



## Protecting privacy on local online portals

The era of strong media expansion brought with it an explosion of various media content and channels. First of all, today we live in the time of omnipresence of the Internet portal, which informs us more or less about everyday events.

Apart from the world, informative Internet portals are even more pronounced in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). With their appearance, professionalism, responsibility, credibility and transparency become important discussion features. Web portals in BiH are developing rapidly like “mushrooms after rain”<sup>1</sup> and do not generally contain basic information on the ownership structure, editors, journalists, financing, etc., which, among other things, represent the “weakest link” in the media space of BiH<sup>2</sup>. Because of the “wild character” of the creation and operation of these media, it is important to check the professionalism of their work.

Therefore, in this paper, we will try to analyze to what extent local web portals in their reports / texts / contents protect privacy of citizens who have against their will become actors of certain events. The topic of privacy protection, i.e. respect for others is a very significant topic, especially today in the period of general tabloidization and ruthless violation of journalistic standards in order to make profits. Apparently, it is just one of the most vulnerable areas in the time of profit-oriented media logic. In this regard, we will focus on whether in their texts Internet portals protect the right to privacy of those who are the main actors of various events.

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<sup>1</sup> Turčilo, L, Online portali u BiH: Vjerodostojnost na kušnji, available at:  
<http://www.media.ba/bs/mediametar/online-portali-u-bih-vjerodostojnost-na-kusnji>

<sup>2</sup> ibid

The fact is that privacy is one of the basic human rights. Like all human rights, the protection of privacy provokes the interest of the professional and general public. With this in mind, all important declarations emphasize the right to privacy to the forefront. For example, the right to privacy is covered by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. Article 12 of the Declaration states: "No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks."<sup>3</sup> Then, Article 8 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms states that: "Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence "<sup>4</sup>

The BiH Constitution incorporates these recommendations and Article II / 3f states that: "All persons on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina shall enjoy the human rights and freedoms referred to in paragraph 2 of this Article, which shall include: f) The right to private and family life, home and correspondence " <sup>5</sup>.

When it comes to privacy, it should be pointed out that this is a broad concept which, in the opinion of the European Court of Human Rights, "cannot be given a definitive definition". The general view is that the right to privacy means the right of the individual to be left alone or the right to have control over unwanted publicity in relation to personal matters<sup>6</sup>.

Given this widespread definition of privacy, it seems that the media are tied in some way when they are reporting on ordinary citizens. It is a great challenge to balance the interest of the public and the media for information about events involving ordinary citizens or the need of these citizens to protect their privacy.

However, there are some guidelines on how the media should protect the privacy of participants in media events. In BiH, the Press Council of BiH is in charge of controlling the

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<sup>3</sup> Universal Declaration of Human rights, available at:

[http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR\\_Translations/eng.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR_Translations/eng.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, available at:

[http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention\\_BOS.pdf](http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention_BOS.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, available at :

[http://www.ustavisud.ba/public/down/USTAV\\_BOSNE\\_I\\_HERCEGOVINE\\_bos.pdf](http://www.ustavisud.ba/public/down/USTAV_BOSNE_I_HERCEGOVINE_bos.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Alvin Dej, L. Etika u medijima, primeri i kontroverze, pp. 157.

work of print and online media. This self-regulatory body in the Press Code recognizes the protection of privacy in Article 9 which states that "Journalists will avoid interfering in one's private life, unless such interference is necessary in the interests of the public. Topics that include personal tragedies will be treated with care, and affected persons will come discreetly and with sympathy."<sup>7</sup> As we see Article 9 of the Code, it is well designed, since it invites journalists not only to professional work, but to a kind of empathy towards people which are the actors of events in which their privacy is compromised.

Our task will be to check to what extent local Internet portals<sup>8</sup> respect the Code, specifically the Article 9, and whether there are certain deviations in that regard. One of the reasons why we chose the analysis of the work of local Internet portals is that on the local Internet portals, the largest number of "employees"<sup>9</sup> are young journalists or students of journalism. We consider it very important to analyze how these young people perform a responsible journalistic job at the beginning of their careers. We are interested in whether and to what extent they use the knowledge they have acquired on their faculties or are left to the style of non-professionalism and sensationalism that seriously corrupt the profession. Ljiljana Zurovac explains that "true and professional reporting is always a priority and that for such a demanding call (young journalists) they must be well prepared both mentally and physically, as in the circumstances in which or the circumstances they report, they would not forget that it is true and professional posted information their task. If they are not sufficiently experienced and educated in their call, they are brought into the situation to be emotionally manipulated and make professional mistakes without being aware of it"<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>The Press Code of BiH, available at [https://www.vzs.ba/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=218&Itemid=9](https://www.vzs.ba/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=218&Itemid=9).

<sup>8</sup> One should be cautious in defining the term local internet portal, because the internet does not have local but global charter, and therefore local internet portals represent a kind of oxymoron. However, in this text local internet portals refer to those which mostly report on the happenings in the local community and in their name have a geographical indication of that local community (eg, trebevic.net, lukavicaonline, istocnosarajevo.net, etc.).

<sup>9</sup> A large number of journalists in BiH work illegally or part-time with irregular wages (Udovičić, R. Radni uslovi novinara u Bosni i Hercegovini, novinari u procjepu devastiranih medija i pravne nesigurnosti, available at: <http://www.mediaonline.ba/ba/pdf.asp?ID=3555&n=NOVINARI%20U%20PROCJEPU%20DEVASTIRANIH%20MEDIJA%20I%20PRAVNE%20NESIGURNOSTI>)

<sup>10</sup> Zurovac, Lj. Medijska (samo)regulativa za najbolji interes djeteta, pp:39.

## Methodology and description of the sample

Within our research, we analyzed the informative Internet portals that exist and work in the area of East Sarajevo. During the seven-day monitoring (17.12.- 24.12.), Seven informative Internet portals<sup>11</sup> were included, which at the time of writing this text existed in the area of East Sarajevo: "trebevic.net", "kateranews", "lukavicaonline", "istocnosarajevo.net" "Sarajevo-rs.com", "palelive", "principnews."

