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Methods and techniques of news information in contemporary Polish press agencies

KEY WORDS

news agencies, internet, websites, social media, Polish Press Agency, Radio Information Agency, Catholic News Agency

ABSTRACT

The aim of the paper is to present contemporary Polish news agencies as modern sources of information in the contemporary media world. The importance of news agencies has increased in the era of internet and development of online services; they create additional channels of information that meet all the requirements of the traditional publics (audiences of press, radio, and television). The traditional formula of press agency has been replaced by new forms, contents, and news addressed to different customer groups. After 1989 news agencies in Poland evolved in the direction of electronic agency (e-agency). Current challenges relate to the rise of “social media” and the role of Twitter and Facebook in the process of news production.

Analyzing the influence of the new media on the press, radio, and television, it is also worth taking news agencies into account since from the first half of the 19th century they play an extremely important role in the process of communicating. Along with the development of the information society, we observe the processes in which the internet, television, radio, and press permeate one another. Since mid-1990s, this phenomenon also affects the news agencies in Poland being one of the most important direction of the evolution of these institutions after 1989¹.

In this paper, I would like to present:

¹ The present-day market of press agencies in Poland was formed by two processes occurring in parallels, which began in 1989. The first involves the transformation of old press agencies operating in the times of the PRL: Polish Press Agency (Pol. *Polska Agencja Prasowa – PAP*), Polish Agency Interpress, and Central Photographic Agency (Pol. *Centralna Agencja Fotograficzna – CAF*). The second, no less important process consisted of the emergence and dynamic development of new entities on the market of agency information in Poland. The roots of this phenomenon were closely related to the fall of the information monopoly of the PAP and the growing demand for various types of information. See: R. Piasecka-Strzelec, *Kierunki rozwoju agencji informacyjnych w Polsce po 1989 roku* [Directions of development of information agencies in Poland after 1989], „Rocznik Bibliologiczno-Prasoznawczy” 2012, No. 4/15, Iss. 2, p. 59–70.

- information agencies in Poland in the face of new communication technologies;
- the decline of traditional information agencies due to the integration with the internet, the emergence of so-called e-agencies and – consequently – moving the title press bulletin to the cyberspace and replacing it with multi-media content;
- the beginning of the second, higher stage of integration of news agencies with the internet (at the Web 2.0 level) and the challenges, Twitter in particular, pose to the discussed institutions.

The process of integration of Polish press agencies with the internet

The direction of the described processes was aptly defined in 2000 by the president of PAP Ignacy Rutkiewicz, who said, in spite of the pessimists who foretold the end of information agencies in the confrontation with the internet: “It does not seem that the age of press agencies, to use the traditional name which does not correspond closely with present-day reality, is soon to come to a close. The internet and multimedia not only do not threaten their position in the media world but rather open new opportunities to enrich and hasten the circulation of the information, which could not be foreseen not so long ago”².

The phenomenon of integration of these institutions with the internet is the last stage of the information revolution described by Paul Levinson, which in this case began with the telegraph: the first electronic means of communication³. It has the typical characteristics of both the internetization and the mediatization of the internet. According to Karol Jakubowicz, one of the forms of internetization of the media is “sharing the current content or archive materials on the internet (in the form of podcasts, among others) or creating on-demand offers (...). Whereas mediatization of the internet means enriching traditional websites and web portals with journalistic content and forms, or with audiovisual forms modeled after linear radio and television programs, or on audiovisual on-demand services”⁴.

The above processes, which began in the first half of the 1990s, led to a gradual decline of traditional press agencies and the formation of electronic information agencies (e-agencies), which can be defined, in most general terms, as the modern form of information agencies using the internet to distribute their products and services, and also as the means of reaching new recipients, which is able to convey all the components of multimedia services

² I. Rutkiewicz, *Cztery potentaci i CNN* [Four potentates and the CNN, “Rzeczpospolita”, 28 Oct 2000, <http://demopol.pl/w88.html> [accessed: 4 May 2013].

³ P. Levinson, *Miękkie ostrze. Naturalna historia i przyszłość rewolucji informacyjnej* [The soft edge: A natural history and future of the information revolution], Warszawa 1999, p. 68.

⁴ K. Jakubowicz, *Polityka medialna a media elektroniczne* [Media politics and electronic media], Warszawa 2008, p. 78–79.

