the need in qualitative journalism is very high. And people are ready to pay for it.

So, the editors of the local media outlets have to learn to see the perspectives. Those who see the perspective are motivated to develop and to make efforts to move forward. I will offer my own short analysis of the perspectives for local newspapers.

Perspective 1. There is no local advertisement markets development, but there is a need in many players' communication. At least the so-called "advertorial market" works (do not take it for the paid-for materials). There are also many examples when local businessmen unite their efforts to solve mutual problems. For example, 12 farmers in Poltava oblast finance the newspaper that helps them to communicate with the land units' owners. In such a way they protect their business from the rivals, who would like to work on the same land.

Perspective 2. United Territorial Communities Development. The newly created united territorial communities need to develop, both territories and economically stable units. To make it real they need good communication within the community, people need to be involved not only in the process of making the community unique, but to participate in local projects. Other than that, local media outlets are great participants of the investments to develop the communities. So, either local media will do that, or local united territorial communities will create such channels.

Perspective 3. Local elections that will take place in 2020 is a powerful possibility for local media to become stronger. Local people traditionally have lots of questions for the authorities. And local authorities very often lacks direct communication with the community members. Rich communities that can afford communication experts even being in advanced position still many of them have problems with local power that reacts slowly to the questions and inquiries. They also experience certain difficulties in involving the community into active discussions of the ways of its development, outlining priorities in the budget planning, and the reason is lack of strong local media. At the same time there are such members in every community that are ready to work but do not show their initiative and are waiting to be invited. Almost everywhere in Ukraine the potential of middle-aged people is not realized, though they possess knowledge and experience and have a desire to help.

And again, local media is a wonderful platform for communication between the local authority and community, and it's also a good source of information about clever and active people, who are ready to serve the community, about the needs in the new ideas and the ways of their implementation. Those editors, who see these opportunities and use them will be the witnesses of the new life of the community and their media.

Perspective 4. Development Projects with the Donors' Support. Local media outlets have a wonderful chance to realize their ideas for the money of International organizations until the donors' programs work in Ukraine. They need to work their projects and apply for the financing. Besides, there are many joint initiatives of the Ukrainian organizations, which help local media to develop. For example, Ukrainian Media Business Association and Ukrainian Crisis Media Center conduct the conference "Constructive Journalism," where editors of the local media exchange their experience. In 2018-2019 with the help of the US Embassy media Development Fund Ukrainian Media Business Association helped 10 local media outlets to write and implement the projects of their development. And the last innovation of Ukrainian Media Business Association and Ukrposhta for United Territorial Communities and local audiences will make it possible to expand and raise the number of local media subscribers, improve the communication on the local level, where local media and local united territorial communities will be active. So, turn to UMBA, we will help you!

Fifth. Conclusions

This part will be very short, because conclusions work when they are brief and distinct.

For local media outlets editors:

1. One or two nearest years is a unique opportunity for the local media to develop quickly.
2. Not all the editors will take this opportunity, and the reason of it could be not only inactiveness of these editors, but the geography of the 'ex-rayon' newspapers' dissemination as a result of the decentralization process and change of the administrative borders of the regions after the creation of united territorial communities instead of the former rayons (districts).
3. In those places where united territorial communities grow rapidly there will be good possibilities for local media. If the media fails to use this situation united territorial communities or local businesses (farmers) will create new ones.
4. Local elections of 2020 will bring money to those media outlets, which are already implementing their projects and develop. Those who fail to do it starting with this autumn will not be able to earn much.
5. All the editors of all local media, both successful and those who still hesitate should print the slogan in big letters and hang it in their offices: "Learn, analyze, and listen to the audience. Write about the things that people need, about the things that make the community successful."
6. And finally. Local edition should change its work from "writing about the activities" to "providing the service in informational sphere", to become useful to local community.

For united territorial communities' leaders, local businessmen and farmers:

1. Pay attention to your local media. Try to forget old offends like “they did not help me during the united territorial community creation, and we will not cooperate with them.” Remember, that it is favorable and useful to work with media having business relations rather than create a new one and finance it.
2. Promote mutual projects with local media where both sides get benefits, and both sides pull together as a team to make projects successful.
3. Educate yourself and learn! Even if you are a professional in communications, it all changes so fast today, and if you do not follow the new possibilities you are going to lose effectiveness in your business.
4. Get to know your audience, consumers and local population. It will give you ideas for new projects and will lead to the sales increase. And the best partner in the audience studies is local media.

