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User's profile in social media – personal newsroom 2.0?

KEY WORDS
newsroom, social media, users profiles, personalization, information space

ABSTRACT
The article presents the similarities between user profile and traditional newsroom in social media. Users are able to distribute and specify which materials will be a part of information flow. Personalisation of their own accounts allows users to shape both the internal information space and external sphere of disseminated news. Users and media companies participate in the same stages of news creation and use similar tools offered by social networking sites for messages distribution.

Technological development led to the emergence and spread of new kinds of media, substantially transferring communication processes to the Internet realm. Changes in this area significantly contributed to expanding the information environment. Its framework included – besides competent, professional communicators (journalists) – users able to receive, create, and set trends of disseminating content. A significant role in this process is played by social media as an unlimited database, exploited and updated by users all over the world.

Social media (SM) led to the crystallisation of new forms of social activity, thereby pulling users into participation in communication processes associated with the many-to-many relation and distinct from the traditional media[1]. The activities of sending (producing) and receiving (consuming) information became mutually integrated and, by occurring simultaneously, introduced a new dimension of communication activity. It currently operates in a dynamic micro-environment created by individuals (users), who are components of the online medium[2].

Thanks to the phenomenon of convergence, traditional media appeared in the new space. The SM provide users with the ability to access the publications of chosen media publishers in a quick and purposeful way. Everything is available at one place: in the user's

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[1] B. Jung, *Wokół mediów ery 2.0* [On the media of 2.0 age], Warszawa 2010, p. 8–15.
[2] K. Kopiecka-Piech, *Afordancje i struktury innowacyjności medialnej – w kierunku integracji technologii w codziennych aktywnościach użytkowników* [Affordances and structures of media innovation – Towards the integration of technology in every-day user activities], in: *Zmiany medialne i komunikacyjne, t. 1, W stronę innowacyjności* [Media and communication changes, vol. 1, Towards innovation], ed. K. Kopecka-Piech, Gdańsk 2015, p. 26.

newsroom (profile), personalised by him- or herself, which becomes a kind of informational micro-space. This space is an area comprising all communication processes occurring between individual entities present in the SM. Furthermore, this space is both exploited and supplied by users; it also allows itself to be moulded into individual two-way (transmitting and receiving) systems. The dynamics of this space changes depending on the activities undertaken by SM users.

The adopted research perspective reduces private profiles to the model of a single-person editorial team. A user, just like an editor, performs all the functions associated with the selection of sources and the processing and publishing of specific content. Determining the factors which make the components of communication process similar or distinct – production and consumption – will make it possible to figure out if user's profiles serve as suppliers of information, and what account owners do themselves to personalise their own private transmitting/receiving spaces.

Personal newsroom

A SM user's profile has a significant informational potential. User activity plays a crucial role in moulding the information space. However, there is an issue how this activity should be defined and which tools can be used to evaluate its level (high/low). It can be assumed that active users are social media consumers involving themselves in communication processes occurring within SM. The evaluation of the degree of involvement and labelling the user as highly active or rather inactive are far from clear and depend on the researcher's assumptions.

It should be noted that SM users are subject to a certain pattern of social relations, expressed by the notion of networked individualism. The owners of private profiles construct networks appropriate for themselves, guided by common interests or undertakings[3]. It is an important components of the activities they undertake, aimed at the creation of one's own identity among the constantly growing public (group of friends). This way information can reach people not directly related to the profiles of traditional media. First and foremost, this involves reusing the news published by professional editorial teams in the SM space. The networks of individuals, by providing the distribution of news material, are automatically integrated in the process of moulding an information environment according to the produsage

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[3] M. Castells, *Galaktyka Internetu – Refleksja nad internetem, biznesem i społeczeństwem* [The Internet galaxy: Reflections on the Internet, business, and society], Poznań 2003, p. 147–153.

(production and usage) model[4]. Users become independent from the domination of producers (individual publishers), allowing them to freely shape information products, supplement them, and submit for further development. This process is highly decentralised, which means that each user has the opportunity to participate in the process of the production of new content or distribution of content already prepared.

The information potential associated with actively using SM results from the two levels of activities undertaken by users. The most important activity involves the creation of messages by account owners. These messages vary both in the content itself and in the way it is expressed. Thus produced private information (posts, entries, etc.) has its own characteristics and an unlimited range of subjects. As part of their SM activity, users often share already published posts, which have been prepared by journalists. It is one dimension of moulding the information potential of one's account. This way, one can make an appropriate selection of the traditional media, adapting them to one's own needs. Therefore, the process of personalising one's account can be discussed in two dimensions: the one associated with the proper preparation and publication of certain content, the other with the creation of a space enriching the user's information environment based on the professional editors of the traditional media.

The use of the term newsroom in the perspective of this discussion is related to a specific communication activity of SM users. It is them who, like journalists, engage in dissemination of content in their contact networks. Cooperating with other users, they forge their own relationships, thus constructing peculiar distribution network for their news. While individual profiles do not operate in the same way as traditionally understood newsrooms of information editors (organisationally or formally), they share many common features. The use of this term mostly refers to the area of creative activity. In order to clarify the analogy between the private SM space and professional editorial offices, one should examine the whole message creation process.