(text, image, video, and sound)⁵. The majority of e-agencies are interactive agencies which enable their recipients to become more and more involved in creating media services and texts. The effect of commodification and tabloidization of media on the content of information agency services is an open issue⁶. What becomes clear, however, is a tendency to create information aimed at saleability⁷.

Press bulletin in cyberspace

For the analysis of the discussed phenomenon, I selected not only the top Polish information agencies, such as the Polish Press Agency, Radio Information Agency, and Catholic News Agency, but also smaller agencies specialized in various kinds of information, including AKPA Polska Press, Val Press, megafon.pl, and Microway Media.

The Polish Press Agency has been operating in cyberspace for almost 20 years (since 1994), quickly reacting to new processes taking place in the world of media. The migration of PAP to the internet was concurrent with the advance of the Polish media into cyberspace, and was closely related to the computerization of the agency introduced in 1991–1994⁸. Already in 1997 the agency began publishing the “PAP Internet Daily” (Pol. *Dziennik Internetowy PAP*), the first daily newspaper in Poland without the printed version. In the internet age, the PAP has clearly risen in importance as an information channel, meeting all expectations of traditional recipients as well as the requirements of the electronic media operating online, which are developing at an increasing pace. PAP serves press, radio and TV, mobile telephony operators, great and small web portals (materials signed “PAP” can be found,

⁵ Traditional press agencies divulged materials they gathered and developed on the basis of subscription or agreements on exchange in the form of services sent by telex or a radio line, or by mail in the form of a reproduced press bulletin. Cf. J. Maślanka (ed.), *Encyklopedia wiedzy o prasie* [Encyclopedia of press-related knowledge], Wrocław 1976, p. 15; A. Ostrowska, *Nowe media – przykład Polski* [New media – the example of Poland], in: M. Bonikowska (ed.), *Media a wyzwania XIX wieku* [Media and the challenges of the 21st century], Warszawa 2009, p. 144–145.

⁶ K. Jakubowicz, *Media a demokracja w XXI wieku. Poszukiwanie nowych modeli* [Media and democracy in the 21st century: The quest for new models], Warszawa 2013, p. 124–132.

⁷ According to Jakubowicz, “an early (and beneficial, in this case) form of commodification (...) can be gleaned in the activities of the first press agencies. In order to sell their services to the greatest possible number of very much politicized and biased newspapers of the time, these agencies adopted the principle of objectivism and impartiality of their information for commercial purposes, in order to make these services acceptable for all editors. In other words, they made the information a commodity.” *Ibidem*, p. 124.

⁸ PAP launched its web service two years earlier than the greatest press agency in the world, the American Associated Press. See: T. Mielczarek, *Między monopolem a pluralizmem. Zarys dziejów środków komunikowania masowego w Polsce 1988–1997* [Between monopoly and pluralism: The outline history of the means of mass communicating in Poland 1988–1997], Kielce 1998, p. 77; I. Rutkiewicz, *Agencje prasowe – stare i nowe* [Press agencies – old and new], in: G. Kopper et al. (eds.), *Media i dziennikarstwo w Polsce 1989–1995* [Media and journalism in Poland 1989–1995], Kraków 1995, p. 80; L. Olszański, *Media i dziennikarstwo internetowe* [Internet media and journalism], Warszawa 2012, p. 12–13; J. Olędzki, *Komunikowanie w świecie. Narzędzia, teorie, unormowania* [Communicating in the world: Tools, theories, regulations], Warszawa 2001, p. 58.

among others, in the portals of Interia.pl, Onet Biznes, and rmf.24.pl), state offices and institutions⁹. Paper bulletin is a historical phenomenon, as the distribution of information by PAP is realized through satellites, the internet (coded access to the WWW site; email), and SMS; in such formats as WWW, News ML, .JPG, video, and .TXT. PAP also has an RSS channel, a way to access the internet resources which is an alternative to standard web pages. Through its RSS channel, PAP serves several dozen information pieces every day (the basic RSS contains the news in three categories: country, world, and sport). Now only the “Political Informer” (Pol. *Informator Polityczny*) and “Schedule Informer” (Pol. *Informator Terminowy*) are published in print, being also available electronically.