In this paper, we will examine the extent to which these media on the territory of Sarajevo Romania region, specifically in East Sarajevo, respect the privacy when reporting on topics from the local crime news. In that sense, the unit of analysis was each newspaper article in the. Namely, in this section, due to the specificity of the reported events, which most often refer to murder, suicide, accidents, theft, tragedy, etc., journalists often find themselves in front of the professional challenges of protecting the privacy of those who are the main participants. Simply, the practice has shown that reporting on these topics is the most frequent target of a sensationalist and unprofessional journalistic approach. Given that there is no clearly highlighted section of the local crime news on all Internet portals, the framework for text analysis was "problematic issues"<sup>12</sup> in which actors, due to the nature of the events in which they participated, became the subject of media and public interest. So, the issues are:

- Infectious diseases
- Sexual crimes
- Homosexuality
- Juvenile delinquency
- The use of children as a source of information
- Suicides, murders and beatings

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<sup>11</sup> It is interesting that there are seven internet portals in the city of East Sarajevo. According to the 2013 Population Census of BiH, 59,916 inhabitants live in this city (Census of B & H, 2013), which means that there is one web site per 8500 people average. It should be taken into account that a significant number of residents are older people who are not sufficiently computer literate and do not serve the Internet, as well as children who do not use informative counterparts to get information. On the other hand, there is a relatively large number of people living in diasporas who use these portals to get information about events in their home town. Anyway, we can ask the question of the justification and the reason for the existence of this conditionally stated large number of the portal that addresses the relatively small audience. This is certainly a question for analysis, but answering these questions goes beyond the ambitions of this paper

<sup>12</sup> see: Alvin Dej, L. Etika u medijima primeri i kontroverze.

- Accidents and personal tragedies
- Crime
- War crime

It is important to note that we paid special attention to texts related to events from East Sarajevo. In this way, we wanted to actually present a real picture of the "situation on the ground," given that a large number of agency news dealing with crime news from the region and the world could have influenced the conclusions on the number and quality of the reports in this area. Finally, we are interested in how local journalists behave when they are able to report sensitive topics. In order to obtain the highest quality insight into the professional work of journalists on the local web portals, we sort the texts according to their source:

- original news: news whose authors are journalists working on the Internet portal
- agency news: news taken from news agencies
- news taken from other media

In this way, we wanted to investigate whether and to what extent local journalists use copy-paste methods in their work.

We paid special attention to those articles in which the main actors are children and the way they are presented in media in the context of their privacy<sup>13</sup>. Zurovac explains that it is extremely difficult to report on the tragedies in which children are involved. "Journalists should be especially mentally, and not only with knowledge, prepared to report on these topics, in the context of heightened emotions. Journalists' empathy often leads to errors in objective reporting, giving priority to emotions instead of facts, thereby losing the focus of reporting."<sup>14</sup>. In other words, this topic is extremely sensitive and therefore, it is always necessary to approach the analysis of children's content with special care. It should be noted

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<sup>13</sup> Children's rights are covered by the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In Article 16.1. It is stated that: No child shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his private life, family, home or correspondence, or unlawful attacks on his honor and reputation. (Convention on the Rights of the Child, available at: [https://www.unicef.org/bih/ba/Convencija\\_o\\_pravima\\_djeteta.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/bih/ba/Convencija_o_pravima_djeteta.pdf) ).

<sup>14</sup> Zurovac, Lj., Medijska (samo)regulativa za najbolji interes djeteta, pp:38

that in 2016, the Press Council in BiH received "398 complaints, of which 80 were related to the violation of the rights of children and juveniles"<sup>15</sup> ..

Then, the analysis included photographs and titles that followed the published text. In this way, we wanted to gain a more comprehensive insight into the level of professional standards when it comes to reporting on sensitive events. Namely, the photographs that reveal too much and do not protect the right to privacy of the actors of events (for example, victims of certain attacks or accidents), and especially children (Article 11 of the Code<sup>16</sup>), were characterized as negative and unprofessional phenomena.

In this regard, we have categorized all the photos into the following categories: illustration of the text, sensationalistic photography, no photo and controversial photos.

The controversial photographs were defined as those that at the same time had the elements of illustration of the text, but also the violation of the privacy of the actors.

We defined sensationalist photographs as those that do not protect the right to privacy of persons who, against their will, have become actors of various events. In this way, we identify the photographs that reveal the identity of the victim or the suspected perpetrator of a criminal offense as sensationalist. Such photographs are not in the service of greater awareness, but attracting attention and achieving greater profit.

In the context of the title, we have identified the following categories: Information Title, Sensational Title, Hook Title, and Other Titles. We have defined the information titles as the ones that fully correspond to the text and serve as a text announcement. Sensational titles are those that reveal the names of people who have been hit by a tragedy or the titles in which the accused is judged in advance (Article 10 of the Code<sup>17</sup>). Those titles serve to

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<sup>15</sup> *ibid*, pp.38.

<sup>16</sup> Article 11 of the Press Code of BiH (Protection of Children and Minors): When treating children and minors, journalists have the obligation to be extremely careful, respecting ethical norms and the Convention on Children's Rights, starting with the child's interest. Journalists are obligated to protect the child's identity in procedures not involving the public. Journalists shall not interview or photograph children under the age of 18, regarding matters involving the child's family, in the absence of or without the consent of a parent or guardian. Journalists shall not identify children under the age of 18 when they are victims of crimes. Journalists must not, under any circumstances, identify children under the age of 18 who are involved in criminal cases as witnesses, victims or defendants. (Press Code of BiH: [http://english.vzs.ba/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=218&Itemid=9&lang=bs](http://english.vzs.ba/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=218&Itemid=9&lang=bs))

<sup>17</sup> Article 10 of the Press Code of BiH (Persons Charged With Criminal Offenses): Journalists shall not treat any individual as a criminal prior to a court sentence to that effect. Journalists have the duty not to prejudge the

attract the attention of the audience. We also described them as unprofessional journalistic behavior.

Hook titles are those that force the reader to read certain content as they point to an incredible event of an exclusive character (You must see this, You will not believe with your own eyes, etc.). What is usually hidden behind these hooks of the title (*clickbait*) is a cheap deception that brings profit to the Internet portals. Their form is very noticeable and recognizable.