Input phase[5]

The first and often the most important step in creating a news message is selecting the sources of information. It allows putting the created material in a specific context. Journalists themselves select the criteria used at the time of selecting the sources and events, pushing

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[4] A. Bruns, *The future is user-led: The path towards widespread produsage*, "Fibreculture Journal" 2008, No. 11, http://eleven.fibreculturejournal.org/fcj-066-the-future-is-user-led-the-path-towards-widespread-produsage [accessed: 03 May 2015].
[5] M. Chyliński, S. Russ–Mohl, *Dziennikarstwo* [Journalism], Warszawa 2008.

them into the media agenda. According to the news value theory, journalists select individual events based on the information factors determining the basic construction frameworks of news[6]. Many researchers indicate a number of most important factors, such as the closeness between the event and the audience, continuity (the prospect of deepen or expand the news), effect on the public or institutions, personalisation (direction of distribution), unpredictability (making the material more sensational), consequences, and controversy[7]. Following specific factors enables drafting an outline of a feature news item. SM users behave in a similar fashion as, on the one hand, they select specific sources and, on the other, disseminate their own or redistribute already made messages[8]. The majority of materials posted by users are spontaneous and not strictly related to the informational activities of traditional media. In this study, all messages created by users or borrowed from traditional media have been defined as information. The choice of the construction framework of a news piece belongs to users. This is different in the case of journalists, who are bound to meet the requirements of the editors. The selection of appropriate sources able to deliver the maximum amount of information is important both from the viewpoint of journalists and of users.

It is possible to discuss so also a profile of an individual SM user who, publishing his or her own materials, uses specific kinds of sources. They may come from the audience remaining in contact with the user's profile (contact networks, subscriptions, etc.) or media companies present in the SM environment[9]. The appropriate choice of media – liked, followed, or subscribed by users – is an important part of the creation process of information messages. The parallel operation of the profiles of users and of traditional media in the same environment leads to their reciprocal relations. First and foremost, it makes them similar to one another in their use of SM to distribute and redistribute data.

Methodology

Studies related to this subject have been carried out mostly in the US and some countries in Western Europe. No such analyses have been performed in Poland. The study employed a qualitative research method (questionnaire), which enabled the imaging of the behaviour of

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[6] J. Galtung, M.H Ruge, *The structure of foreign news*, "Journal of Peace Research" 1965, No. 1, Vol. 2, p. 64–91.

[7] M. Ziegele, T. Breiner, O. Quiring, *What creates interactivity in online news discussions? An exploratory analysis of discussion factors in user comments on news items*, "Journal of Communication" 2014, No. 6, Vol. 64, p. 1114.

[8] Ibidem, p. 1114–1116.

[9] K. Stachura, *(Nowe)? Widownie. Doświadczenia odbiorców mediów w kulturze konwergencji* [(New)? Audiences: Experiences of media recipients in convergence culture], in: *Nowe media i komunikowanie wizualne* [New media and visual communicating], ed. P. Francuz, S. Jędrzejewski, Lublin 2010, p. 84–87.

SM users both at the time of selection and of dissemination of news. In the course of research carried out between February and April 2015, 565 questionnaires filled by Polish users with SM accounts were collected (292 from women and 273 from men). The largest group of respondents were people aged 18–24 years and 25–34 years (46% and 41% respectively). The smaller group consisted from people in age ranges of 35–44, 45–54, and 55+ years (9%, 3%, and 2% respectively). The age structure of the presented sample is unrepresentative, as the discussed technologies are mostly used by young people. Thus, the article constitutes a preliminary diagnosis preceding future, more detailed studies based on representative samples. The analysis showed that 66% of participants had higher education. People with secondary education comprised 29% of respondents. The smallest group were users with elementary education and vocational training (2% each). The majority of participants in the study live in towns and cities of more than 100 thousand inhabitants (53%). People from towns above 50 thousand made up 16% of respondents. Whereas 17% of participants lived in towns below 50 thousand people, and 14% came from rural areas.

The web-based questionnaire prepared by the authors was made available in Polish social media and on Internet forums. In order to increase the reach of the study, individual SM users shared the questionnaire on their own profiles and the profiles of the groups to which they belong. This pyramid structure of questionnaire delivery made it possible to reach people not directly related to the main profile. The questionnaire consisted of 19 questions divided into 3 parts: (1) socio-demographic conditions, (2) activities undertaken by users to collect the sources appropriate for them from those available in the SM, and (3) activities leading to the distribution of their own messages. The part devoted to the creation of information associated with the selection of appropriate press editors refers to the activities undertaken by users to enrich their profiles. The respondents answered SM-related questions: which SM they used, from which medium they usually obtained information, and on which grounds they chose the individual publishers they included in their profiles. The questionnaire also contained questions related to the second sphere, related to the publication of one's own informational materials. This part contained question on the factors which make them share or publish their own posts and entries, as well as the editorial work meant to make the message more varied.
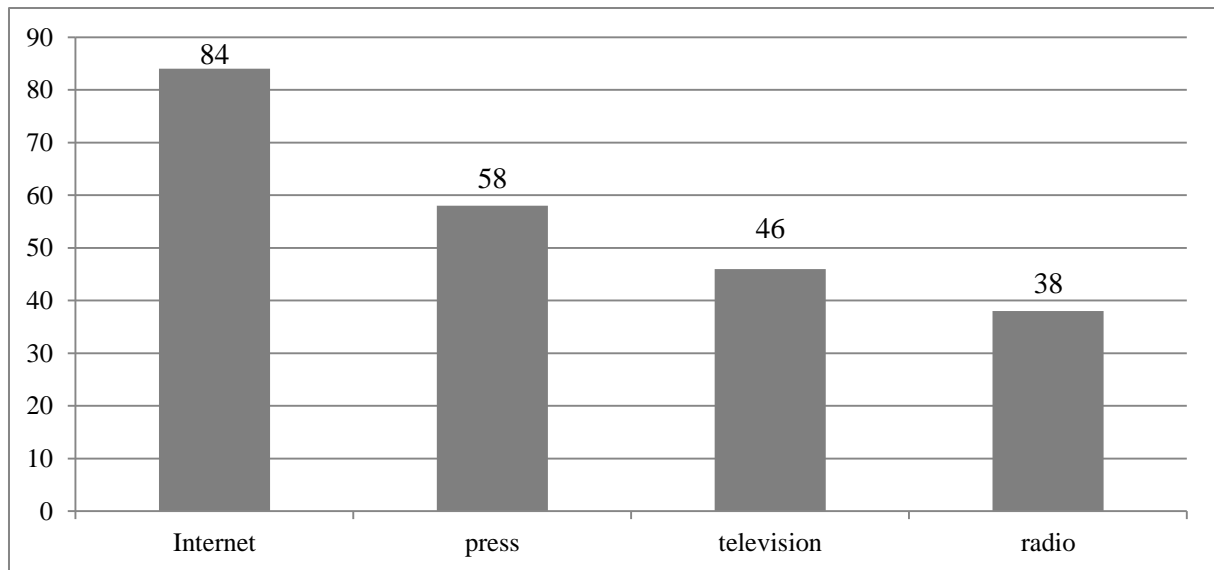
Chart 1: Media followed by the respondents (percentage), N (Number) = 565 (multiple choice was allowed)

