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RISKS OF LACK OF ONLINE LITERACY IN CONTEXT OF E-ACTIVISM

Roland Kyška*

ABSTRACT

A massive spread of Internet connections and, in particular, of web 2.0, built mostly on conversation and web applications enabling users to create and easily transfer texts, pictures, videos or sound recordings, came along with the possibilities of civic participation as well as communication between citizens and representatives of the political power. Fear of authoritative governments arising under unlimited and free dissemination of opposing opinions in online environment, manifested in the form of application of restriction measures and Internet censorship, combined with the use of social media tools in organizing protests in those countries often forms a biased view on the so called twitter revolutions. In this respect we can mention anti-government demonstrations in Moldova after marred elections or citizens' protests in Iran, as well as the role of new technologies in the revolutionary movement of the so called Arab Spring. In non-democratic countries with a monopoly position of state media under the control of the government, the Internet constitutes an alternative to the dual system and a good platform for dissemination of opposing opinions, whereby the positive effect strongly suppresses the debate on disadvantages of the content spread in such manner. On the contrary, in plurality societies, where there is no big problem with free spreading of ideas, we can observe shortcomings resulting from the growth of the influence of web content on the political life of the countries. Also the political situation in Slovakia shortly before the parliamentary elections in March 2012 is an example of it; the pre-election campaign in the traditional view was, by its virtue, marginalized by various revelations and information published usually anonymously on various web platforms. In a country that has its negative experience with abusing intelligence services in the political battle, however, such activities affected a significant part of voters and, to a large extent, redefined political communication of traditional parties. Many of them seemed to not fully understand the power of web and, on the contrary, underestimated that form of communication. Parliamentary elections results ended in a disaster for the right, with opposition left-wing Smer winning 83 out of 150 mandates. Events of the past days also stressed insufficient level of online literacy of inhabitants, which, in combination with insufficient social education and interest in public affairs may have negative consequences in many aspects.

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A massive spread of Internet connections and, in particular, of web 2.0, built mostly on conversation and web applications enabling users to create and easily transfer texts, pictures, videos or sound recordings (Safko, Brake, 2009, p. 6), came along with the possibilities of civic participation as well as communication between citizens and representatives of the political power.

Fear of authoritative governments arising under unlimited and free dissemination of opposing opinions in online environment, manifested in the form of application of restriction measures and Internet censorship¹, combined with the use of social media tools in organizing protests in those countries often forms a biased view on the so called twitter revolutions. In this respect we can mention anti-government demonstrations in Moldova after marred elections or citizens' protests in Iran (Kyška, 2010, p. 20), as well as the role of new technologies in the revolutionary movement of the so called Arab Spring (Beaumont, 2011).

In non-democratic countries with a monopoly position of state media under the control of the government, the Internet constitutes an alternative to the dual system and a good platform for dissemination of opposing opinions, whereby the positive effect strongly suppresses the debate on disadvantages of the content spread in such manner. On the contrary, in plurality societies, where there is no big problem with free spreading of ideas, we can observe shortcomings resulting from the growth of the influence of web content on the political life of the countries.

Also the political situation in Slovakia shortly before the parliamentary elections in March 2012 is an example of it; the pre-election campaign in the traditional view was, by its virtue, marginalized by various revelations and information published usually anonymously on various web platforms. In a country that has its negative experience with abusing intelligence services in the political battle, however, such activities affected a significant part of voters and, to a large extent, redefined political communication of traditional parties. Many of them seemed to not fully understand the power of web and, on the contrary, underestimated that form of communication. Parliamentary elections results

¹ It can be evidenced also by a thorough censorship and turning off of several web services, including Twitter, in communist China prior to the twentieth anniversary of the massacre at the Square of Heavenly Peace, just as efforts of the Ben Ali regime to block Facebook in Tunisia.

ended in a disaster for the right-wing parties, with opposition left-wing Smer winning 83 out of 150 mandates.