For Donors

1. Pay attention to local media! It's more than 40% of the subscribed circulation in Ukraine. Very often the workers of the local media need just to believe in themselves and get a little help from the professional curator. In fact, they need to check if their ideas are good and get psychological help to go on.
2. Please support sustainable projects, these are projects that communities need.
3. Please take into consideration that business, media, and community should learn to effectively exchange information at the local level. And it's important that they learn to cooperate, and not simply get the proper basic knowledge separately.
4. It would be very important to improve the dialog on the local community level to develop local self-government. People need to be educated to find proper solutions through the discussions and dialogs.
5. Sharing the experience is extremely important, both successes and failures experience. This type of learning and finding new possibilities is one of the most effective, but not enough used in Ukraine.

Internet Development and Social Networks Functioning in Ukraine in 2018-2019



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Introduction

The global impact of the Internet and technology on the lives of billions of people worldwide increases every year. This process has its positives and negatives. The positives include the digital economy and digital market development with the help of the World Wide Web, global processes and unlimited information capabilities becoming accessible to users, communications' speeding up and cost reduction, tasks performance efficiency, and storage of information in cloud services.

At the same time, technologies' pervasiveness and increasing modern people dependence on them are also characterized by some negative consequences, such as a risk of the behavior control through the technology, personal data collection and privacy reduction, externally caused infrastructure vulnerability at the level of institutions and the state, Internet of Things (IoT) related risks, and the use of artificial intelligence (AI), deep fakes, in particular.

Ukraine does not stand aside from the global processes, moreover, it is one of the leading countries in terms of Internet access for the users and the latest Internet technologies development. Ukrainian society is quite progressive in innovations' adoption, even today the growth of contactless payments (NFC) is one of the fastest in Europe, and WI-FI technologies availability in public space (cafes, parks, gas stations, shops) can be envied by some EU countries residents.

22.96 million Ukrainians, or 71% of the population, use the World Wide Web. Such data was reported by the Factum Group and InMind researches as of September 2019. Other companies' researches say that in 2018, 21.4 million Ukrainians used the Internet, while in 2017 this figure

was slightly higher – 22 million users. The decrease in audience dynamics was likely related to some negative demographic indicators – the working population migration from Ukraine.

The World Wide Web development in Ukraine calls for the Internet phenomenon understanding in some categories. First, the Internet is taken for its content, meaning all information that is published, functioning, and disseminated in the offline world in spite of the national boundaries.

Second, the Internet is viewed as an infrastructure, data technology, in particular. ISPs (Internet Service Providers) and operators (telecommunications companies) work in this area. They are intermediaries and provide network access to users. The intermediaries' role gradually changes, by analogy with Facebook Inc., which is increasingly responsible for content distribution.

Third, cybersecurity, counteracting cyberattacks, and unauthorized access by cybercriminals and fraudsters. As of 2019, Ukraine has been at war with Russia for five years, and cyberspace is one of this war's key areas, as demonstrated by cyberattacks at some regional power distribution companies (2015) and key ministries (2016), Petya.A virus (2017), and the use of botnets in social media during the 2019 elections.

Internet Access in Ukraine

While in the world statistics, the Internet penetration rate is 58.4% of the population on average, the top 25 countries with the highest Internet penetration rates in the world show figures above 93%. Ukraine's figures are above average [1].

The *Factum Group* researchers noted that as of September 2019, the number of Internet users among the population increased to 71%, reaching 22.96 million [2]. They also noted that 65% of these users access the Internet at home, and 22% go online exclusively with smartphones.

The *InMind* researchers, who conducted their survey in October 2019, supported by USAID-Internews, give the same figures indicating the Internet penetration increase in 2019.

According to *InMind*, 71% of the Ukrainians use the Internet every day, which is 12% more than a year ago [3]. In general, the number of regular Internet users increased from 48% to 72% in 5 years. At the same time, the number of Ukrainians with no Internet access at all in 2019 decreased from 18% to 15%, compared to 2018.