Source: own research

The analysis of the material was based on the following research questions:

RQ1: How do users personalise their profiles with regard to information?

RQ2: Which traditional media are most frequently chosen by SM users?

RQ3: What is the reach of the media used by users?

RQ4: For what reasons do users choose specific media?

RQ5: What kind of posts and entries predominates in the user-created content?

RQ6: Which activities are undertaken by users to make their materials more attractive for recipients?

RQ7: In what regard can a user's account function in a similar way to that of a profile of a medium operating in the SM space?

The presented empirical material shows specific behaviour of SM users undertaken in order to mould information environments of their own.

Personalisation of the information content of the profile

The majority of participants in the study (85%) indicated the new media as their primary source of information. The smallest percentages belonged to the press (3%), radio (5%), and TV (7%). This does not mean, however, that the traditional media are not used by Internet users. Currently, SM allow users to follow channels and programmes, and use the materials made available by individual media. The personalisation associated with proper selection and

adjustment of the providers of information services within one's profile follows the needs of users. They make individual conscious choices, which contribute to moulding an internal, personal information sphere. Even though online media services are commonly available and have an enormous reach among recipients, the traditional media still enjoy much interest among Internet users (Chart 1). It is related mostly to the availability and convenience of using this type of solutions, which actually are cumulated in one place.

The online media publishers are of most significance to the respondents. When the participants indicated this answer, they referred to autonomous media (Onet.pl, Wp.pl, or Interia.pl), which have their own teams of editors and journalists. They are used by as many as 84% of SM users. The editorial teams of these media show great variety, which enables users to access solely these sections and materials, which are currently needed. One very important thing, which needs to be mentioned, is the fact that SM interfaces allow users to post links to full articles, which can then be accessed by users as needed.
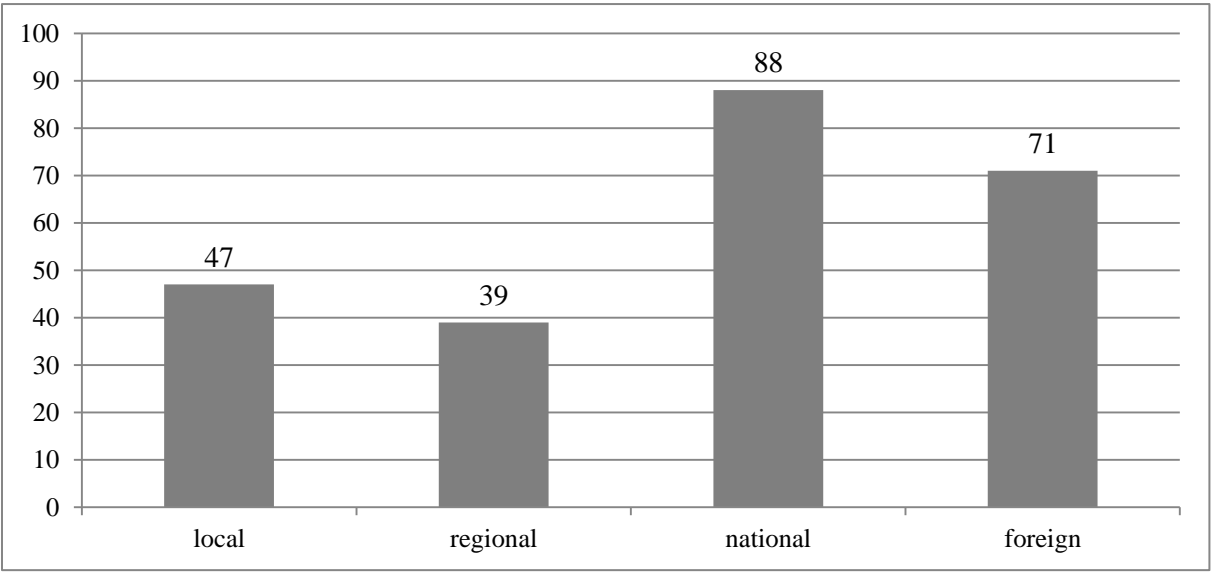
Chart 2: Reach of followed media (percentage), N = 565 (multiple choice was allowed)
Source: own research

Taking advantage of selected journalistic materials is associated with opening posts and entries published by individual editorial teams. The fact that only 6% of respondents always want to see whole posts published by journalists in SM is a confirmation of the large extent of personalisation of users' private profiles with regard to information. In turn, a larger group (68%) comprises these study participants who chose the information materials they

have selected. The interests of users are the filtering component for the topics which might potentially be used to create one's own message.