Events of the past days also stressed insufficient level of online literacy of inhabitants, which, in combination with insufficient social education and interest in public affairs may have negative consequences in many aspects.

E-participation and e-activism as new ways of civic engagement

There are many obstacles hindering people from civic engagement. On one hand, there are predispositions leading individuals to deal with politics only in the case they feel immediate danger or if particular politics threaten their interests. Unless that is the case, they are usually not interested in politics. Caplan explains low level of awareness among voters as a result of natural human inclination to pursue their own benefit and not as a temporary cultural deviation (Caplan, 2010, p. 21).

The ideal of contemporary person's good life in the mass consumer society does not inevitably include civic engagement; that ideal concentrates on the private sphere and no strong appeals to civic consciousness can help with that. On the other hand, there is more room left by citizens to professional political elites, whose activity, however, does not exceed the overall cultural pattern of consumption and happiness in private life (Višňovský, 2010).

According to Milbrath's definition of political participation it is possible to divide individual activities into three clusters. *Viewer activities* are such activities that require the least level of participation in political life and they contain the act of voting as well initiating political discussions within a circle of relatives and friends with the aim of convincing them to support a particular entity in the political battle. *Interim activities* encompass contacting political leaders, financial support to political battle entities and/or participation in political meetings. *Gladiator activities* cover participation in political campaigns, active membership in political parties, running for and serving in a public position (Sopóci, 2004, p. 123).

The onset and spread of web 2.0 services brought about, to a certain extent, a new view on established classifications. Many activities, above all those from the category of viewer or interim activities, became streamlined in the online space and, above all, they became impersonal. Writing an email represents much lower costs for a citizen, not only financial but also time costs, compared

to writing a letter. Contacting political actors on social networks or using a chat is also much more comfortable than a direct participation in political meetings. Moreover, the concept of web 2.0 makes it possible for anyone to create contents that can influence voters as well as, on the contrary, to publicize author's activities².

The power of the Internet is understood by civic activists as well as participants to the political competition and, indirectly, also by citizens themselves. The influence of the Internet is growing every year. During the US Congress election campaign in 2006, 15% of Americans indicated Internet as the primary source of political information³, whereby during the campaign, altogether 31 per cent of adult inhabitants in the country received information and shared opinions on politics online (Gueorguieva, 2009, p. 234).

In the presidential campaign in the USA two years later, Haradakis and Hanson already attributed several historic milestones arising under onset of new technologies and web services such as YouTube, Twitter or Facebook during the presidential period 2004 – 2008. For voters, the Internet was one of the key sources of information. According to their study, in the age category from 18 to 35 years the Internet even exceeded traditionally dominating television as the primary source of political information (Haradakis, Hanson, 2010, p. 77). However, TV managed to keep its dominance in the category of voters over 35 years.

Also in other surveys there were around 40% of US voters collecting information on election campaign on the Internet. Almost 20% took part in an online activity of any of the candidates at least once a week. Moreover, almost 10% of them used social networks to stay in touch with their candidates (Brauckmann, 2009, p. 170).

Intensive campaign of Barack Obama on the Internet, especially through the social media, provided new means of communication, building relations with supporters as well as public declarations of support to the candidate by voters (Harfoush, 2009). Thus it strongly helped his victory in elections. Obama's dominance in this respect was definitely helped by low e-literacy of the

² An example is Natália Bláhová, Member of the National Council of the Slovak Republic, who used to be an influential blogger dealing especially with social issues. Her opinions, and also popularity among a specific category of inhabitants played a significant role in her engagement in *Sloboda a solidarita*, which had, in 2012 elections, the image of the party most active in the web environment. The party was often referred to, pejoratively, as a virtual party.

³ TV as still the primary source for 71%.

republican candidate John McCain, who is well known by having problems even when working with emails (Caplan, 2010, p. 21). That fact did not increase his attractiveness among younger voters, so called "Google generation". Based on surveys, Obama received as much as 66% of votes of 18-29-year-old voters. Young voters always rather supported Democratic Party candidates; however, Democrats had never had such massive support (Keeter, Horowitz, 2008).