Alvin Day points to certain guidelines that journalists should respect in order to protect the privacy of citizens who are participants in the events. These guidelines fully correspond to the aforementioned articles of the Press Code. The first guideline or principle is respect for others. "As autonomous individuals, we have the right to a certain level of dignity, which cannot be arbitrarily attacked for a slogan like the right of the people to know."<sup>18</sup> According to this author, the essence of the debate about privacy is the phenomenon of respect for others "and can be crucial in the quest for a delicate balance between the information value and the value of the individual's autonomy."<sup>19</sup> We can say that this guideline directly refers to Article 9 of the Code, which in the first place highlights a compassionate approach in reporting on topics in which actors experienced a personal tragedy. During the analysis, we were guided by the following issues in the context of the violation of this article.

1. Has the personal information been published in the text about an actor of the event that could have been omitted and that the public interest would not have been suffered?
2. Has a photo been published in the text to reveal the identity of the actor / victim of a tragic event?

The principle of minimizing damage is in accordance with this guideline., is. Namely, in certain situations, such as reporting on issues of public interest, it is impossible to avoid

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guilt of an accused person. Journalists have the duty to publish information about the dismissal of charges against, or the acquittal of, anyone whose filed charges or commenced trial they had reported about previously. (Press Code of BiH: [http://english.vzs.ba/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=218&Itemid=9&lang=bs](http://english.vzs.ba/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=218&Itemid=9&lang=bs))

<sup>18</sup> Alvin Dej, L. Etika u medijima, primeri i kontroverze, pp. 190

<sup>19</sup> *ibid*, pp.168

distortion of accessibility. In such cases it is necessary to "limit the reporting of those details which are essential for the information value of the event"<sup>20</sup>.

The next guideline is social utility. Namely, social utility indicates that the general usefulness of certain information should be clearly separated from sensationalism, ridicule, voyeurism as a justification for the violation of privacy.

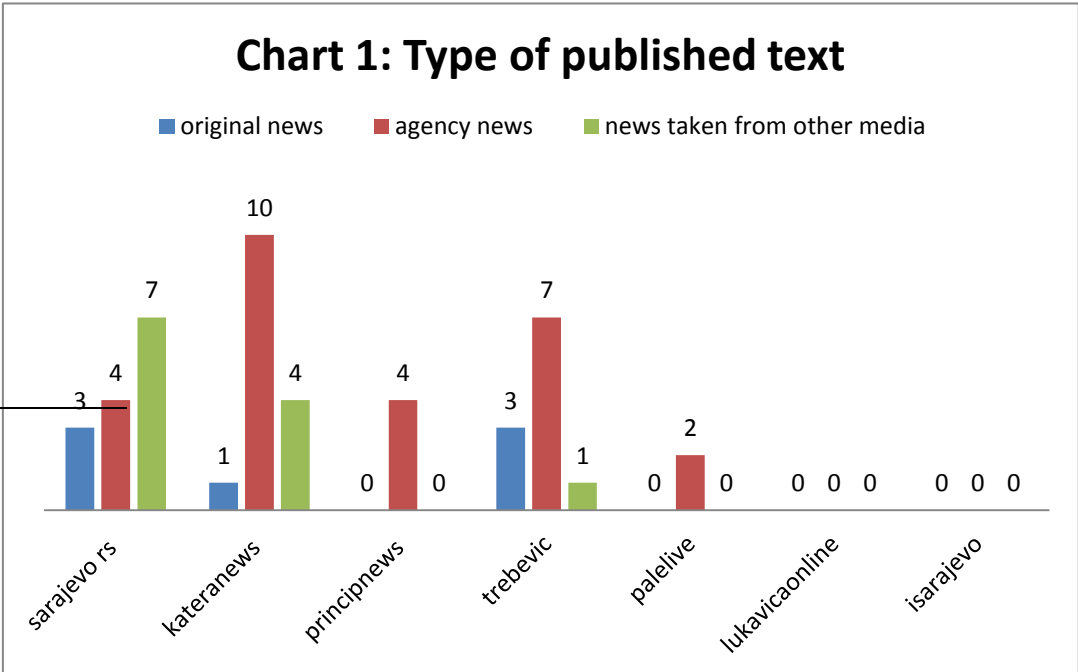
Then, the fourth principle is justice. Justice is defined as a kind of level of responsibility that the actors of a certain event have. For example, public officials accused of violating laws deserve less privacy from the victims of the tragedy<sup>21</sup>.

We will take these guidelines and use them as criteria for assessing the quality of texts on privacy issues (infectious diseases, sexual crimes, homosexuality, juvenile delinquency, use of children as sources of information, suicides, murders, accidents and personal tragedies, crime, war crime ). In other words, these principles will help us determine whether and to what extent is Article 9 of the Press Code of BiH violated.

**Results of research**

Within the monitoring, which lasted seven days, from December 17 – 24 , we recorded 46 texts related to or topics that we have previously identified as the framework for analysis: infectious diseases, sexual crimes, homosexuality, juvenile delinquency, the use of children as a source of information, suicides, killings and beatings, accidents and personal tragedies , crime, war crime. Most of the articles were published by Internet portal *Kateranews* (15), followed by *Sarajevo-rs* (14) and *Trebevic.net* with 11 texts in the third place.

*Palelive's* portal is more focused on positive news from the city and



<sup>20</sup> Ibid, pp.181  
<sup>21</sup> Ibid, pp. 180



ads that can be the reason for publishing only two texts on sensitive topics, while *Principnews* is the youngest among these web portals and is still at a certain stage of initial consolidation and organization, and therefore this site has significantly fewer texts (4). It should be noted that Internet portals *isarajevo.net* and *lukavicaonline* generally publish very little content, and the time span between published news can also be over a month. Since our monitoring lasted for seven days, we could not record any news that was published in this period and was related to dark chronicle topics. Therefore, we can say that these Internet portals only physically exist on the local media scene, but they do not do their job promptly and professionally.

*Kateranews* and *Sarajevo-rs* published on average two texts per day in a crime column. However, what is important for our analysis is that these Internet portals, although local in nature, published relatively few texts from East Sarajevo. *Trebević.net* published four texts, *Kateranews* three, and *Sarajevo-rs* and *Palelive* two.

It is very important to note that most of the published articles are agency news or news taken from other media (Chart 1). Out of the total of 46 published texts, 27 are agency news, 17 are taken from other media and only seven are original news.