Ukrainians mostly use the Internet for instant messaging. The share of this option users increased from 45% last year to 77% this year. People also search the web for relevant information (71%), use social networks (61%) and e-mail (58%), read news (56%).

Research into the accurate statistics on the Internet coverage in Ukraine are more about the exception to the rules. Large research companies, Gemius, in particular, conducted such a most recent research in August 2017, and reported on 22.1 million Internet users [4]. Among them, 19.3 million people accessed the Internet via desktop and laptop computers, 10.5 million via smartphones/mobile phones, and 2.6 million via tablets. A large number of users accessed the Internet via multiple devices at the same time.

In 2018, the Internet audience in Ukraine reached 21.4 million, or 70% of the inhabitants, according to *AdMixer* [5].

← Ukraine August 2019



Diagram 1. Speedtest Global Index Ukraine 2019
Source: <https://www.speedtest.net/global-index>

The cost of Internet connection services in Ukraine remains low, compared to other countries. The monthly subscription fee for a 100 MB/s broadband Internet service package usually does not exceed 120-150 UAH, and some providers often offer a promotional home Internet broadband connection monthly fee of 75 UAH for a year. In 2018-2019, some providers' representatives consistently emphasized the gradual rise in the Internet services fees to help companies run in profit.

Another important Internet access indicator is data transmission speed. According to the *Speedtest Global Index* rating by *Ookla*, in August 2019, Ukraine ranked 52nd out of 122 countries in terms of broadband Internet access [6]. This is 10 positions lower than in 2017. Though the speed increased over the last two years, the technologies develop and the Internet speed grows all over the world, so the study showed slower performance for Ukraine, compared to the world. Accordingly, on average, the broadband Internet speed in Ukraine as of 2019 is 42.7 MB/s for downloads and 49.5 MB/s for uploads.

Meanwhile, in two years, from 2017 to 2019, the mobile Internet speed in Ukraine increased significantly. According to the *Speedtest Global Index*, in 2017 Ukraine ranked 107th, and in 2019 went thirty points up to 87 position. On average, the mobile Internet speed in Ukraine is 21.26 MB/s (8.63 – in 2017) for downloads and 11.45 MB/s (2.44 – in 2017) for uploads.

3G mobile services launch in 2015 gave a significant impetus to the mobile Internet development in Ukraine and led to a surge in smartphone sales. At the beginning of 2018, the government offered to sell 4G mobile internet frequencies licenses, and in late March 2018, *Kyivstar*, *Vodafone*, and *Lifecell* announced their first subscribers using 4G services in major Ukrainian cities [7].

The telecommunications industry, integrating the providers and operators, is still profitable, however, most of the revenues come to the big players, such as three key operators and the largest providers, *Ukrtelecom*, *Volia*, *Data Group*, etc. Thus, for the first half of 2019, the total industry revenue amounted to UAH 32,031,900,000, according to the National Commission for State Regulation in Communications and Informatization [8]. The providers' revenues from the Internet broadband access services reached UAH 5.57 billion, while mobile operators earned "on the Internet" more than all providers together – 56.5% of the total revenue. However, in 2019, the highest revenue in the telecommunications industry comes from mobile telecommunications services, UAH 19.9 billion or 62.3% of the total revenue.

E-Governance and E-Democracy Prospects

In terms of Internet Governance actions implementation, as a process of finding agreements on the future of the Internet in all its dimensions (technological, political, ethical, social, economic) through cooperation between the key stakeholders, namely the government, the civil society, and the private sector (IT industry), Ukraine is in the global transitional trend. One of such stakeholders' venues is the annual Ukrainian Internet Governance Forum (IGF-UA) [9], the Ukrainian representatives also visit the global IGF every year to discuss the future of the Internet.

Until 2019, Ukraine had its State Agency for E-Governance, responsible for such issues as electronic services adoption or broadband Internet availability to the public. Western partners assisted Ukraine with e-democracy and e-governance issues through TAPAS [10] and EGAP [11]. The latter was renewed for the next four years in September 2019.