The hallmark of PAP is “condensed information and attractive photographs”¹⁰. The main source of information for both nationwide and regional media is “Daily Information Service” (Pol. *Codzienny Serwis Informacyjny – CSI*), which is the present-day counterpart of the “Information Bulletin” (Pol. *Biuletyn Informacyjny*), published for almost half of a century, published both in a reproduced form and sent to the recipients by telex¹¹. The CSI is supplemented by the “Daily Photographic Service” (Pol. *Codzienny Serwis Fotograficzny*; in .JPG format), dedicated to both printed and electronic media¹².

PAP, just like the greatest information agencies in the world, offers its customers multimedia services in the form of information packages, ready to be automatically included into a website. These information packages incorporate selected information from the CSI PAP. All dispatches are illustrated with photographs or graphics in a resolution suitable for internet publication and do not require any editorial work from the customer. Information

⁹ Leszek Olszański stresses that “as a rule, portals use external providers of information in their services. Customarily, the most important among them are information agencies. For Yahoo!, MSN, and other English-language portals, these include mainly Associated Press (AP) and Reuters, for the ones in Poland, PAP (Polish Press Agency), IAR (Radio Information Agency), and KAI (Catholic News Agency).” According to this author, “while agency services have many disadvantages, they have been prepared in consideration of electronic media for several decades now, so they are more than able to cope with the internet. It turns out that terse language, superficiality of coverage and limited share of proprietary subject which are of interest mostly to newspaper journalists are not a problem for internet users who expect, above all, to have the publicly available daily news delivered quickly. The throng of virtual readers also appreciates the impersonal style in which the agency dispatches are written, devoid of the educational tone and comments which the journalists and columnists, accustomed to the opinion-making role of the press, often permit themselves to make.” See: L. Olszański, *Dziennikarstwo internetowe* [Internet journalism], Warszawa 2006, p. 25–29.

¹⁰ Quoted from the PAP website: www.pap.pl.

¹¹ See: R. Piasecka-Strzelec, *Polskie agencje prasowe w latach 1944–1972. Upowszechnianie i reglamentacja informacji. Działalność propagandowa* [Polish press agencies in 1944–1972: Dissemination and rationing of information: Propaganda activity], Kielce 2012, pp. 108–110, 183.

¹² http://pap.pl/palio/html.run?_Instance=cms_www.pap.pl&ID=18s=ofertaPAPszczegóły&dz=ofertaPAPinformacje.csi& [accessed: 14 May 2013].

packages are also available in the flash format, as automatically updated applets, ready to be published on web pages or displayed on LCD screens in public spaces¹³.

The multimedia offer of PAP also includes:

- infogalleries (thematic photo galleries), or sets of subtitled photographs ready for publication;
- video materials – curiosities, interviews, coverages of cultural events etc., prepared for publication on websites and in television programs;
- applications – for web portals, television platforms, and electronic display devices of all kinds;
- mobile – publicly available applications for smartphones as well as packages of agency news and photographs combining information and entertainment, addressed to the media and mobile operators to be used on mobile platforms¹⁴.

What deserves the attention of media scholars is the offer available on the special website net.pap.pl, which contains extensive commercial and thematic services (with text, photographs, and video), created by special order. They are prepared for websites, mobile telephony operators, internet TV stations, as well as other carriers, such as LCD screens. The dedicated services include profiled information packages prepared for the customer who also decides the purpose, manner, and time of data transfer. PAP has also made available a panel for customers which not only allow one to edit graphics but also publish one's own content as news or comments¹⁵. This offer is a special case of interactivity in the media, which means enabling the user to directly influence the perused images and texts, and to change them as well¹⁶.

In the net.pap.pl service, one may find the typical characteristics of the already mentioned phenomenon of intra-genre commodification and tabloidization, which involves shifting the stress within the genre from hard to soft information¹⁷. To indicate just a few examples, the “Country” (Pol. *Kraj*) information package (*light*), the “Variety” (Pol. *Rozmaitości*) information package (*light*), or the “Lifestyle information package containing celebrity gossip from both the country and abroad; news about expensive gadgets and cars¹⁸.

¹³ http://www.pap.pl/palio/html.run?_Instance=cms_www.pap.pl [accessed: 14 May 2013].