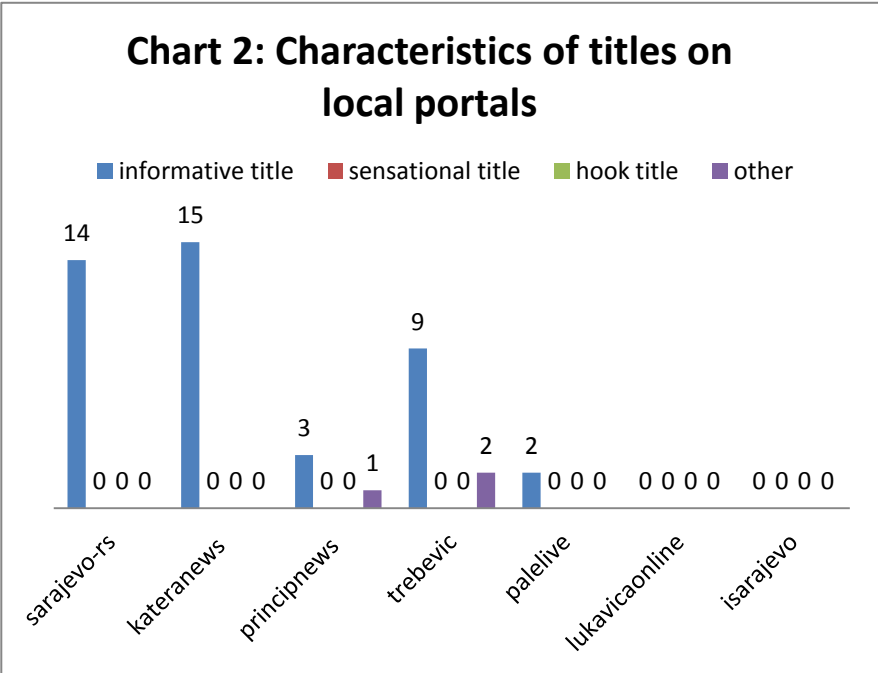
Given the large number of downloaded texts, we can say that work on local Internet portals is reduced to "copy-paste" journalism, which can be characterized as negative phenomenon. First of all, a large number of downloaded news can testify to the poor financial situation as well as the unfavorable working conditions on the local Internet portals. Namely, the local media outlets is most often unable to send journalists on the field, so they decide to deal with office journalism.

On the one hand, this is understandable, but on the other hand, this principle is negative, since (young) journalists who use these methods simply cannot develop the skill of writing the news that is necessary for their journalistic career.

The analysis of the title shows that the local Internet portals did not start with tabloidisation and sensationalism (Chart 2). We found only two titles that we have framed as controversial. Basically all titles are informative and in accordance with professional standards. The reason for this may again lie in the fact that the vast majority of texts taken from agencies, which are largely a reflection of professional standards, and therefore a space for sensationalism is significantly lower.

However, the two examples we have found relate to news of the arrest of six people who are suspected of war crimes. These two examples relate to the arrest of six people who are suspected of war crimes.

*Principnews* (19.12.2017.) published the news: "Čemerno: six people were arrested for the war crimes against Serbs" and *Trebevicnet*: "Six people were



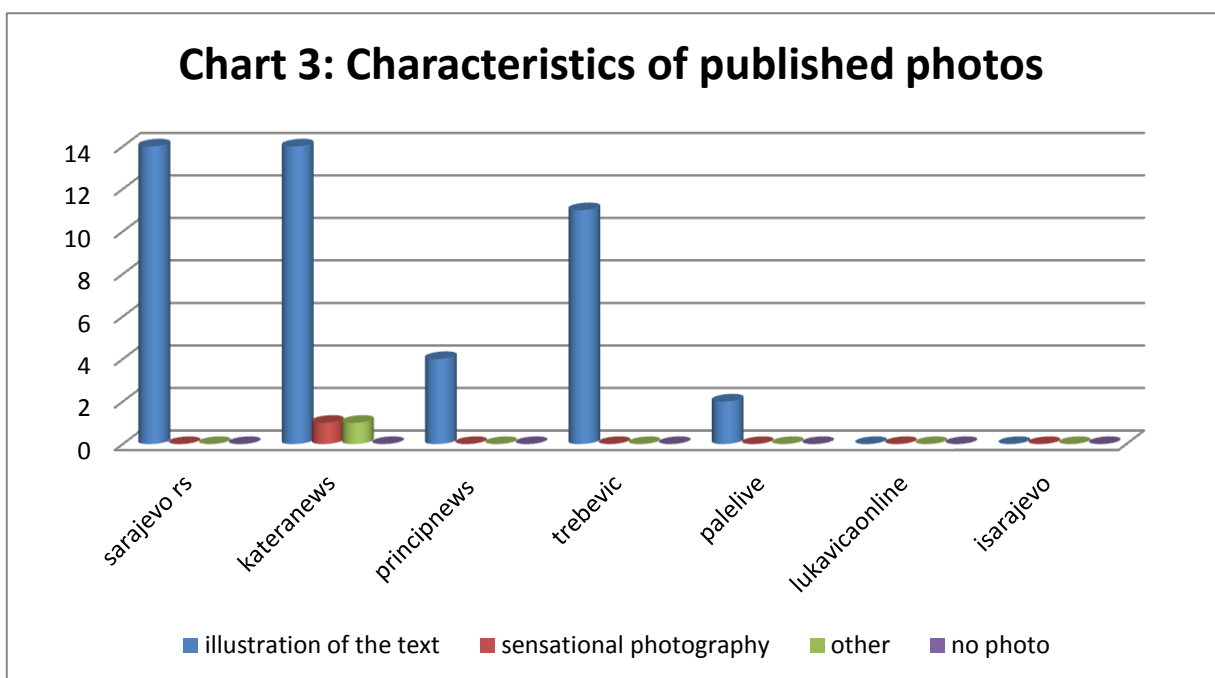
arrested for war crimes in the SIPA action". We appreciate that in this way, the presumption of innocence has been violated, since these Internet portals have already in their title overruled that these arrested people were guilty, that is, they created titles as if these people were already convicted of war crimes. In this way, privacy is in fact threatened, because this formulated title can confuse the reader and make it clear that these people have already been convicted. In addition, those arrested as well as their families may also have inconvenience, suggesting that the media actually have no interest in minimizing damage, but on the contrary. However, in the text itself, both Internet portals more than professionally broadcast information about the arrest, saying that they are suspected of crimes, which in some way these media have protected the main actors of the event.