Web has become a space that politicians cannot ignore any more. And just as it provides participants of the political competition with innovative possibilities of communication with voters it also provides new means of civic engagement and strengthens the civil society. The Internet streamlined publicizing government documents or documents pertaining decision making and decisions of representatives of the power, which increased the control of professionals as well as the general public. Citizens can check politicians also by means of various open source projects, which originated also thanks to engagement of representatives, non-government organizations or volunteers. Votes can often watch decision-making of authorities online, in fact. Electronic mail, on the other hand, significantly streamlined and accelerated communication with state administration authorities as well as with individual representatives of political elites.

Talking about the so called e-participation, there are often discrepancies or disputes concerning terminology. E-participation is often incorrectly perceived to be a sort of a synonym to e-voting, which results especially from a limited perception of democracy as a transaction process where citizens exchange their votes at the time of election for promises of politicians to implement promised election agenda.

E-participation means all processes that get citizens involved to public decision-making processes by means of information and communication technologies beyond the scope of electronic voting. In such case, the following formula would apply:

$$\mathbf{e-democracy = e-voting + e-participation}$$

The very e-democracy can be perceived as one of two parts of electronic public administration (e-governance), whereby the second one is e-government in the sense of electronic processes as a part of professional public administration (Pekárek, 2008).

E-participation also enables communication among citizens and representatives of the power without physical presence of dialog participants. Among its tools are also wiki platforms, social networks, blogs and other applications based on the web 2.0 technology⁴.

The concept of e-participation has a chance to succeed also with regard to increasing penetration of the Internet and popularity of various platforms based on web 2.0. Moreover, the interest in the concept arises independently on each other, however, in the correlation relation of opening the public administration on one hand⁵ and growing expressions of civil engagement on the web, either in the form of electronic petitions, organizing protests or meetings in the area of social networks as well as various more creative forms of protests.

E-activism represents activities in online environment utilizing especially social media or emails in order to enable civil movements and activists communicate faster and more efficiently to the widest possible auditorium. The Internet also often makes it possible to share and distribute messages that would otherwise would not get to mainstream media, either due to power control or because they are extraordinarily controversial messages. Among strengths of e-activism is the ability to respond quickly, cheaply and affecting the general public. E-activism also includes pressure activities, such as mass sending of emails, electronic petitions and mobilizing people to off-line activities. There is a specific category containing activities on the verge of the law and illegal activities, such as *hacktivism* (illegal penetration to computers and attacking web sites motivated by political goals).

Anyway, the real scope of e-activism remains questionable. While the so called *weboptimists* find them equal and use successes of revolutionary movements in Moldova, Arab Spring or demonstrations in Spain as arguments in favour of their claims, opponents say that there is a long distance between clicking a mouse and real action in the real world. There are a lot of arguments supporting both opinion groups. E-activism should, however, not be perceived only as a complement to civil engagement in the real world; it is a new type of activity in a completely different environment. Just as it is necessary to place different quality and quantity claims on it than on existing known expression of

⁴ Definition on the portal *eSpráva republiky Srbsko* Available at: <<http://www.euprava.gov.rs/sk/eParticipacija>> (Obtained on: 5 March 2012)

⁵ An example is an initiative of originally eight countries Open Government Partnership of 20 September 2011, which was later accessed by around 50 countries, including Slovakia. For more information see also <<http://www.opengovpartnership.org/>>.

civil engagement, it should always be correctly placed to a right context.

Use of web tools in the concept of deliberative democracy

Currently, many societies are experiencing a certain crisis of values expressed also in doubting existing framework of representative democracy, whereby the fundamental argument of opponents of the liberal democratic regime is, especially, unequal distribution of wealth and power in the society. Along to movements such as “Occupy Wall Street”, or Spanish initiatives *Democracia real YA*, similar protests also got to Slovakia.