¹⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹⁵ <http://net.pap.pl/index> [accessed: 7 Mar 2014]; <http://net.pap.pl/PNP/pl/staticPage/oferta/> [accessed: 7 Mar 2014].

¹⁶ M. Lister et al., *Nowe media. Wprowadzenie* [New media: A critical introduction], Kraków 2009, p. 33.

¹⁷ K. Jakubowicz, *Media a demokracja...*, op. cit., p. 131–132.

¹⁸ <http://net.pap.pl/PNP/pl/category/92/> [accessed: 7 Mar 2014].

Apart from these, PAP is the publisher of several web portals promoting professional knowledge and exchange of information and opinions:

- samorzad.pap.pl (540 thousand visits per month) – the largest information and advice portal for self-government officials in Poland;
- biznes.pap.pl (publicly available) – containing current economic news from the country and abroad;
- WSE InfoSpace (Pol. *GPW InfoSfera*; publicly available);
- Science & Scholarship in Poland (Pol. *Nauka w Polsce*; current accomplishments of Polish scientists; has information on scientific research conducted by leading scientific centers in Poland);
- dzieje.pl (historical portal; formatted and distributed as WWW);

Within this group, it is worth to single out the interactive portals Science & Scholarship in Poland and dzieje.pl. The former, publicly available service, financed by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, is a useful and valuable source of popular scientific information, which presents the developments in world science as well. It is also available in English. The Science & Scholarship in Poland presents 40 new and current pieces of information every day, from all fields of science. They are illustrated with photographs, presentations, and films. The portal provides photo galleries, an event calendar, mobile applications, and links to useful websites. It is distributed in the form of a newsletter and an RSS channel as well. The building of a community is supported by the forum, blogs, surveys, and competitions for readers¹⁹.

The last portal listed above is an impressive educational project being carried out by PAP in cooperation with the Museum of Polish History, under the patronage of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. The service documents the most important events in the recent history of Poland and the political transformation from 1918, when Poland regained independence, to the end of the People's Republic of Poland. It contains infographics, interactive maps, and multimedia: video clips, voice recordings, and several thousand original photographs. It attracts users with the surveys it carries out, quizzes, and competitions²⁰. It also provides the opportunity to evaluate the articles and comment them²¹.

¹⁹ http://www.pap.pl/palio/html.run?_Instance=cms_www.pap.pl&_PageID=1&s=ofertaPAPszczegoly [accessed: 22 Feb 2014].

²⁰ http://www.pap.pl/palio/html.run?_Instance=cms=www.pap.pl&_PageID=ofertaPAPlista&dz=ofertaPAP [accessed: 15 Apr 2013].

²¹ The existence of the forum brings tangible benefits to the editors of the portal, both as a valuable source of information and a significant component of proofreading 2.0. As stressed by Leszek Olszański, “a forum is a constant poll of the public opinion (...) which enables to learn the sympathies and antipathies of internet users

PAP also offers:

- thematic services (selected packages of dispatches in such categories as country, world, economy, energy, law, sport, culture, movie & theatre guide, PAP life, science, and health), the form, content, and message of which are adapted to the requirements of the customers; they are updated online, 24 hours a day;
- commissioned information services (this service is based on a unique and mass “Press releases” channel for the distribution of information and press material to the media; the information is also distributed via targeted mailing, published in the newsletter, and posted in the publicly available portal zlecone.pap.pl);
- online advertising (the sale of advertising space on the following websites: pap.pl, biznes.pap.pl, and samorzad.pap.pl);
- emitent (distribution of official information from listed companies, as well as general pension funds and open contributory pension funds; it guarantees that information reaches journalists and investors directly and immediately through coded news services and publicly available PAP web portals)²².

A certain sign of the times is the presence of PAP in such portals as Twitter and Facebook, where the links from its website, www.pap.pl, are published, or YouTube (PAP is present there since September 2005; according to the data from 5 May 2013, the number of subscriptions was 1974, and the number of views amounted to 4 541 641)²³. The PAP news is also available via the popular Google News website. They appeared in this search engine, often referred to as the nemesis of the press, owing to the agreement from 8 April 2009, which aroused much controversy and triggered mostly negative press comments²⁴. Among other things, the case of Agence France Presse was adduced, which forced Google News at court to forego the subscription of its services²⁵.

towards the characters in the text, the degree of their approval and disapproval of described facts.” See: L. Olszański, *Dziennikarstwo...*, op. cit., p. 228–229; *idem*, *Media i dziennikarstwo...*, op. cit., p. 207.