A positive example is the reporting of the *Sarajevo-rs* portal, which published the following headline for the same story: " Suspects for war crimes that took place in Čemerno

near Ilijaš were arrested." This title is completely acceptable and professional, since it fully follows the text. In addition, the public interest is satisfied and at the same time the privacy of the suspects is protected.

It is commendable that we did not find any sensational title or the so-called hook titles on the local portals which is a real rarity in the era of general tabloidization of media reality.

The analysis showed that photographs constitute the standard part of the equipment of every text that is published on the Internet portals (Chart 3).



So all the analyzed news was equipped with photography. It is positive that the vast majority of photographs served as a supplement or illustration of the text. In that sense, we can say that the role of the photographs was informative. However, we again return to the previously mentioned conclusion that an extremely large number of texts are taken from other portals or news agencies, and that is why a large number of illustrative photographs, that is, photographs that are not the original product of the journalists from the field. Accordingly, we can say that the local Internet portals only to a certain extent professionally covered texts with photographs, since they illustrated the texts with simple symbolic

photographs which is easy thing to do. In any case, this is positive from the aspect of protecting the privacy of citizens and actors of events.

Only one photo had elements of sensationalism. Namely, *Kateranews* is 20.12. published a photo (Figure no. 1) that followed the text about a woman who attacked a three-year-old child in a playroom. In the photo, the face of this woman is rounded off with a yellow marker, which sets the media in the service of a kind of lynch and targeting, which is certainly not in line with the principle of privacy protection and has elements of sensationalism.

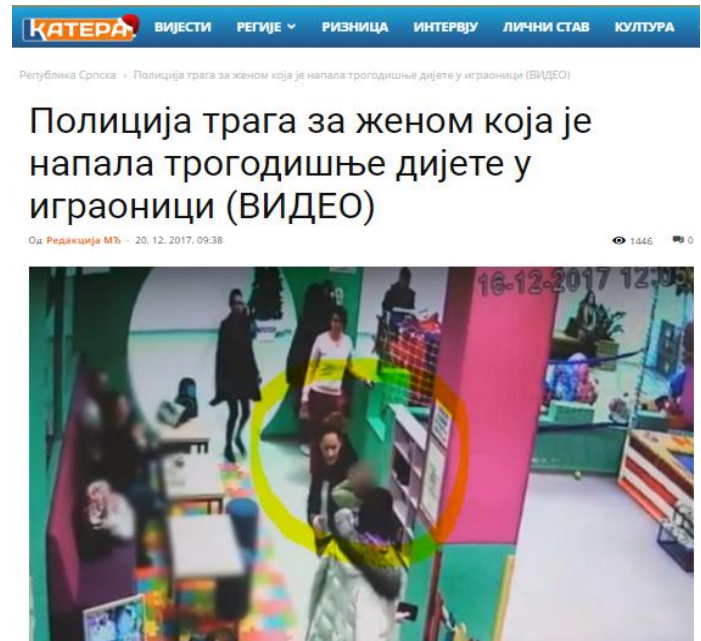


Figure1.: A controversial photo of a "violent" mother

The text is accompanied by a video material that confirms the allegations in the text, which in a way enhances the conviction of such misbehavior. We appreciate that such events are in the interest of the public, but that in any case it is necessary to be careful in reporting. We believe that the media needs to report on these events, and report it in the best interest of children, but in a less tendentious manner. In the text itself, a woman is called a "bully", and citizens are called to "report a violent woman to the police". In addition, video material that tracks the text is shaky for viewers at certain moments, and is not in the service of protecting a child who is the victim of an attack. Namely, in the video clip,

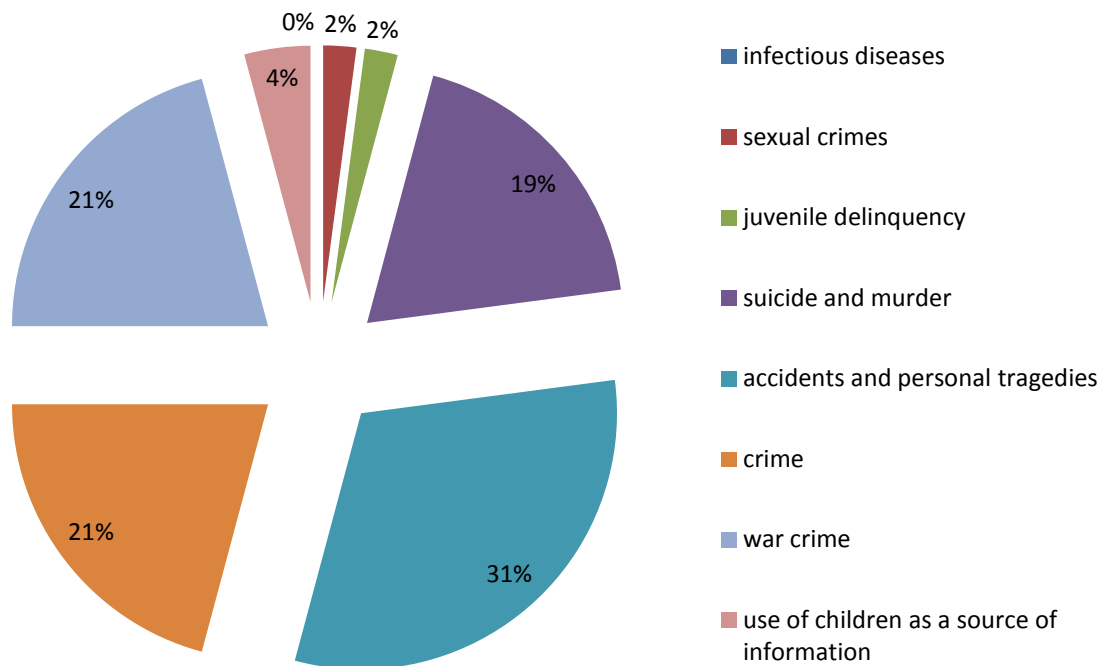
children's faces are protected, but the faces of the child's parents who were the victim of the attack are not protected, which in turn indirectly reveals the identity of the victim.