Even though on-line information is commonly accessed by users, the traditional media play an important role in the shaping of one's own profile. The press is of relatively large interest to Internet users: 58% of the respondents include the profiles of printed media into the frameworks of their accounts.

It should also be mentioned that the press, as a medium of low interactivity, has to compete with other media sectors to maintain a high market position. The technological development and media convergence have shifted the press into the space of the new media, which has gradually been leading to the blurring of the lines between individual media sectors. In consequence, the press, radio, and TV operate in a similar in the SM space. Every traditional medium present on the SM platform is able to use the same tools offered by individual social networking services.

Television is being followed by 46% of respondents. In contrast, radio is the medium which attracts little interest from users (38%). Such a low percentage of participants is quite surprising, since pushing this medium into SM can be related with both pure entertainment and information spheres. What is important is that the activities of each medium are not limited in time. The traditional media present in SM publish between several to a dozen or so post a day.

Users also make decisions regarding the reach of each given media company they included in their own accounts (Chart 2). This kinds of decisions are crucial, since they respectively widen and narrow the information space of the profile.

Each medium has an information value reflecting its scale of influence. Using solely local media proportionately narrows the information space of a user's account. It can be widened by including more media or by selecting certain editorial teams which distribute the content they produce to a broader audience.

The data indicate that the least followed sources are regional media, used by 39% of respondents. Local media attracted little more interest, which may be due to the lack of attachment solely to the issues closer to the residents. Polish SM users pay the most attention to nation-wide media (88%), which can be related to the largest media broadcasters. The Internet is the place where the whole world is bound into an accessible network. Thus, users are can also take advantage of foreign information materials. The media with this kind of reach were also indicated by a large part of the respondents (71%). This means that the reach of users is rather widening than narrowing.

What is important from the viewpoint of personalisation of one's profile is the reason why certain media are included in the user's information grid (Chart 3).
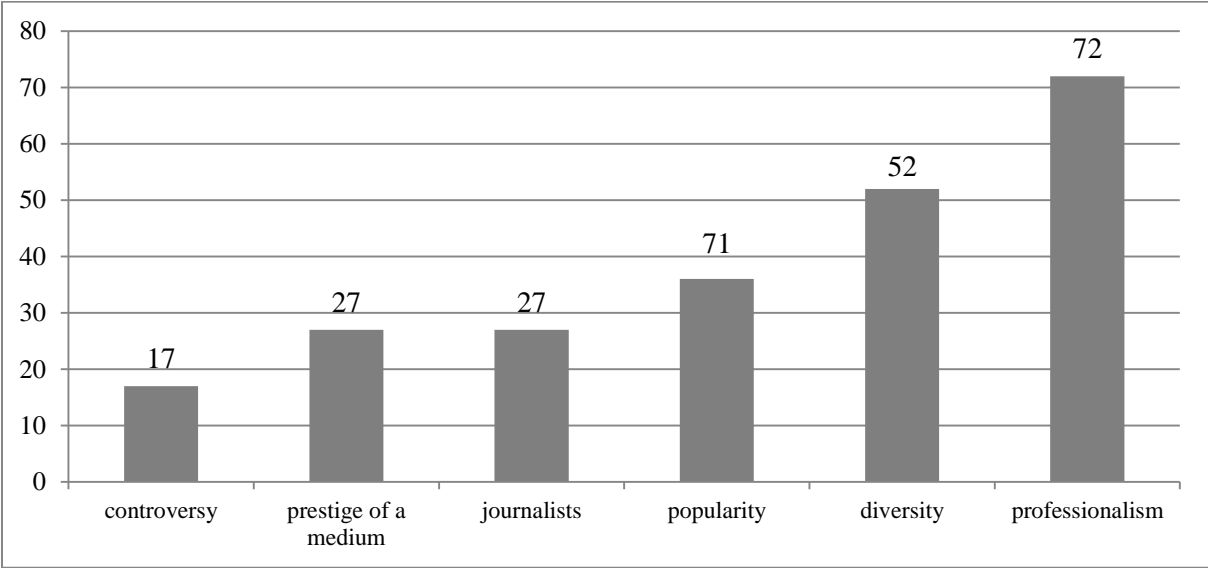