With the new government, formed by the results of the snap parliamentary elections in 2019, a new ministry emerged in Ukraine – the Ministry of Digital Transformation, based on the State Agency for E-Governance and headed by the chief SMM manager of the Volodymyr Zelenskyy's presidential campaign Mykhailo Fedorov. The new government plans are quite ambitious – the President promised to implement the "State in a smartphone" program for moving all administrative services for the citizens online. Mykhailo Fedorov promised the next elections in Ukraine to be held online, which was criticized by the civil society and the cybersecurity experts for the risks with such plans hasty implementation [12]. Later, Fedorov promised that the government would propose to fix the minimal Internet speed in a law [13].

In early October 2019, the Ministry of Digital Transformation announced its plans for the next five years: to move all government services online, to launch electronic identification methods, to maximize Internet coverage, and enhance the population digital skills[14].

The government plans to expand its range of online services to citizens.

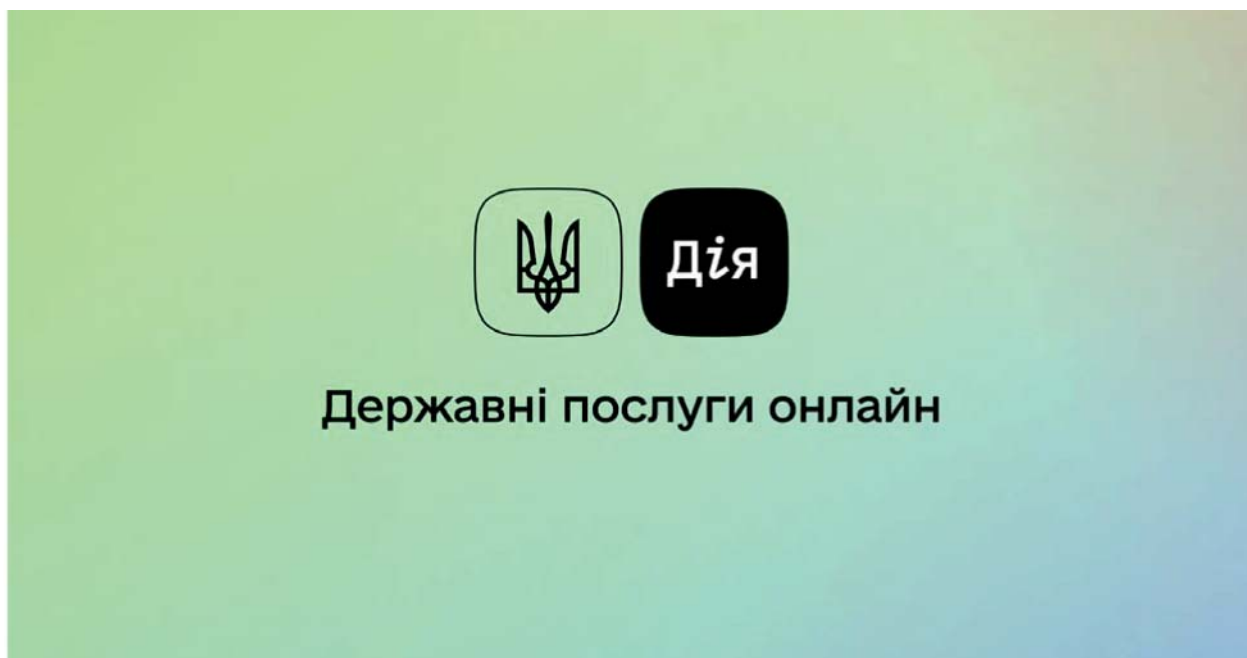


Diagram 2. Speedtest Global Index Ukraine 2019

Source: <https://plan.dia.gov.ua>

Successful implementation of these initiatives will positively impact the Ukrainian society. At the same time, this can mean an expansion of the state's control over the society, given the increasing level of processing and disposing of personal data of millions of Ukrainians, while a low culture of respect for personal data in society can lead to significant abuses in this area.

Internet Regulation Challenges

In the spring of 2017, the Ukrainian government started to regulate the Russian Internet segment in Ukraine by imposing sanctions on the Russian companies – the Decree No. 133/2017 signed by the President of Ukraine required from the Ukrainian operators and providers to block such popular at the time websites as *Vkontakte*, *Odnoklassniki*, *Mail.ru*, *Yandex*, and others. Most ISPs and mobile carriers blocked Ukrainian users from accessing the Russian sites, although the law does not mandate them for this.