In the end, we must point out that this text was completely downloaded from the RTVBN portal, which is not the original product of the local portal *Kateranews*. However, this does not diminish the responsibility for such an approach to reporting. However, portal editors are gatekeepers who ultimately decide whether to publish something or not, and more importantly, how it will be published.

Finally, in this text, violations of almost all of the principles we have mentioned earlier can be identified. First of all, there is no respect for the other, because the identity of the victim is indirectly revealed. Then, although there is a certain social benefit, in this case, it is only of secondary importance, given that the journalistic approach is tendentious, sensationalist and calls for lynching. Finally, the media does not try to minimize the existing damage, but on the contrary. Neither the victim nor the perpetrator are fully protected, causing even greater damage than it is. The media are being put in charge of "witch hunt", thus jeopardizing journalistic profession standards. What is encouraging is that this is just an exception, and not a rule in the work of local Internet portals.

In the chart 4. the results of the distribution of various topics in which we analyzed the texts were presented. As can be seen, local media reported most often about accidents and personal tragedies. A third of the total number of articles is dedicated to this topic. Then, war crimes and crime (21%) followed suicide and murder (19%). In all two texts, the sources of information were children (4%). The smallest number of articles dealt with juvenile delinquencies and sexual crimes (2%) and infectious diseases (0%),

**Chart 4: The share of different topics in the total number of analyzed texts**



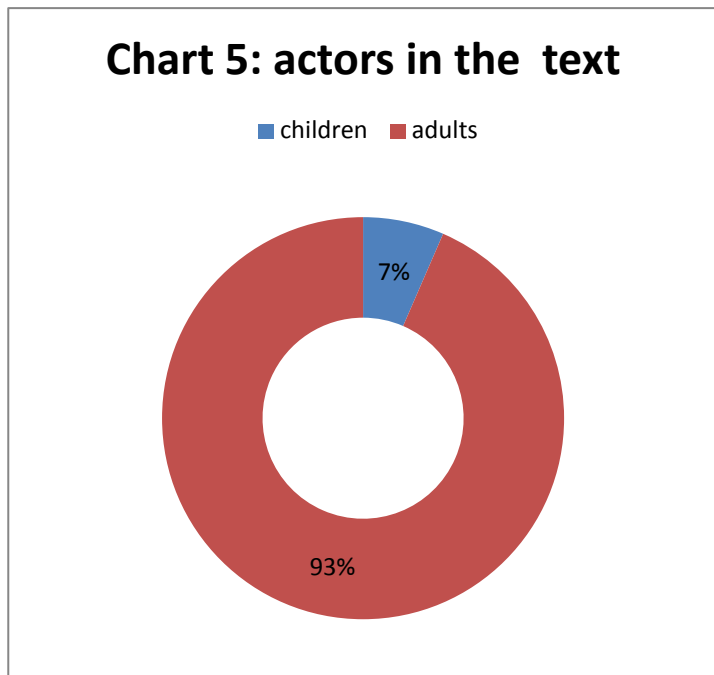
The results of the representation of texts in different topics are shown in Chart 4. As can be seen, local media reported most often about accidents and personal tragedies. A third of the total number of articles is dedicated to this topic. Then, war crimes and crime (21%) followed suicide and murder (19%). In all two texts, the sources of information were children (4%). The smallest number of articles dealt with juvenile delinquencies and sexual crimes (2%) and infectious diseases (0%).

## Reports of local Internet portals about children

As we pointed out, we devoted special attention to the texts in which the actors are children. Children were actors in three texts, while in all other texts (on all portals) actors were adults. In the context of juvenile delinquency, only one text was published. A professional approach is noted in this text. The identity of the minor is protected, while at the same time the interest of the public for

information is satisfied. Likewise, the *Kateranews* portal has published two texts that report childhood illnesses, with two reported boys representing a source of information. Both texts are a kind of appeal to help children with severe illness.

Media reporting on sick children and children with special needs is a very sensitive issue. While the focus is on the child's interest, media reporting about sick children often threatens to slip into stereotyping (child hero / poor and unstable child) and sensationalism. The media usually report on isolated examples of sick children, describing the problems that every child and their parents face each day. The problem is that most of all it ends with the emphasis on individual problems and, potentially, the call for help, and not



looking for answers that would lead to the adoption of system solutions that would help others.

In these stories, media usually play on a variant of pity and emotionality, which raises ratings / readiness and the

Figure 2. Reporting about sick child  
(Kateranews,24.12.2017.)

media presents in the light of the fighters for children. "A number of media outlets are launching humanitarian campaigns sometimes for their own promotion in order to present to citizens that they are more humane than institutions for which humanity should be a professional and work assignment"<sup>22</sup>Therefore, we appreciate that media support should go in the direction of influence on decision-makers with the goal of resolving these and similar problems systemically rather than ad hoc.

"Not one solution that meets one or a limited number of cases is not a solution and should not be considered so. All children have equal rights and in this case care should be taken exclusively in the way that the best interest of the child and their rights to the full extent are achieved. The responsibility of journalists is to offer possible solutions, which they learn in contact with competent institutions, services or civil society organizations."<sup>23</sup> In addition, when reporting on sick children in the context of an aid application, it is problematic that there is a danger that in the long run there will be more harm than benefit. "Let's say a child in ten years may wish that no one knows the state that he has overcome, that is, to be known only to a certain circle of people. It is very debatable whether publishing the name of a child goes beyond what is being accomplished, that is, whether it is useful, safe for the child, what if it comes from the problems that are problematic ... "<sup>24</sup>. On the other hand, both texts served as a kind of announcement for the donor's "Love With Brave Hearts", which was held on December 27 in Banja Luka, where funds for all children with rare diseases were collected. From this perspective, these and similar texts can be of positive character, given that they are conditionally aimed at systemic solutions. In this

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<sup>22</sup> Interview with Ivan Šijaković, cited according to Stevanović, I. (Ne)humane akcije za prikupljanje pomoći za djecu pp.125

<sup>23</sup> Bajić, Ž, Kotur, A. Djeca s poteškoćama u razvoju, pp.108

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Ana Kotur, cited according to Stevanović, I., (Ne)humane akcije za prikupljanje pomoći za djecu pp.127



regard, we can say that these specific examples are at the margin of positive reporting. At the same time, there is a certain turn in stereotyping and simplification when it comes to reporting on sick children, as well as a real public interest to help not only individuals, but the whole community of patients.