Chart 3: Reasons for the choice of media (percentage), N = 565 (multiple choice was allowed)
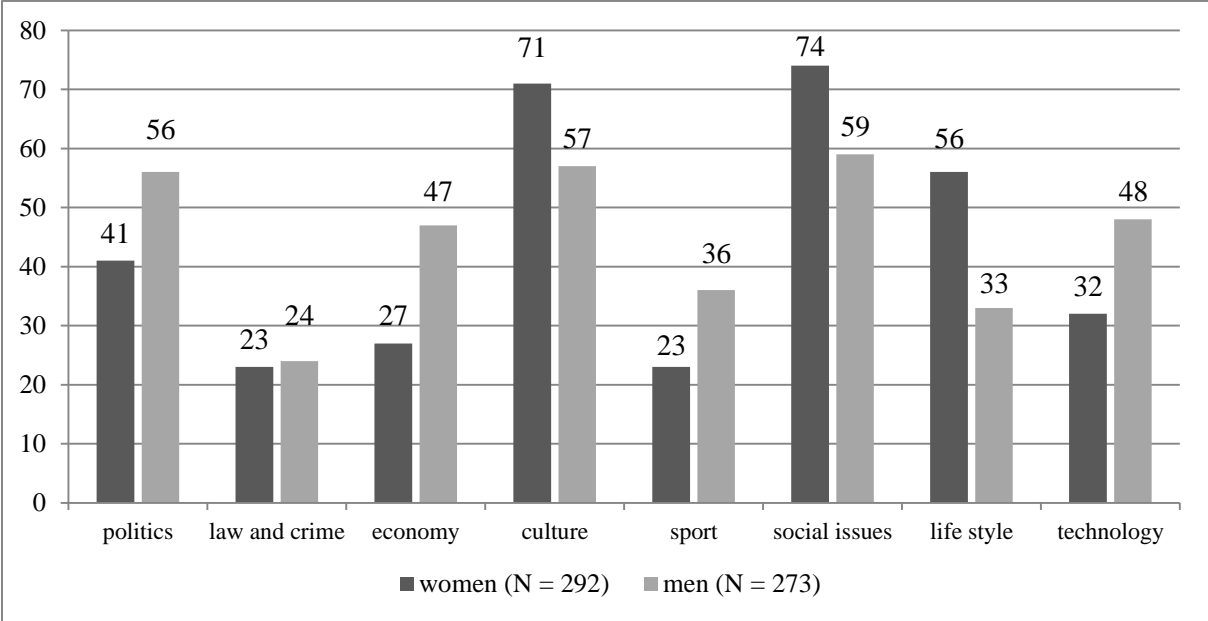Source: own research

Chart 4: Interest in thematic sections (percentage) – multiple choice was allowed
Source: own research

The main reason guiding the selection of sources by SM users is professionalism (72%). This refers not only to journalists themselves and their editorial actions but also the

clear, transparent, and reliable presentation of individual materials. Apart from the appropriate level of expertise and organisation dictated by the notion of journalistic professionalism, the variety in any given medium are also important (as indicated by 52% of respondents). It is associated, above all, with the target groups receiving the message. Strong personalisation of the whole profile and high selectivity of its individual components allow users to determine which media should be included within, and exactly which topics should be taken into consideration.

The next reason for which the respondents decide to choose a given medium lies in its popularity (36%). From the viewpoint of information, this factor is hardly significant. Less popular media can be interesting information-wise as well. They can present both the variety of messages and professionalism. Conversely, the respondents do not tend to choose certain media because of the journalists employed there. Those who did so made up only 27% of all participants. The question of the prestige of the medium was a similar case (27%), not being a factor strongly determining any given choice. Also, only 17% of respondents paid attention to the controversiality of media. Sensational news materials – sometimes even originating from unproven sources – do not attract much interest from the respondents. Users consciously choose the media which operate above all based on the professionalism factor. Which does not mean, however, that lurid headlines, emotional pictures and videos do not attract interest.

It seems interesting and justified to present the interests in individual topic sections (Chart 4). At the first stage, users personalise their profiles selecting appropriate media and, at the second, select information which they find interesting. The topics related to culture, society, and politics are some of the most popular. Men, unlike women, prefer topics related to politics (56%), broadly understood technology (48%), economy (47%), and sport (36%). Whereas the predominant topics among women are social (74%), related to broadly understood culture – including higher culture (71%) – and all lifestyle-related topics (56%).

Personalisation of profile with regard to choosing appropriate sources not only enriches its information background but also provides many opportunities to use it. It is clear that composing certain elements of one's profile does not have to be the sole domain of media companies. Users have the freedom to decide about the particular sources included in the information spaces of their profiles. This means that both users and editorial teams of traditional media exhibit similar properties in the process of creating their own information. In both cases the sources may include both observed media and materials from outside of the media.

Conversion and output phase

The inclusion of individual media followed by determining their reach and range of topics allows to increase the information value of a user's profile. Journalistic messages reach the recipients via many channels, which is primarily related to the phenomenon of media convergence, characterised by significant increase in the dynamics of communication processes. An important activity related to the operation of both traditional media and private accounts (besides searching and selecting specific sources) is the adequate dissemination of created material. It is related to the user activity mentioned above, namely their involvement in the communication processes occurring in SM. Every account comes with certain information resources, yet the extent to which they are used depends on the owner. The profiles of traditional media are obliged to disseminate journalistic material above all in order to maintain their audience and, perhaps, broaden it, whereas SM users have to determine the line-ups of their profiles on their own.

The phases of conversion and output are interconnected. The transformation of properly selected information sources involves editorial work, which means a journalist. It is he or her who gives the form and meaning to information, integrating it into a given social or political context. The news items which appear in the scheduling of traditional media either cover recent events or have been recognised as important by persons or teams responsible for their dissemination[10]. Attributing meaning is one of the most important principles in editing and preparing material. Setting the agenda belongs to the basic tasks of traditional media, which create the image of an issue. They determine what should be included in the media and attribute the component of relevance to issues by adequately constructing and disseminating the message itself[11].

User created content (UCC) is associated with yet another dimension of moulding the information space. It comprises certain creative works and forms of communication (textual, auditory, video, and combined forms) created by SM users via the Internet[12]. The dissemination of messages by professional senders and by users are very similar with regard to the use of tools offered by SM. For this reason UCC has to meet the requirements of publication of messages within SM, show a certain creative contribution to the distributed

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[10] T. Ashuri, *Activist journalism: Using digital technologies and undermining structures*, "Communication, Culture & Critique" 2012, No. 1, Vol. 5, p. 44–45.