According to Vašečka, *“liberal democracy, due to the fact how and by whom it was built in Slovakia, is becoming, for those who did not experience its “standard” functioning, a synonym for robbery capitalism. In many aspects, the heroic story of the battle for liberal democratic regime, which, to a large extent, was written by the civil society, is mocked or, in better cases, overseen”* (Vašečka, 2012, p. 13).

The most common reservations used by opponents of the current model of the liberal democracy built on competitive representation are growing asymmetry between the rich and the poor, interconnecting economic and political power and insufficient influence of citizens on the public administration. Among solutions for these problems, they mention especially the so called direct democracy, i.e. increasing participation of citizens.

The deliberative democracy concept that has been gaining ground since the 90s talks about an ideal form of the government, where free and equal citizens will substantiate decisions in the process where they mutually state reasons that are mutually acceptable and generally accessible, in order to achieve goals that are binding to all citizens at present but open to new challenges (Bianchi, Miková, 2010, p. 109).

The key principle of deliberative democracy is, in fact, communication in order to form a shared will in a free and rational way, whereby the participants offer their best arguments in favour of their own opinions or proposals or against opinions and proposals of other participants (Dolný, 2011).

This concept, in connection to the use of web 2.0 tools such as the platform for presentation and mutual confrontation of opinion positions looks like an ideal combination. It is the web environment that could be the place of participative deliberation, accessible for each member of the community, as deliberation assumes active approach of all concerned by the issue. To a certain extent it

would eliminate limiting factors of space and time of assembling participants, as the discussion could also be held in the form of web fora and discussions.

The idea of the web as the room intended for looking for the common wealth, however, fails in many aspects. Instead of strengthening the idea of deliberative democracy as a suitable concept, it points out at and stresses its many shortcomings. Deliberation thus assumes certain characteristic features of participants such as tolerance, ability to accept and adopt opinions of others, ability to logically formulate their arguments. Besides that it puts time demand on participants and equally assumes a certain level of cognitive abilities. Last but not least, there are motivating factors.

Parliamentary elections in Slovakia shadowed by web

Elections to the National Council of the Slovak Republic in 2010 were the first ones marked by a substantial shift in informing and political mobilization to the Internet. Web played an important role in direct communication with potential voters as well as in their election mobilization, especially for new parties and parties outside the parliament (Kollár, 2011, p. 130).

A survey concerning activities of candidates of relevant political parties implied that the most active participants were representatives of the extra-parliamentary liberal party *Sloboda a solidarita* (Freedom and Solidarity, hereinafter referred to as SaS), followed by candidates of conservative *Kresťanskodemokratické hnutie* (Christian Democratic Party, KDH) and the strongest right-wing party *Slovenská demokratická a kresťanská únia – Demokratická strana* (Slovak Democratic and Christian Union – Democratic Party, SDKÚ-DS). On the contrary, government parties, such as left-wing *Smer – Sociálna demokracia* (Direction – Social Democracy), nationalistic *Slovenská národná strana* (Slovak National Party) or centre-right *Hnutie za demokratické Slovensko* (Movement for Democratic Slovakia) completely underestimated that means of communications (Kyška, 2010, pp. 23-27).

Even despite doubts about real scope of social media and efficiency of mobilization on the Internet there is an exact result reflected in the success of SaS, which acquired the basis of its electorate especially thanks to communication over new media as well as the fact that participation in elections was confirmed on Facebook by more than 100,000 users of the social network. "Internet" voters thus may be an important voice especially in the case of tight election results (Kollár, 2011, p. 130).

While elections in 2010 pointed out at insufficient preparedness of many representatives of traditional political parties and movements to communicate using new, modern methods, less than two years later the Internet marked preliminary parliamentary elections in an unprecedented manner. The method of communication of political parties and individual candidates was, in this case, not inventive nor offensive, in majority of cases, the Internet presentations even induced only formal meeting of their “obligation” to have also this type of presentation and many leaders did not use profiles on social networks at all.