In the spring of 2018, the list of the sanctioned websites managed from the territory of the Russian Federation, who occupies Crimea, and the non-government controlled areas of the Donbas region was expanded – the new Decree No. 126/2018 signed by the President of Ukraine contains a list of almost 200 information resources, including “DPR News”, “Novorossia Today”, the sites of TV channels Star TV, REN TV, RTR-Planet, and others. Non-governmental media organizations protested over such an extended list for an unlawful method of regulating online legal relations, and the possible consequences for the Ukrainian Internet in general [15].

In 2018-2019, the social sector continued to fight against the draft law No. 6688, providing pre-trial websites blocking for the period lasting from 2 days up to 2 months, expanding the investigators' role in such blocking, and introducing the term "technological terrorism". In the long run, the draft law returned for improvements.

In the summer of 2019, some questionable court decisions brought to life new Internet regulation precedents. On July 12, 2019, the Svyatoshinsky District Court of Kyiv ordered providers to block the electronic money exchange website – vilkov.com. On July 23, 2019, the Pechersk District Court of Kyiv ordered providers to block 18 sites, including blogs.korrespondent.net, Enigma, informant.news, UkrPress.info, and others [16]. The decision supported the seizure of intellectual property rights. On July 29, 2019, the Pechersk District Court of Kyiv ordered providers to block another 6 websites, such as a casino. This led to an appeal against the court decisions, and the proceedings are still pending.

Social Networks and Websites Popularity Among Users

Even though many Ukrainian users did not accept Russian web resources blocking in 2017 and actively switched to anonymizers and VPN, Russian websites gradually began to lose their popularity.

Before blocking, VKontakte, Mail.ru, and Yandex services were continuously among the top five most popular websites among Ukrainian internet users [17].

In August 2019, a Kantar TNS CMeter research found that the top five websites among the Ukrainians are google.com, youtube.com, facebook.com, rozetka.com.ua, and wikipedia.org [18]. The Russian social network VKontakte, with its 5 million users monthly audience, was ranked only 17th. However, this data is likely underestimated as it may not account for users circumventing websites blocking with VPN technology. Accordingly, 5 million people audience is serviced by providers not blocking Russian websites under sanctions.

Researchers' data on the Internet audience figures often differ. The Internet Association of Ukraine orders researches from Factum Group. These studies show that the top 5 websites as of August 2019 include the following resources: google.com, youtube.com, facebook.com, ukr.net, and instagram.com [19]. The Russian service VK.com was ranked 6th.

Since 2017, the social network landscape in Ukraine dramatically changed – with VKontakte and Odnoklassniki de-emphasized, the US social networks Facebook and Instagram increased their role. And global change in information consumption formats emphasized the role of Viber, Telegram, and WhatsApp messengers. In 2019, the Chinese service for short video remixes distribution, TikTok, began to conquer the market at a rapid rate.

The PlusOne research data show 13 million Facebook and 11 million Instagram users in Ukraine as of July 2019 [20]. Researchers say that in February 2019, the Facebook administration massively removed fake accounts. At that time, the number of the Ukrainian Facebook users dropped from 13 million to 12 million and Instagram users – from 11 to 10 million people, but within a few months the social network indicators increased again.

CMeter Site: ТОП-25 Серпень 2019		
	Сайт	Охоплення*
1	google.com	22 159 540
2	youtube.com	17 634 270
3	facebook.com	13 567 270
4	rozetka.com.ua	10 584 850
5	wikipedia.org	10 330 100
6	privatbank.ua	10 068 680
7	ukr.net	9 880 570
8	prom.ua	9 489 750
9	olx.ua	9 259 160
10	sinoptik.ua	7 309 100
11	24tv.ua	6 352 510
12	obozrevatel.com	6 296 660
13	tsn.ua	5 980 170
14	instagram.com	5 962 090
15	znaj.ua	5 166 470
16	segodnya.ua	5 152 560
17	vk.com	5 039 750
18	aliexpress.com	4 708 450
19	unian.net	4 698 760
20	rbc.ua	4 458 630
21	work.ua	4 248 610
22	politeka.net	4 234 010
23	rezka.ag	4 119 990
24	kyivstar.ua	4 109 710
25	ria.com	3 920 070

