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Aspects of the History of Internet Regulation from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0*

Gergely Gosztonyi**

Abstract

The time of the Internet from 1990 to 2000 can hardly be compared with the digital world in which we live today. For a long time in media history, we were talking about a one-sided, straight line of information from the content creator to the content consumer with a corresponding legal framework that has existed for centuries. The former legislation of the press was no longer able to fill the new modern framework of the Internet. This gave rise to the early myth that the Internet is a lawless space in which almost Wild West rules dominate. The study outlines the appearance of social media, the transformation of Internet communication, and the arc from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0, highlighting the difficulties legislators and regulators may face with this new medium.

Keywords: regulation, internet, Web 1.0, Web 2.0, lawless space, broadcast model, intercast model

1. Introduction

The Internet between 1990 and 2000 can hardly be compared to the digital world we are living in now. That era was characterised - as it had been for centuries - by a unidirectional straight line of checked information passed on from the creator to the consumer of the content, mostly without the need for feedback. The legal regulation was in line with this practice, as previous laws concerning the media were not exactly appropriate for this framework, then regarded as modern. This is why in the early days a myth arose that the Internet is a space outside the law, a 'lawless space', where, metaphorically speaking, the rules of the Wild West apply. Present study outlines the formation of social media, the transformation of online communication, and the road from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0, highlighting the difficulties that legislating and regulating authorities might encounter when dealing with this new type of medium.

2. The appearance of Web 1.0 and Web 2.0

Although the data suggest that the spread of social media took place in the last decade, the evolution of the digital world

did not start with those platforms. The old, unidirectional, so-called Web 1.0 applications merely served as a means to represent traditional media in a new, digital environment.¹ "Web 1.0, the 'heroic age' - even looking back from the point of view of Web 2.0 - was basically about online presence, being seen via brochure-type, rarely updated websites for companies, portfolio-type websites for individuals, and various news sites; that is, a kind of online representation of the printed press, where the most obvious forms of feedback were through e-mail or the telephone."² As this quote shows, the Internet between 1990 and 2000 can hardly be compared to the digital world we are living in now. There were obvious technological limitations to displaying traditional media products in traditional ways, but an even more significant difference is that this era was characterised - as it had been in practice for centuries - by a unidirectional straight line of checked information passed on from the creator to the consumer of the content, mostly without the need for feedback.³ The key issue here was clearly that consumers were passive: their primary 'role' was to absorb the information.

However, technological development,⁴ the bursting of the first dotcom bubble in 2000,⁵ and the ensuing crisis of confi-

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** Gergely Gosztonyi, PhD, Department of the History of Hungarian State and Law, Faculty of Law, Eötvös Loránd university (ELTE), Budapest, Hungary, email: gosztonyi@ajk.elte.hu

¹ On the early history of the Internet see: NAUGHTON, J., The evolution of the Internet: from military experiment to General Purpose Technology. In: *Journal of Cyber Policy*, vol. 1, Nr. 1, 2016, p. 5-28. or CAMPBELL-KELLY, M. – GARCIA-SWARTZ, D. D., The History of the Internet: The Missing Narratives. In: *Journal of Information Technology*, vol. 28, Nr. 1, 2013, p. 18-33.

² HERENDY, Cs., A kereső, a dokumentumok és a user [Search engine, documents and the user]. In: *Médiakutató*, vol. 11, Nr. 1, 2010, p. 41-55.

³ See: FERENCZY, L. T., Sajtólevelezés régebben és ma [Press correspondence then and now]. In: *Korunk*, vol. 30, Nr. 10, 1971, p. 1610-1612.

⁴ "In 2012 twenty (!) average households – having broadband internet – generated more digital traffic than the whole of the Internet in 2008." HÁMORI, B., A Barnaby Rich-szindróma a XXI. században. A figyelem, mint szűkös jószág [The Barnaby Rich-syndrome in the 21st century. Attention in demand]. In: *Köz-gazdaság*, vol. 10, Nr. 3, 2015, 3, p. 133.