[11] M. McCombs, *Ustanawianie agendy: Media masowe i opinia publiczna* [Setting the agenda: The mass media and public opinion], Kraków 2004.

[12] OECD (2007), *Participative web and user-created content: Web 2.0, wikis and social networking* [accessed: 01 May 2015].

message, and be separated from the professional practices and procedures associated with one's occupation[13].

The phenomenon of dissemination of journalistic materials by users has become common. It is associated with the distribution and redistribution of information messages via private accounts. Redistribution involves the use of pre-made, published news items and pushing them into the networks of personal relationships between users' accounts and other private profiles connected to it. In the case of Facebook these will be networks of friends, and all followers of one's profile on Twitter. What is important in this process is that a given media information reaches even those users who do not follow the profiles of traditional media. What is more, in the case of Facebook, the membership in various topic groups allows one to broaden the reach of one's information.

It should be assumed that journalistic informational materials shared by social media users are only partially associated with UCC. This occurs when the account owner uses some already published material just adding his or her own description to it. Whereas when it comes to the content which has been constructed based on the heard, seen, or read information without supplying an applicable link to the given material, it can be said that the given content item has been created by the user entirely from scratch.

The question of UCC is of particular importance due to its close connection with the information environment shaped by account owners. The use of pre-existing news items and creating them from scratch by users broadens the operation range of individual profiles significantly. Moreover, the concept of UCC introduces a distinction between the operation of traditional media within SM, which need to fulfil their fundamental function of information, and users' profiles moulded freely and without obligations.

Personalisation of message

The publication of one's own posts and entries in SM is the basic component of the communication process related to such platforms. Every day SM data bases grow with new materials coming from various sources and various entities. These materials are private, being limited to publishing one's pictures, sharing music, or expressing one's mood. Yet, on the other hand, users rely on professionally prepared information, which has reached them thanks to the personalisation of their own profiles or directly from the area of traditional media (Chart 5).

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[13] A. Kaplan, M. Haenlein, *Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media*, "Business Horizons" 2010, Vol. 53, p. 61–62.

Based on the data collected during the study, it has been possible to present the distribution of materials published by SM users over a week. The seven-day period was selected in order to grasp the dynamics of the process of publishing posts in the space of social media. The choice of a single day could easily turn out to be too short, while a time span longer than 7 days would not reflect the phenomenon. To begin with, the respondents who do not publish any materials during a week should be examined. Here, the discrepancy is clear between it and the informational materials originating from traditional media, not included in the profiles by 58% of respondents. The percentage related to private content is much smaller (34%), which phenomenon is quite understandable, since SM are mostly used for spontaneous communication between users. Yet, this proportion indicates the significance of the phenomenon of distributing informational materials. It should be remembered that the informational aspect of social media is considered as a supplement to the ability to engage in conversations with other users or meet new acquaintances.

Users usually create between 1 and 2 messages per week: such answer was given by 44% of respondents engaged in spontaneous daily activities. Posts and entries containing journalistic information are shared by 32% of users. The next quantitative range (3–5) clearly shows a much lower share of published materials (Chart 5). Here, private materials make up 24% of content, while 8% belongs to informational content published by users. The frequency related to the distribution of 6 or more pieces of material per week is characteristic of a negligible group of respondents. In this case, the percentages are similar to the previous answers (respectively 8% and 2% for informational materials).

The data analysis allows to introduce a certain scale of user activity: from no activity (0), to low (1–2), average (3–5), to high (6 and above). It is characteristic of respondents to show low activity in distributing their own messages associated with private (every-day) posts and based on secondary external (journalistic) sources.

Just as it is the case of selecting adequate sources, users are guided by certain factors when deciding whether to publish an individual piece of material (Chart 6). Compared to traditional media, the owners of private profiles are not obliged to define the target group for their messages. In this area, the audience consists of all people who follow or are connected in a network of friends with a given profile.
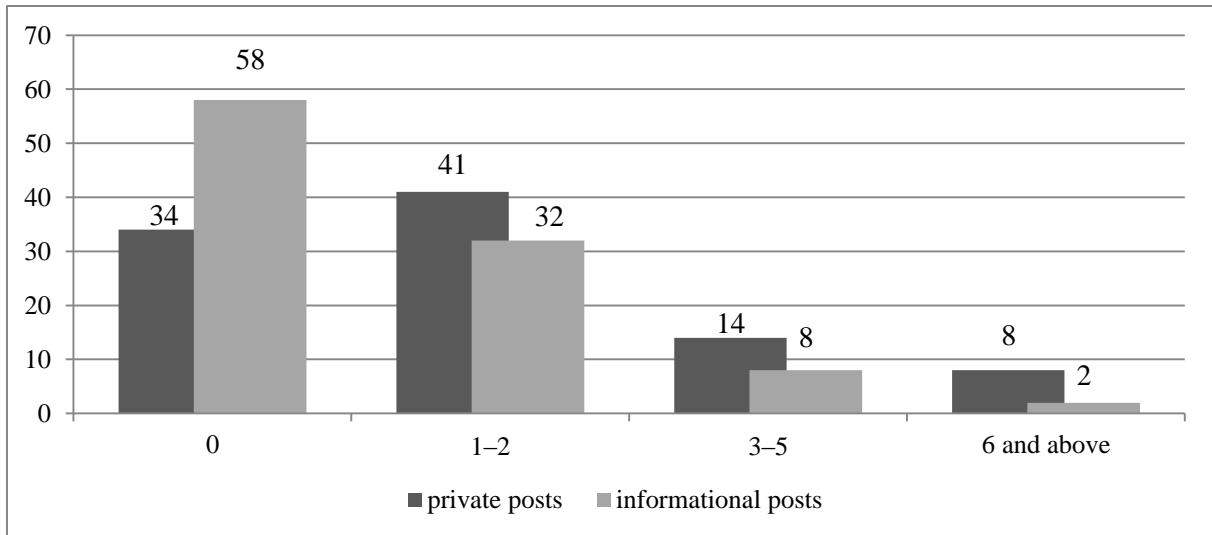
Chart 5: Kinds of posts published by SM users over the span of a week (percentage), N = 565 (multiple choice was allowed)