²² http://www.pap.pl/palio/html.run?_Instance=cms_www.pap.pl&_PageID=1&s=ofertaPAPszczegoly& [accessed: 7 Mar 2014].

²³ <http://www.youtube.com/user/PAP> [accessed: 5 May 2013].

²⁴ Google News is a web service which aggregates press news and provides them in the form of thematically ordered blocks, such as politics, sport, technology, etc. The news is shortened to leads (clicking on one redirects the reader to the original page where she can access the content of the information, signed with the name of its author and source). Google News was launched in September 2002. See: <http://www.polityka.pl/kraj/analizy/292558,konflikt-między-wydawcami-prasowymi-a-mediami-internetowymi.read> [accessed: 5 May 2013]; <http://www.intrenetstandard.pl/news/168235/Google.News.Postrach.prasy.zawitał.do.Polski.html> [access: 5 May 2013]; <http://media2.pl/media/49654-Wydawcy-prasy-VS-Internet-zaczyna-się-wojna.html> [accessed: 5 May 2013].

²⁵ See: L. Olszański, *Media i dziennikarstwo...*, op. cit., p. 25.

The PAP website is appropriate to the prestige of the greatest information agency in Poland. It is animated with multimedia and interactive elements. It contains not only the most important information on the Agency and its offer but also the news from the country and the world, a photo gallery, advertisements of services and products (e.g. “Fast, Impartial, Professional”, “Come through to the reliable side of information”, “Leave the information chaos behind”), PAP announcements, weather forecast for Warsaw and the larger cities in Poland, a link to PAP on YouTube, WSE quotations, NBP’s table of foreign exchange ratings, a calendar, Facebook social plugin (6192 people like the Polish Press Agency object), as well as an info box encouraging users to inform the Agency about important events (“If you have witnessed an important event, know about an interesting conference, or want PAP to cover some significant subject – inform us. We are waiting!”)²⁶.

Still, it is not the PAP but rather the Radio Information Agency that is considered as the largest electronic information agency on the media market in Poland. IAR was founded in 1992 at the Polish Radio. In 1993–1994 it operated as the Radio-Info, the first informational radio station in Poland, broadcasting live only, without music. In 1994, the Chief Editorial Board for Information of the Polish Radio was transformed into the IAR. The principal product of this agency is the web service containing text and audio materials (450 information pieces per day, 200 in the audio format; it also offers news services ready for broadcasting)²⁷.

The distribution of IAR services containing text and audio materials is carried out via satellite or the internet. Its information services are used by the public service radio in Poland, television, press, non-commercial broadcasters, and web portals (IAR news are available, among others, in the Onet.wiadomości portal). This institution is present on Twitter and Facebook. Its website contains a photo gallery and the information on associated blogs.

In December 2010, the IAR launched its own broadcasting station in the form of the web station Polish Radio 24. The program offer of Radio24 includes IAR news services, live conversations with experts and public life celebrities, materials specially prepared by IAR employees and foreign correspondents of the Polish Radio²⁸.

Another online information agency, in the true meaning of the word, is the Catholic News Agency (Pol. *Katolicka Agencja Informacyjna – KAI*), established in Warsaw in 1993

²⁶ http://www.pap.pl/palio/html.run?_Instance=cms_www.pap.pl&_PageID=1&s=informuj_nas&_Checksum=1279287610 [accessed: 11 Oct 2013].

²⁷ <http://www.polskieradio.pl/78,IAR/965,0-nas> [accessed: 13 Apr 2013].

²⁸ *Ibidem*.

as the first denominational agency in Eastern Europe²⁹. The KAI agency service has been disseminated via the internet since 1995³⁰. It is currently also available on Facebook and Twitter.

Once the agreement with the agency is signed, the recipient receives credentials permitting access to the service on a webpage or is entered into the base of recipients who are sent the information via electronic mail. KAI has developed several levels of access to the service, including:

- press bulletin, or a collection of dispatches sent twice a week via electronic mail in .TXT or MAIL-ISO format;
- e-mail service, where every dispatch published in the KAI service is delivered in real time to the designated e-mail account;
- satellite transmission, addressed exclusively to the recipients of the PAP service; it allows the service to be received via the satellite links of the PAP³¹.