### Violation of privacy in published texts

Out of 46 texts, we encountered elements of violation of Article 9 (Privacy) of the Press Code of BiH in six of them (13%). The articles were published on the *Sarajevo-rs* (3), *Kateranews* (2) and *Trebevic.net* (1) portals. It is interesting that all texts in which there are elements of the violation of privacy were taken from other media. In other words, not a single text was a direct product of local portal interactions. For illustration purposes, we will describe the listed examples of violations of Article 9.

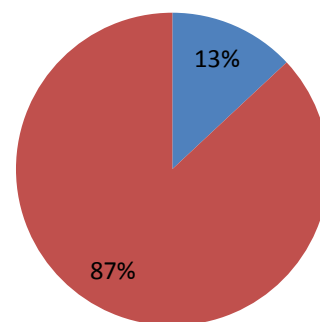
The first text in which we recorded a breach of privacy was published on December 18 on the portal *Sarajevo-rs*. In the article "Sarajevo: Water and sewer workers are attacked by axes"<sup>25</sup>, the full name and surname of the victim of the attack is stated, which completely violates Article 9. We believe that in

this text the journalists did not come out discreetly and sympathized with the victim of the attack. In this specific case, we can say that the privacy of the victim is more important than the public's interest, which is why we appreciate that citing full name and surname in the text was unprofessional. In other words, the victim's name does not in any way contribute to greater public awareness, and therefore it is necessary to protect the identity of this person. That is why we can say that the governing principle here is social utility.

<sup>25</sup> Article, "Sarajevo: Water and sewer workers are attacked by axes", available at: [https://www.sarajevo-rs.com/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=15385:sarajevo-radnike-vodovoda-i-kanalizacije-napali-sjekirama&Itemid=155](https://www.sarajevo-rs.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=15385:sarajevo-radnike-vodovoda-i-kanalizacije-napali-sjekirama&Itemid=155)

**Chart 6: share of texts where privacy is violated**

■ texts that have a privacy violation  
■ texts in which there is no privacy violation



In addition, journalists are unjust because they have not properly evaluated the



Figure 3: Text „New Attack on the Police of Srpska“  
(Sarajevo – rs, 21.12.2017.)

amount of privacy deserving the victim of the attack. Recalling Alvin Dee's guidelines, we can say that the principle of minimal damage was not fulfilled here, but on the contrary, the media produced additional damage by stating the

name and surname of the victim of the attack. Finally, the principle of respect for others is terminated, because everyone has the right to privacy when one becomes an actor of a certain event against one's will. In such cases, journalists must not compromise their privacy in any way "for the sake of a slogan like the right of the people to know."<sup>26</sup>

Another negative example in which we recorded a violation of privacy was published on *Sarajevo-rs* portal. Namely, in the article "New Attack on the Police of Srpska"<sup>27</sup>, journalists do not protect the privacy of the perpetrator. Journalists reveal their full name as well as the age of a man who was suspected of "threatening a 40-year-old citizen, and then hitting a policeman with a car, causing minor injuries to him" (Sarajevo-rs, December 21, 2017).

<sup>26</sup> Alvin Dej, L. Etika u medijima, primeri i kontroverze, pp.190

<sup>27</sup> Article, „New Attack on the Police of Srpska“, available at: [https://www.sarajevo-rs.com/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=15465:novi-napad-na-policiju-srpske&Itemid=123](https://www.sarajevo-rs.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=15465:novi-napad-na-policiju-srpske&Itemid=123)

Since it is only a matter of suspicion, we appreciate that journalists should protect the privacy of the suspect. Therefore, in the context of reporting on suspected perpetrators, it is sufficient that the media publish the initials, which would somewhat protect the privacy of the suspects, while at the same time satisfied the public interest. In other words, it is unnecessary to publish more details about the suspected perpetrator, because in this way



The screenshot shows a news article from the website sarajevo-rs.com. The article is titled "Šest osoba poginulo na bh. putevima ove sedmice" (Six people killed on BH roads this week) and is dated Friday, December 22, 2017, at 12:04. The article is published by the Redakcija (Editorial). The main image shows a severely damaged, overturned car on a snowy road. The article text provides details about the accidents, including the names and ages of the victims: Mirsad F. (19) from Bugojna, a driver of a BMW who died from injuries sustained in a rollover; a young man who died in a head-on collision with a truck; and three other people who were injured in a collision between a golf cart and a Renault. The article also mentions that the police are investigating the causes of the accidents.

Figure 4: Six people were killed in BH. roads this week (Sarajevo –rs. 22.12.2017.)

his privacy is jeopardized. And here we can notice that the principles of minimizing damage, justice, respect for others and social responsibility have been violated. Unlike the previous example, which protects the privacy of suspected perpetrators, it is evident here that the text protects the privacy of victims (a policeman and a fellow citizen), since their names and surnames and even initials were not given.

In the article "Six people were killed in BH. roads this week"<sup>28</sup>, which was published on 22 December on portal *Sarajevo-rs*, we have noticed the inconsistency in reporting on the victims of traffic accidents. Namely, in this text, which presents an overview of the accidents that occurred during the past week, only the initials of victims as well as the year of age appear in several places, which we consider positive and professional. The privacy of victims is protected, and at the same time public interest is satisfied. However, in some parts in the text, the name of the victim is indicated with the initial letter of the surname, as well as the

<sup>28</sup> Article, "Six people were killed in BH. roads this week", available at: [https://sarajevo-rs.com/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=15476:sest-osoba-poginulo-na-bh-putevima-ove-sedmice&Itemid=741](https://sarajevo-rs.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=15476:sest-osoba-poginulo-na-bh-putevima-ove-sedmice&Itemid=741)

full name of the victims. We believe that this inconsistency in reporting is not professional, and there are elements of violation of the privacy of victims of the tragedy.

Another example of the violation of privacy was recorded in the text "Golf landed in Vrbas, the driver pulled out a woman and children"<sup>29</sup> which was published on Trebevic.net portal on December 22. Namely, in the text, the name and surname of the driver is stated without any need, thus jeopardizing his privacy, as well as the privacy of his family. An accident in which there were no casualties and injuries was not pleasant and we thought that it was enough to list drivers' initials.