Source: own research

There are many reasons related to the selection of information which users want to publish. What is important is that they do not have to focus on a single criterion. The collected quantitative data clearly show that both men (62%) and women (65%) choose specific materials for publication based on their own interests. Essentially, this is an obvious factor, since the very involvement in communication processes is voluntary. The interests of users are the main reason to establish a personal (topical) line-up of one's own account.
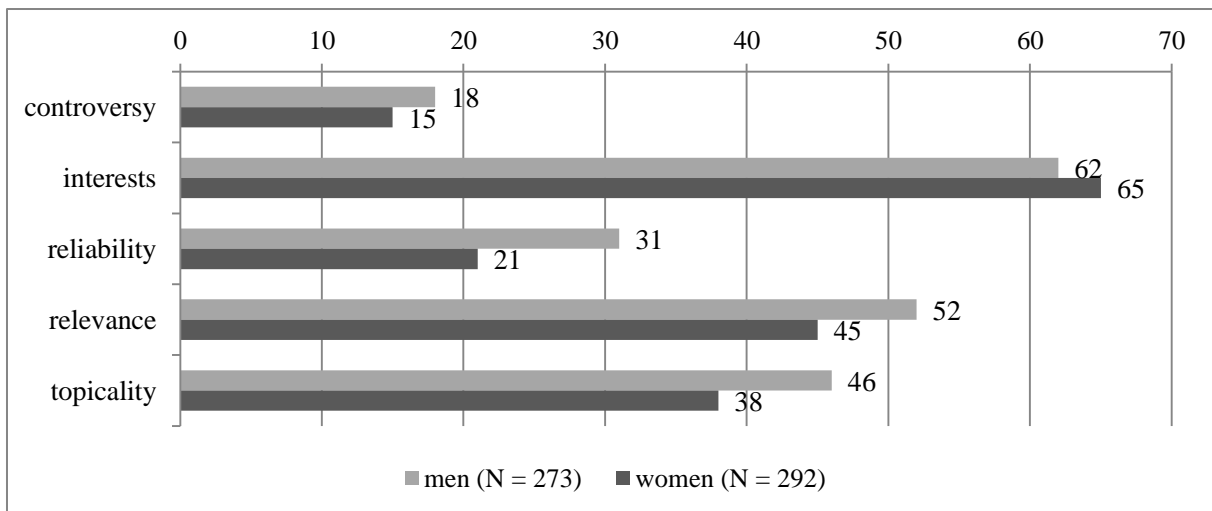

Chart 6: Criteria for the selection of published posts (percentage) – multiple choice was allowed

Source: own research

The next criterion is relevance, which is related to one's interests in a way. Contrary to traditional media, SM users attribute relevance to materials individually. While professional editorial teams combine relevance with the expectations of recipients, users' profiles are not dependent on commercial factors and thus do not require similar actions. Still, 45% of women and 52% of men decide whether or not to publish certain materials with regard to this criterion.

The third factor determining the choice of published content is topicality, as indicated by 38% of women and 46% of men. This distinguishes users' profiles from professional editorial teams, for whom the topicality of a given event is one of the most important factors in constructing a news piece. Which does not mean, however, that the respondents do not consider it as important.

There was a significant difference between women and men in the case of reliability of a given piece of information. This factor, as another one taken into consideration, was indicated by 21% of women and 31% of men. When it comes to a personal newsroom, professionalism in its pure form, characteristic of traditional media for which reliability is paramount, is not on the agenda. The majority of users have never been acquainted with the work of journalists, therefore their lack of experience is strongly tied to the lack of professionalism.

The controversial nature of news pieces (entries/posts) is the least important criterion for choosing specific material. This factor was indicated by roughly similar percentages of women and men (15% and 18%, respectively). The low rank of this criterion is associated with the indicated criterion of interest. As a rule, users publish these materials which correspond to their preferences, thus avoiding disharmony in their personal information spaces. Whereas, in the case of traditional media, the introduction of dissonance from time to time may improve the popularity of the publisher.