Since 2000, the agency in question has also been publishing a publicly available web magazine *ekai.pl*, containing a set of the most important news about the Church, updated 7 days a week³². Apart from the services listed above, KAI prepares a weekly information bulletin *KAI News* (Pol. *Wiadomości KAI*) for 4.5 thousand parishes in Poland. This bulletin is available in three versions, which is the only case of the coexistence of “the old” and “the new”:

1. A traditional, printed version – a magazine comprising roughly 30 A4-sized pages bound in a colorful cover, sent via traditional mail, intended for libraries and those people who do not wish to read from the screen.
2. The PDF version – intended for printing or reading from the screen (about 800 kB in size); it is a faithful copy of the printed version, sent once per week via e-mail.
3. The HTML version – (about 200 kB in size), which allows to conveniently navigate the text on-screen; advantages: an HTML file is roughly 4 times smaller than the PDF, so it is less of a burden for the mailbox and downloads faster; it contains all the news

²⁹ More broadly on the KAI: R. Piasecka, *Katolicka Agencja Informacyjna – pomost między mediami wyznaniowymi a świeckimi* [Catholic News Agency – a bridge between denominational and secular media], in: E. Kossewska, J. Adamowski (eds.), *Media wyznaniowe w Polsce 1988–2004* [Denominational media in Poland 1988–2004], Warszawa 2004, p. 123–129.

³⁰ T. Mielczarek, *Monopol. Pluralizm. Koncentracja. Środki komunikowania masowego w Polsce w latach 1989–2006* [Monopoly – Pluralism – Concentration: Means of mass communication in Poland in 1989–2006], Warszawa 2007, p. 66.

³¹ http://system.ekai.pl/kair?screen=serwis_agencyjny [accessed: 11 Oct 2013].

³² *Ibidem*.

from *KAI News* connected with the table of contents via reference links in a way which allows to move freely around the text in a web browser³³.

In the number of electronic services, one should include the audioKAI audio service and photoKAI photographic service as well. The agency also publishes the online “Catholic Daily” (Pol. *Dziennik Katolicki*), a virtual daily newspaper which can be delivered twice daily (it has a morning and an evening edition). The weekly poster-gazette “Life of the Church” (Pol. *Z Życia Kościoła*) is printed in the traditional form³⁴. At the KAI website, just as it was in the case of the IAR, one can find a list of blogs.

The Ecumenical Information Agency, founded in 2004, is also an e-agency. It maintains the ecumenical information web service ekumenizm.pl, whose existence is the result of a division among the editors of the kosciol.pl news service. Some of them decided to establish the Ecumenical Information Agency and operate as a separate website. Another website, associated with ekumenizm.pl, is the Theological Journal “Semper Reformanda”. The ekumenizm.pl service is also available on Facebook. Users visiting the ekumenizm.pl site can contribute to the creation of the service by participating in surveys, submitting articles (informational notes, journalistic comments), asking questions, and posting events³⁵.

A complete integration with the internet is also the case of the agency AKPA Polska Press, representative of a large group of small but very dynamically developing private information and photographic agencies dedicated to serve colorful magazines, women's press, as well as web portals and vortals³⁶. The agency advertises its offer on the www.akpa.pl website as the "highest quality TV service, celebrity photos, comprehensive texts, and unique video clips." The agency service of AKPA Polska Press is available in a classical form dedicated for publishing houses (a logon is required to view the video materials, access the base of photographs, texts, and programs, integrated search engine, and the cart facility) and in the form of a database, for EPG systems and internet portals which require full automation of the update process. AKPA Polska Press has a Facebook page as well³⁷.

³³ <http://system.ekai.pl/kair/?screen=tygodniki> [accessed: 11 Oct 2013].

³⁴ http://system.ekai.pl/kair/?screen=serwis_agencyjny [accessed: 11 Oct 2013].

³⁵ See: www.ekumenizm.pl.