KANTAR

*Охоплення, desktop та mobile інтернет- користувачі

Diagram 3. Speedtest Global Index Ukraine 2019
Source: <https://tns-ua.com/>

Change in Facebook and Instagram users number in Ukraine

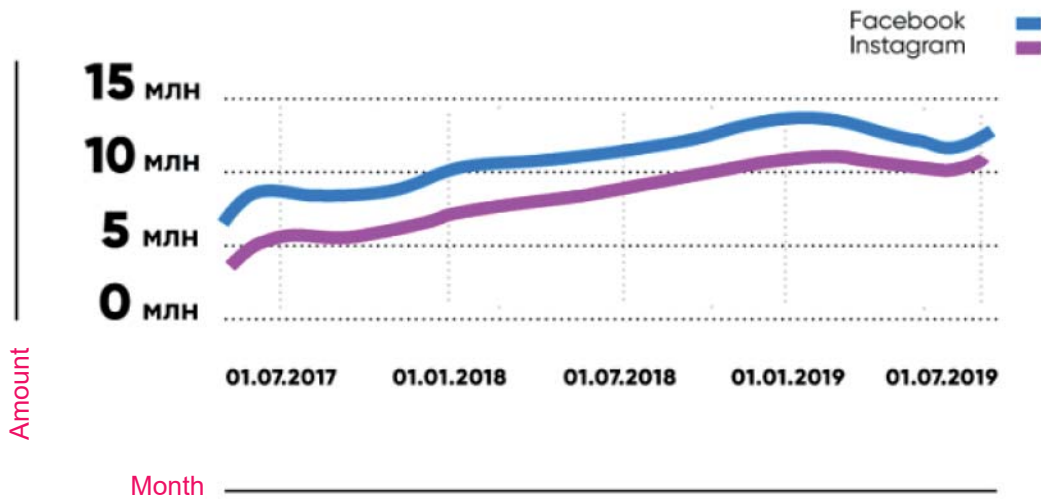


Diagram 4. Speedtest Global Index Ukraine 2019
Source: <https://www.plusone.com.ua/>

The most Facebook users are in Kyiv (55%), Lviv (39%), and Dnipropetrovsk (35%) regions. The lowest penetration is recorded in Chernihiv and Zaporizhzhia regions – 27%. With 61% or 7.6 million female users and about 39% or 4.9 million male users, Facebook is dominated by women in Ukraine.

Following the Cambridge Analytica scandal and Russia’s interference in the 2016 US presidential election, Facebook increasingly shows a willingness to collaborate with the governments on co-regulation issues. With probable facts of social networks being used against the democratic government in Ukraine long before 2016, and the disinformation war from Russia’s side, Ukraine forces Facebook to keep it in the spot. The company reported for the second time on the removal of a trolls network, responsible for disinformation campaigns realized with the \$1.6 million advertising tools [21]. And in the summer of 2019, Facebook appointed a Policy Manager for Ukraine in its Warsaw office to communicate with the Ukrainian government, the private sector, and civil society [22].

Ukrainian society underestimates the social networks’ role and opportunities to misuse them from outside or inside the country. Disinformation, fake profiles, user targeting for political purposes are the challenges all parties will have to cope with.

[1] Top 25 Countries with the highest Internet penetration rates in the world
<https://www.internetworldstats.com/top25.htm>

[2] Internet users number in Ukraine increased by 7% – study
<https://www.epravda.com.ua/news/2019/10/11/652498/>

[3] Internet becomes a major source of information for Ukrainians – study
<https://netfreedom.org.ua/article/internet-staye-osnovnim-dzherelom-informaciyi-dlya-ukrayin-civ-rezultati-doslidzhennya>

[4] GemiusAudience survey results for August 2017:
<http://www.gemius.com.ua/vse-stati-dlja-chtenija/gemiusaudience-za-serpen-2017-roku.html>

[5] Online audience of Ukraine:
<https://blog.admixer.ua/wtf/wtf-online-audience-ukraine-upd/>

[6] Speedtest Global Index August 2019:
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