Similarly to traditional media, user's profiles in social media have the capability to use certain tools to diversify and adequately mould informational messages (Chart 7). Following the development of technology, the tools and capabilities included in user's interfaces have changed, took new forms, or have been replaced.
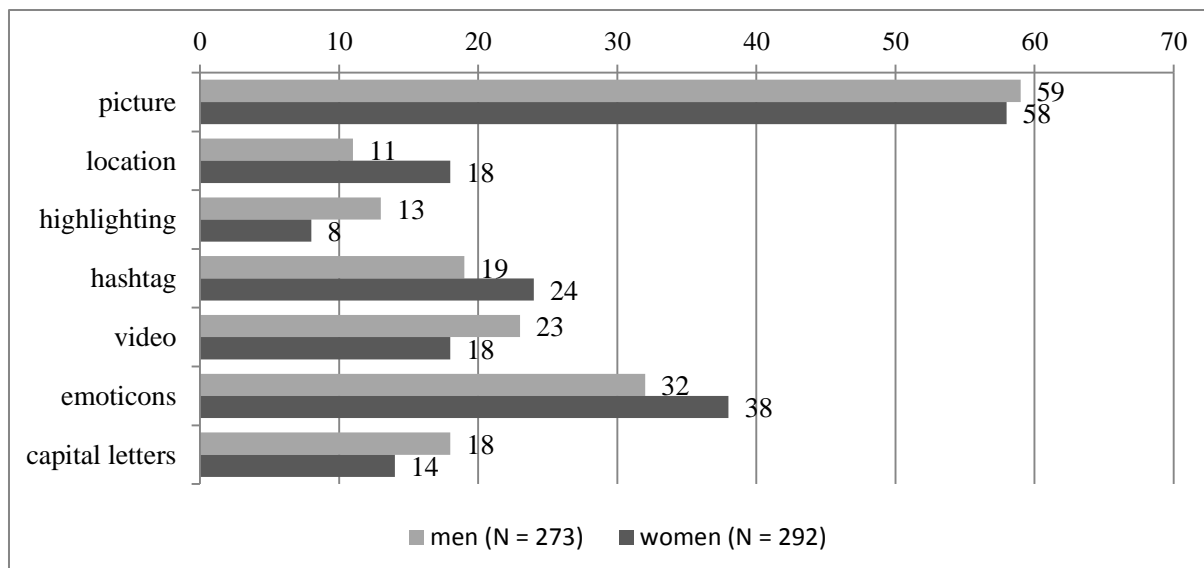
Chart 7: Editorial operations (percentages) – multiple choice was allowed.

Source: own research

Drawing the attention of users to published material can take various forms. The most common way involves adding pictures to one's own posts. Both women (58%) and men (59%) add pictures to their own materials. It is an extremely important component of each newly created news piece, which illustrates the described issue or event. The respondents placed emoticons in the second place. Their basic purpose is to express emotions with graphic characters. They enrich the text of a created piece of material not just aesthetically but also show the intentions of its author: irony, anger, or satisfaction. This tool is used by 38% of the women and 32% of the men who took part in the study. A very popular measure, which serves to diversify the message and, on the other hand, catalogues it, is the use of hashtags (#word). This feature is used by 24% of women and 19% of men. Even though this detail of SM does not directly affect the content of a message, it nevertheless brings order to certain sections of information.

The frequency of sharing of video materials by SM users is similar. Contrary to hashtags, this measure was employed by men (23%) more often than by women (18%). Compared to the profiles of traditional media, such as those related to TV, users' accounts are not related to any specific programme or line-up, which provides them with more liberty to choose adequate tools.

Featuring posts on one's own dashboard was the least popular (13% of men and 8% of women). This option is not widely spread in SM, therefore its popularity among the respondents was low. The introduction of geo-location (18% of women and 11% of men) is

mostly related to the Instagram. Users have begun to use this tool on Facebook and Twitter only fairly recently. Capital letters (18% of men and 14% of women) are associated rather with messages posted to bulletin boards, and for this very reason they are frequently used in this form.

The SM environment made traditional media more similar to users' profiles on a functional level. This means that the process of producing informational materials follows a similar flow both in the case of professional editorial teams and individual users. Private account interfaces often provide the same tools as used by the editors of traditional media.

Conclusion

Profiles of SM users define new directions of distribution of informational materials. While they are not related to the professional preparation of news, the principles governing their creation are similar to the processes taking place in the traditional editorial teams of individual services. Basing one's activity on the construction framework of a news piece is characteristic of both average and professional SM users.

Similarities can be observed in two interrelated dimensions: (1) the participation of users in each of the three creation stages of a news piece: gathering, processing, and publication of materials; (2) the use of specific tools made available by SM. Users, similar to journalists, determine sources, acquire information, process and then publish it, subjected to editorial operations as necessary. This is due to the fact that both editors and individual profiles operate in the same communication environment. The ability to add pictures or films and to provide them with adequate captions, comments, or links allows one to create an image of a given issue introduced into the circulation of information. It should be stressed, however, that the scale of this phenomenon is different for the profiles of professional media and private users. Traditional media always have home pages from which any given information is taken, whereas users hardly ever have such resources.

SM users' profiles exhibit a large degree of freedom in creating certain messages: the shape and range of a personal newsroom is determined by the interests of a user. Traditional media play a crucial role in this process, to a large extent defining the form, type, and reach of published information. Informational materials made available by certain media sectors are sources providing information mostly to users. This is the way in which the younger generations get to know traditional media. The communication process between the professionals and the recipients has been mediated by SM. Personalisation of a profile leads to the moulding of both internal and external spaces of individual users. The informational

micro-environment widens in proportion to the involvement in the processes of information exchange occurring in SM. The more the user is active, and the more sources of information are included in his or her profile, the more communication processes occur between him or her and other SM entities. In the process of moulding their profiles, respondents mostly select media of nation-wide and international reach, which determines the scale of prospective materials which may be used. In the case of SM, both the delivery and distribution of information is highly dependent on user's decision. The method of creating information and their dissemination depend solely on the personal preferences of people involved in SM. Private profiles then function in a way similar to one-person editorial teams: personal newsrooms, which are very much like the account of traditional media registered in SM.

The analysis of a private SM account through the lens of professional editorial teams is a novel solution. It presents a phenomenon related to the use, reception, and sending of specific pieces of information by users themselves, who – not unlike journalists – make decisions regarding the inclusion of certain messages into communication processes. The performed study not only shows the extent of activity of Polish SM users but also constitutes a prelude to analyses associated with the popular notion of citizen journalism.