³⁶ Recipients of the service of this agency include, among others, daily newspapers (“Fakt”, “Super Express”, “Dziennik Gazeta Prawna”), weeklies and bi-weeklies, TV supplements (e.g. “Fakt TV”), luxury monthlies (e.g. “Twój Styl”, “Pani”, “InStyle”), magazines in the people segment (e.g. “Party”), yellow press magazines (e.g. “Twoje Imperium”), guide weeklies (e.g. “Tina”), crossword publications, digital satellite platforms (digital Polsat, nc+, Orange), cable networks (upc, TOYA, INEA), web portals (onet, wp.pl, Interia.pl, SE.pl, dziennik.pl, stopklatka.pl); see: <http://www.akpa.pl/ofirmie.php?typ=3> [accessed: 3 May 2013].

³⁷ <http://www.akpa.pl/ofirmie.php?typ=3> [accessed: 3 May 2013]; <https://pl-pl.facebook.com/AKPApolskapress> [accessed: 3 May 2013].

One should include in the same category the Val Press agency, megafon.ps (which has an original website in the style of a traditional press bulletin, provides news and gossip from the world of music and film accompanied by photographs, as well as music and film reviews; the service fulfils the needs of both electronic and traditional media), and the Press and Photographic Agency Microway Media (Pol. *Agencja Prasowa i Fotograficzna Microway Media*), which was founded in Warsaw in 1994 as the first internet-based agency in Poland³⁸.

A numerous group of economically-oriented information agencies have also fully integrated with the internet. Polish branches of worldwide information agencies, such as Thomson Reuters Polska, are good models here.

As the above analysis shows, Polish information agencies have entered the second stage of integration with the internet. More and more often, internet users can not only comment on the news posted on the websites of Polish information agencies but also co-create them, as the information pages are supplemented with the ability to notify about events (infoboxes), write blogs (KAI, IAR), and articles corresponding to the content of the news.

A new challenge for information agencies, closely related to the migration into cyberspace, is the dynamic development of social media. Scientific studies highlight especially the growing share of Twitter in the information streams³⁹. This phenomenon is also widely commented on in the Polish press and internet⁴⁰. According to the Institute of Media Monitoring (Pol. *Instytut Monitorowania Mediów –IMM*, which has been carrying out, since September 2003, the study of “The most opinion-making media in Poland” other than information agencies), “social media are becoming a fully-fledged channel for information. (...) the media tap the news and information directly from the social media platforms, which resembles obtaining information from press agencies.” This leads to other bold statements: “Facebook and Twitter more opinion-making than the television. When are they going to

³⁸ The Press and Photographic Agency Microway Media offers press materials, photographs, and picture stories on various subjects, including interviews, coverages of cultural and other events, film sets, curiosities, gossip on the life of stars, guide materials, etc. See: <http://Press.mwmedia.pl/press4/?cwd=101> [accessed: 3 May 2013].

³⁹ Particular attention should be given to the studies carried out by Miles Osborne from the University of Edinburgh, who compared the information publication rate on Twitter and in agency services. See: <http://www.wirtualnemedia.pl/artykul/twitter-czy-agencje-prasowe-kto-jest-szybszy> [accessed: 10 Mar 2014].

⁴⁰ Twitter sometimes replaces information agencies, which led to the coining of a somewhat exaggerated term “Twitter information agency”. It has been noticed, however, that the role of Twitter in the USA is the exchange of information, and the exchange of opinions in Poland. See: <http://natemat.pl/39369,dla-kogo-jest-twitter-w-polsce-w-usa-sluzzy-wymienianiu-informacji-u-nas-opinii> [accessed: 26 Apr 2013]. The substantial problem of the threat to public security has also been mentioned, stressing that “many experiments were conducted which demonstrated the ease of implementing lies in the place of truth, lies which are then repeated even by the greatest and most reputed information agencies.” <http://www.nowinki.be/pl/content/niebezpieczne-zwiazki-jakie-zagrozenia-niosą-portale-społecznościowe> [accessed: 26 Apr 2013].

overtake information agencies?”⁴¹ For instance, the entries made by Pope Francis on Twitter are considered by the media as more attractive than the KAI service. It has been calculated that the Pope’s profile on Twitter, prepared in 9 language versions, is being followed by over 6 million people. In this case, the reliability of the social media may be questionable, as was attested by the famous incident from 23 April 2014, when hackers broke into the Twitter account of the American agency Associated Press and sent false information regarding an alleged terrorist attack on the White House and the President of the United States⁴². Indeed, this incident is a model example of the phenomenon of informational chaos, which is the dark side of the freedom of communication offered by the social media. As Leszek Olszański was right to note, “with that in mind, nobody doubts that the professional media are still needed”⁴³.