Anyway, three events had much bigger impact on elections and their results. The first one was anonymous publication of bugging of journalists on an American portal. Transcripts were published briefly after recalling Ľubomír Galko, Minister of Defence, in connection to illegal bugging performed by the Military Defence Intelligence Service (*Vojenské obranné spravodajstvo*)⁶, which allegedly monitored at least three journalists of the Pravda daily and the Director General of news TV channel TA3 (Miháliková, 2011).

Authenticity of transcripts of phone conversations was even confirmed by Robert Kaliňák, Vice-Chairman of opposition Smer-SD and a Member of the Parliament, whose phone conversation with an editor of the Pravda was tapped too.

Shortly before Christmas 2011, a document was published on web, originating allegedly from a secret operation of the Slovak Intelligence Service (*Slovenská informačná služba*) under the code name Gorila. It was supposed to contain transcripts of space tapping in an apartment in Vazovova Street in Bratislava, which was utilised by the Penta financial group for secret meetings with representatives of political elites.

The Trend economic weekly described that “more than one hundred pages of the Gorila and Gorila 1 case files included an outline of attempts to influence privatisation of the Bratislava airport, electricity distribution companies, heating plants, water supply companies and efforts to get to the money during privatisation of *Slovenské elektrárne*. Even instructions how to get their people to strategic companies in order to influence big orders from companies under

⁶ The Prosecutor General Office confirmed at least 18 cases when the Military Intelligence Service tapped based on framed arguments. In Slovakia, an approval by the court has to be provided in order to use information and technical equipment. Also this case proved that courts often review only formally and decide in favour of institutions requesting the approval for tapping. E.g. in the first half of 2011 Slovak courts decided about 1,519 requests for the use of information and technical equipment and approved 1,499 cases.

the control of the government” (Beer, 2012).

All persons allegedly involved in the secret meetings refused authenticity of the file, based on which they were supposed to negotiate such often corruptive transactions – Penta financial group, Jirko Malchárek, former Minister of Economy and even Anna Bubeníková, Chair of the Executive Committee of the National Property Fund⁷. The police resumed investigation of the case, a special investigation team was set up and on March 15, 2012 it accused Pavol Rusko, former Minister of Economy, of privatisation of *Paroplynový cyklus* (Steam Gas Cycle) under unfavourable conditions⁸.

As a result of the Gorila case a series of protest meetings was held in several Slovak towns. They were attended by thousands of people. Protests in Bratislava even turned into violence several times, when demonstrators attacked the offices of the National Council of the Slovak Republic, the Government of the Slovak Republic and the President of the Slovak Republic (Trško, Krempaský, Pažitková, 2012).

SaS, the second strongest coalition party was affected by the so called Sasanka case. At the end of January 2012, there were transcripts of SMS messages between Richard Sulík, the leader of the party and then Chairman of the National Council of the Slovak Republic and a businessman Marián Kočner published on the Internet. The latter name occurred in the past also in the so called mafia lists that leaked from the police systems. The content of the messages implied that both of them were meeting and discussing issues such as election of the Prosecutor General, whereby good relations between Mr. Kočner and Dobroslav Trnka, one of the candidates, the preceding Prosecutor General and the opposition candidate, were published in media.

Subsequently, also short edited video sequences appeared on the Internet from the house of Marián Kočner, where he hosted Richard Sulík, Chairman of SaS, as they discussed several topics of domestic politics, including a hypothetical possibility of replacing Iveta Radičová, then Prime Minister, by Ivan Mikloš, her party peer and the Minister of Finance (Gajdočíková, 2012).

There is no doubt that the above cases influenced results of Slovak

⁷ Anna Bubeníková was recalled by the Government after the case became published when three collation partners stood against the strongest SDKÚ-DS, which tried to protect its nominee in the FNM.