In the article "Murder and Suicide on Family celebration"<sup>30</sup> published by *Kateranews* portal (19 December), there are elements of sensationalism and privacy violations. Namely, in the text that reveals details of the murder in a sensational style, all the principles and guidelines that we mentioned in the text (respect for others, social responsibility, justice, minimization of damage) are suppressed. First of all, the full names and surnames of the perpetrator and the victim are given, which in the case of such tragedies is unnecessary and can damage the families of the victims. Therefore, we believe that the media violate the principle of respecting others and minimize damage.

Then, in a sensational tone, it is "revealed" that the suspected murderer sent a message to his sister from Australia in which he wrote "I killed my mother, and now I will kill myself". This information is fully in line with the profit-oriented media logic, which neglects the professional standard and pushes the interest for greater readiness in the first place. Such and similar "juicy" details of murder actually satisfy the "morbid curiosity and voyeurism"<sup>31</sup> of the audience while completely disregarding the interest of the victim and family. Therefore, we think it is unfair that the media in this way refer to perpetrators and victims, as well as their families. In the spirit of tabloid journalism, there are "unnamed sources" or "sources close to the media" that appear in the text. Basically such sources can serve as a false wall for false information. Such journalistic practice suggests the presence of

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<sup>29</sup> Article, „Golf landed in Vrbas, the driver pulled out a woman and children“, available at: <https://trebevic.net/republika-srpska/golf-sletio-u-vrbas-vozac-izvukao-zenu-i-djecu/>

<sup>30</sup> Article, „Murder and Suicide on Family celebration“, available at: <https://katera.news/ubistvo-i-samoubistvo-na-porodicnu-slavu/>

<sup>31</sup> Alvin Dej, L. Etika u medijima, primeri i kontroverze, pp. 190

sensationalism in reporting that is not socially responsible. In general, we can assess that there is a violation of Article 9 of the Press Code of BiH.

In the end, it is necessary to say that in only 13% of the total number of texts we found a violation of privacy. The vast majority of texts, even 87% were written professionally and responsibly, and the conclusion is that the local portal nevertheless consciously performs its work in the context of protecting the privacy of citizens who are unwilling actors of media events.

As a rule, the texts were written in a way to satisfy the public's interest in information, but at the same time protect the actors of events. One of the best practices of reporting in the context of privacy is the reporting of missing persons. Namely, we consider that the media have a very important role in disseminating information about missing persons that can help their finding. Thus, the moderate release of private information about missing persons and their photographs is positive and in the interest of the missing persons and their families. In this regard, during the monitoring, we recorded two texts that reported on missing persons.

### **Final considerations**

Taking into account all of this, we can still positively evaluate the work of local Internet portals in the context of protecting the privacy of citizens. The analysis covered the contents published in the section on crime column, since this area is the most challenging in terms of professional and responsible reporting.

Although this is a relatively small sample of only 46 texts, the conclusions can be indicative. The vast majority of published texts (41 texts / 86.9%) do not violate the Press Code of BiH in the part concerning privacy (Article 9). The analysis has shown that almost all of the headlines are of informative character, and that the photographs accompanying the text serve as an illustration and some kind of additions to the event. Juveniles were reported cautiously, and three stories of sick children were recorded for which, although they were debatable, they were positive and contributed, by the way, to systemic solutions in the treatment of all sick children. Similarly, war crimes as well as crime, murder, suicide, traffic

accidents and tragedies were generally reported in accordance with the standards of the journalistic profession.

Only a few cases (6 articles / 13.1%) were reported in violation of the Press Code of BiH. This can be presented as an exception rather than a rule in the work of local Internet portals.

All the articles in which we noted the violation of Article 9 (privacy), which were published on the portals, were taken from other media. This, however, only partially diminishes responsibility of the portal for their publication since editors and journalists on local Internet portals should correct the texts in which they encounter a Code violation before publishing downloaded content. Routine and office copy-paste journalism is not professional enough and it seems to be one of the biggest problems in the work of local Internet portals. Very few of the original texts and photographs are published by journalists who are employed in the editorial offices of local online media. Everything is mostly reduced to the distribution of processed press releases and the downloading of agency and news from other media, as well as the publication of illustrative photos with text.

The download of agency news and content from other portals to which the work of local Internet portals is being summarized can suggest three conclusions.

First, this practice can represent the illusion of professional and responsible journalism. Internet portals are most often published by content from agencies representing journalist profession standards. Taking news agency news from local Internet portals is in some way hiding behind the agency's professional approach, which can influence the creation of a distorted picture of the actual situation on the ground. Namely, given the very few original texts, we cannot know how (young) journalists would behave in a situation where they would have to report on sensitive topics.

Secondly, if the content "must" be downloaded, it is good to download from agency tickers rather than from other media, which are prone to sensationalism and the publication of less quality content aimed at increasing readiness. All six texts that violate privacy are downloaded from other media. On the other hand, the contents in which there are no Code violations and that were professionally written were taken from news agencies (with a few

original news). Namely, no agency text violates the privacy of the actors, which confirms the conclusion that the agencies professionally and responsibly do their job.

Thirdly, reducing journalism to training for downloading and publishing agency news may at the same time have a real negative and potentially positive impact. A real negative impact is reflected in the fact that young journalists, taking over from the news agency, do not really bother to write any news themselves. In other words, reducing the journalistic profession to routinely downloading and publishing (quality) news has a negative impact on the development of writing skills among young and inexperienced journalists. It should be noted that one of the reasons for this should be sought in the very unfavorable financial situation of the portal. Namely, very often (because they simply do not have enough staff) Internet portals are not able to send one or more journalists to different events. In that case, it is justified to ask why there is a relatively large number of local portals throughout BiH. This question could serve as a basis for some new research.

On the other hand, a potentially positive impact is reflected in the fact that professional norms and standards of news writing can begin to adopt (and subsequently apply) at a particular moment from the daily meeting with the news taken from the agencies. At the same time, such a practice is less harmful than a shift to sensationalism and bitterness that corrupt the journalistic profession. This (optimistic) scenario could be the starting point for a better development and a more promising future for the profession in general.

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