According to Robert Bogdański, “there is no indication that information agencies may leave the media scene before other media, to which they are very useful helping them save time and money. Media do not disappear, they only change form. Thus, agencies will likely remain in our world, hardly visible for the average media consumer but greatly needed by the media system”⁴⁴. On the other hand, “Michael Wolff, American writer, journalist, and essayist, in his comment on the job offer from Twitter for a head of the media division, remarked on the internet pages of the “Guardian” that it is the first time in history that a social media website recognized delivering news as one of its basic functions. In his opinion, the publication of the Twitter’s offer is one of the most important events in the media industry in recent years, for it shows that a social media service wants to use its potential fully to become a commonly used tool for both the recipients of the news and the journalists who develop

⁴¹ *Facebook and Twitter more opinion-making than the television. When are they going to overtake information agencies?* <http://biuro.mediccontact.pl/imm/b67fbf26e8348403969736b9486927a/> [accessed: 24 Apr 2013]. The IMM studies do not take into consideration messages derived from information agencies. The phenomenon of impressive citability of the social media is closely related to the process of intra-media tabloidization and its accompanying trivialization and personalization of information. Cf.: K. Jakubowicz, *Media a demokracja...*, op. cit., p. 130–132.

⁴² <http://blog.gdata.pl/2013/05/sześć-długich-minut-na-twitterze-czyli.html> [accessed: 9 May 2013]; <http://www.wirtualnemedial.pl/artykul/twitter-ostreza-media-beda-kolejne-ataki> [accessed: 2 May 2013].

⁴³ L. Olszański, *Media i dziennikarstwo...*, op. cit., p. 102–103.

⁴⁴ In the times of the Martial Law, Robert Bogdański edited the underground weekly “Obóz” [Camp], devoted to the issues of the former Eastern Bloc. He was one of the founders of the press agency known as the Solidarity Information Service (Pol. *Serwis Informacyjny Solidarności – SIS*). Later, he was the president and editor-in-chief of the SIS-Service Information Agency (Pol. *Agencja Informacyjna SIS-Serwis*; it was a private press agency created by the transformation of the SIS agency). He worked as a journalist for BBC and Reuters. He was the president of the PAP in 1997–2002. In 2006 he became the director of Interfax Tsentralnaya Evropa, a new information agency belonging to the Russian Interfax. See: <http://elekcyi.org/mam-wolnosc/co-to-jest-agencja-prasowa-i-jaka-jest-jej-pozycja-w-swiecie-mediow.html> [accessed: 15 May 2013]; <http://www.press.pl/newsy/prasa/pokaz/4131Bogdanski-dyrektorem-rosyjskiej-agencji-prasowej> [accessed: 25 Feb 2014]; http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agencja-Informacyjna_SIS-Serwis/ [accessed: 25 Feb 2014].

information materials. An intermediary who may, to a large extent, replace information agencies”⁴⁵.

To summarize, it should be noted that the migration of Polish information agencies to cyberspace was the only possible direction of their development after 1989. The agencies created in the early 1990s began and have been operating as internet information agencies. The others – which, like PAP, go back long in history – had to gradually transform into e-agencies. According to the model put forward by Martch Löffelholz and Thorsten Quandt, it began as the introduction of the “new” into the “old”, and then the replacement of the “old” by the “new”⁴⁶. Unlike in the case of the press, radio, and television, the dynamics of the development of the institutions in question led to the lack of complementarity, or the division into the “old” (traditional) and “new” (electronic) information agencies⁴⁷.

Social media, just like the internet, has become just another chance and a stimulus for further development of Polish information agencies. It is demonstrated by the increasingly more common use of Facebook and Twitter as the new way of dissemination of agency services.

⁴⁵ Zob. <http://natemat.pl/60743,rewolucja-w-dziennikarstwie-twitter-szuka-szefa-dzialu-medialnego> [accessed: 15 May 2013].

⁴⁶ Cf.: S. Michalczyk, *Spółeczeństwo medialne. Studia z teorii komunikowania masowego* [Media society: Studies in the theory of mass communicating], Katowice 2008, p. 102.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*.