⁸ See also *Prvý obvinený v kauze Gorila je Pavol Rusko*. In *Hospodárske noviny* (online), 15 March 2012 Available at: <<http://hnonline.sk/slovensko/c1-55060190-prvy-obvineny-v-kauze-gorila-je-pavol-rusko>> (Accessed on: 15 March 2012)

parliamentary elections. It has been admitted by experts as well as independent observers and the politicians themselves. Two right-wing parties, SDKÚ-DS and SaS, that were the most frequently mentioned in connection to the above cases, experienced the largest drop in support. In 2012, SDKÚ-DS received 155,744 votes (6.09% of valid votes), which means a drop by 234,298 votes compared to the preceding election results. *Sloboda a solidarita* got 150,266 votes (5.88% of valid votes), i.e. by 157,021 votes less than in 2010. Thus, both parties made it to the parliament, but compared to the past their influence has strongly diminished. Paradoxically, the Gorila case did not affect Smer-SD, even though according to published documents also Robert Fico, Chairman of the Smer-SD party was allegedly meeting Jaroslav Haščák in the conspiracy apartment and Fico's personal secretary is even supposed to have received an illegal financial donation for running the party. In elections it got 1,134,280, i.e. 44.41 % of valid votes, which led to winning 83 out of 150 mandates in the National Council of the Slovak Republic and setup of a one-party government.⁹

The aforementioned three cases, besides being published on the web, spread in an uncontrollable way in that environment, share also several other features:

- a) Authors and the origin of the documents are unknown;
- b) It is assumed that, at least in two cases, the documents might originate in the intelligence services;
- c) It is not clear who published the documents;
- d) No investigation body, in neither of the cases, verified authenticity of the documents or all published facts.

Slovak experience with misusing secret services

Slovakia, just like many other post-communist countries, has harsh experience with secret services. During the former regime, the *Štátna bezpečnosť* (State Security, ŠtB) was not only a specific and self-willed executive body of the regime but also it itself affected political conditions in the country and in certain areas even predestined decisions of the political leadership. It had huge, uncontrolled and uncontrollable power (Pešek, 2001, p. 35).

⁹ Final results and election statistics of parliamentary elections are available at <http://app.statistics.sk/nrsr2012/menu/indexV.jsp?lang=sk> and http://app.statistics.sk/nrsr_2010/menu/indexV.jsp?lang=sk.

Fear of the almighty secret service helped to jeop the regime at the power. Dissident Milan Šimečka described the atmosphere in the eighties as follows: *“Where have we got with our humanism when we notice the fear of disease, we remain silent about the fear of failure in love, we subdue the fear of losing our relatives, we do not admit the fear that some friend stop trusting us, we start to worry about the fear of empty life only closely before the death but we cannot cope with the fear of the secret police and let it cripple the dignity of the national life”* (Šimečka, 2011, p. 243).

Influence of intelligence services, often self-willed actions on their part and influencing the political development did not stop even after the takeover in November 1989. There are several examples from the past 20 years. For example, in 1990, Vladimír Mečiar, the Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic, obviously had access to intelligence information including lists of ŠtB agents; he was not supposed to have that access. Moreover, several cases of influential people who were supposed to cooperate with the communist secret police were stolen (Leško, 1996, pp. 64-67).

In the 90s, the Slovak Information Service was several times misused in a rough and illegal manner in order to intervene with the political development in Slovakia. In the summer of 1995 it took part in an operation aimed at discrediting the Catholic Church (case known as the Triptych case) or kidnapping of the son of the President Michal Kováč to Austria. In April 1996, Robert Remiáš died after an explosion of a bomb in the car; he served as the connection for a former SIS officer who admitted participation of the secret service in kidnapping the President's son. SIS also participated in installing an explosive at the meeting of opposition KDH in March 1997 (Palko, 2004, pp. 49-51).

There were probably more cases for which no underlying documents were found whereby it can be explained by a massive shredding of documents at the end of the third Mečiar government, when the shredding committee decided to shred 1,094 documents, which represented more than 20,000 pages (Lesná, 2001, p. 326).

Even during the preceding Dzurinda governments there were several allegations and cases of misuse of the security units. In 2003 a scandal broke out concerning tapping of Pavol Rusko, then Minister of Economy. Two SIS agents were accuses; the court, however, acquitted them later. Mikuláš Dzurinda, then Prime Minister, announced in the summer 2003 that there was a “little group” operating in the country against interests of the government. He did

not mention any names but he also did not refute a list published by Robert Kaliňák, opposition Chairman of the Committee of the National Council of the Slovak Republic for Defence and Security, who also included there Ján Mojžiš, Chairman of the *Národný bezpečnostný úrad* (National Security Office). The Government recalled the latter and Mojžiš subsequently, in interviews, talked about the structure of connections between SIS officers and several influential business people as well as about efforts to scandalise police officers investigating such connections (Palko, 2004, p. 69).

Even despite many years of such experience, in the cases publicised before 2012 parliamentary elections voices talking about a possible misuse of secret services for political battle or even about engagement of representatives of security forces in power games were not often raised with such intensity. In the discourse the issue of strengthening the control of security services almost never appeared. Claims concerning authenticity of documents were often marginalized and put aside, outside the main stream of discussions. Iveta Radičová, the Prime Minister called the case files a “combination of truth, semi-truth and lies” (Luppová, 2012) and even several mass media doubted whether it was possible to trust them un block.

Introduction of web 2.0, above all of new media, brought about changes in information behaviour of inhabitants. Traditional media could not afford publishing unauthorised parts of the case file, not even the file as such, due to the pressure of strict legislation, regulatory bodies as well as due to experience with Slovak justice, which had punished failures concerning providing information about politicians with high sanctions. However, it is almost impossible to find the “guilty” one who published the information on foreign servers.

Thus, published information were not subject to verification of facts to which recipients of news had been used to until then; and the question is whether they became sufficiently aware of that fact. There is missing media education in Slovakia and experts have pointed out at the fact, for years, that due to insufficient education in the area and, in combination with continuously and dynamically changing media environment it is not possible to expect sufficient level of critical approach in thinking of recipients of media messages.

The critical approach in the above cases should have focused not only on the source of information and its motivation to publish it but, naturally, to its accuracy. Arguments of speakers at demonstrations caused by the Gorila case as well as responses of web users usually implied that few of them doubted

truthfulness of the case file and possible tampering of it or its parts was not even discussed in the main stream of discussions. On the other hand, an initiative to verify facts occurred, when web users were adding arguments and proofs supporting truthfulness of the published case file on Google docs. Anyway, no authority checked the relevancy of those arguments, methodology of the verification of facts; it was purely an activity with all characteristics of web 2.0 tools that place increased demand on recipients, especially concerning critical approach of thinking.

Even if all anonymously published facts were true, the missing discourse about sources, motivation of authors or spreaders, authenticity of documents and, with final effect, also moral and ethical questions concerning the situation point out at serious failure of the society. The mechanism when an anonymous source can provide discrediting documents in a stepwise manner and expects that, even if it is ignored by traditional media, the people will send it to each other as a peculiarity (Šifra, 2012), obviously worked. In this situation, actually, it is not possible to exclude that it will be used next time, in this or similar form, by any of the competing parties in the political battle to eliminate or cyberbully political opponents and maybe with fictitious or altered data.

Moreover, we are not talking about risks for democratic development of the country arising under the threat of misusing secret services or their wilful actions.

Web 2.0 provides a broad base for new possibilities of civic engagement and brings a new quality to civil life. It enables growing control of the public administration and power, improves communication between its representatives and citizens. The contribution of the Internet for processes of democratisation in developed and less developed countries is undoubted.

However, if the society fails to realize the need for a continuous education of inhabitants, increasing political media and online literacy as well as the developing the ability of critical thinking, such possibilities may not only be wasted but also constitute a burden for democratic development due to their easy possible misuse.

Therefore, it is important to put increasingly more stress to those educating activities in all age and social categories of inhabitants in order to improve cognitive as well as moral component of the personality of individuals in order to induce interest in public affairs and engagement in order to do the good for the society. Web 2.0 is an ideal space for performance of such activities.

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