⁵ N/A: The dotcom bubble twenty years ago. In: *origo.hu*, 30 March 2019, <https://www.origo.hu/gazdasag/20190329-internet-nasdaq-reszveny-usabuborek-tozsde.html> (accessed 24 Aug 2021).

dence led internet companies in a new direction, where the roles of users have changed, and the focus shifted to common knowledge, common creation and common action. And although some of the pioneering companies had been founded a few years earlier (Google in 1998, Blogger in 1999, Wikipedia in 2001), the real breakthrough took some time.⁶ Myspace, Last.fm, Picasa and Facebook were set up in 2004, while Flickr, del.icio.us and YouTube in 2005, but for Web 2.0 to be widespread it needed a large mass of users who were able to really create a community. “Only with Web 2.0 does the number of content uploaders rise drastically, as the new, stable infrastructure and simplified user interface make every downloader a potential uploader as well.”⁷ Within a few years (by December 2007) 20% of the world’s population had access to the internet:

Date	Number of users	% of world population ⁸
December 1995	16 million	0.4 %
December 1996	36 million	0.9 %
December 1997	70 million	1.7 %
December 1998	147 million	3.6 %
December 1999	248 million	4.1 %
December 2000	361 million	5.8 %
August 2001	513 million	8.6 %
September 2002	587 million	9.4 %
December 2003	719 million	11.1 %
December 2004	817 million	12.7 %
December 2005	1,018 billion	15.7 %
December 2006	1,093 billion	16.7 %
December 2007	1,319 billion	20.0 %

Thus a growing number of users were able to join an infinite number of bidirectional⁹ communication processes, which were primarily based on the community, and advocated the priority of user-created content. Constant sharing,¹⁰ qualifying (e.g. comment, like, link) and classifying (e.g. tagging) of content enabled the creation of a communication space where active users could participate as economically and politically independent entities. The term ‘Web 2.0’ was coined in 2004 by Tim O’Reilly, but there is no obvious and unified definition to it.¹¹ O’Reilly, however, based on the ideas of Christopher Alexander,¹² lists a group of characteristics - which form the basis of every later attempt at defining Web 2.0. The most im-

portant characteristics of the new media, according to O’Reilly, are the following:

- „Small parts can make one big item, either through inner development or by adding up (The Long Tail)
- Data as the driving force (Data is the Next Intel Inside)
- ‘Architecture of participation’ (Users Add Value)
- Loose organisational structure (The Perpetual Beta)
- Based on cooperation, not control (Cooperate, Don’t Control)”¹³

Based on the above, a decade later Jonathan Obar and Steven Wildman summarised previous attempts at defining Web 2.0:

- „Social media services are Web 2.0 Internet-based applications,
- User-generated content is the lifeblood of social media,
- Individuals and groups create user-specific profiles for a site or app designed and maintained by a social media service,
- Social media services facilitate the development of social networks online by connecting a profile with those of other individuals and/or groups.”¹⁴

This means that social media sites constitute only a small segment of Web 2.0 applications, even if the huge number of users suggests that they are a much bigger segment. The Hungarian Wikipedia entry on Web 2.0 lists the following types of social media:¹⁵

- Social networking services (Facebook, LinkedIn, Orkut, MySpace,)
- Photo-sharing websites (Instagram, Flickr, Indafotó, Picasa, Photobucket, SmugMug, Zoomr,)
- Video-sharing platforms (YouTube, Google Videos, IndaVideó)
- Blogs, micro-blogs (Twitter, Jaiku.com, Plurk)
- Online office applications (Google Calendar, Google Docs & Spreadsheets, Zoho, ThinkFree Online)
- Auction sites (Marketplace, eBay, Vatera)
- Podcasts
- Wikipedia and other wikis
- Forums
- Online file storage facilities (Dropbox, Google Drive, Box.net)
- Online maps (Waze, Google Maps, Yahoo! Maps)
- Sites facilitating online trading (PayPal, Abaqoos)
- Music streaming services (Pandora.com, Last.fm)
- Public copyright licenses (Creative Commons, GPL)
- Link-sharing services (del.icio.us, Diigo, Linkzilla)
- News aggregators (Digg)

⁶ SLUMKOSKI, C., History on the Internet 2.0: The Rise of Social Media. In: *Acadiensis*, vol. 41, Nr. 2, 2012, p. 153-162.

⁷ CSORDÁS, A., A feltölthető világ – Web 2.0 [Uploadable world – Web 2.0]. In: *Magyar Narancs*, 17 November 2005, https://magyarnarancs.hu/tudomany/a_feltoltheto_vilag_-_web_20-64804/?pageId=64 (accessed 24 Aug 2021).

⁸ <https://www.internetworldstats.com/emarketing.htm> (accessed 24 Aug 2021).

⁹ And later through multidirectional (P2P) communication. MILEFF, P., P2P hálózatok [P2P networks]. University of Miskolc General Informatics Department. <https://users.iit.uni-miskolc.hu/~mileff/parh2/p2p.pdf> (accessed 24 Aug 2021).

¹⁰ As the proverb goes, ‘Sharing is caring’ – which became a basic principle for sharing.

¹¹ KARAMBIRI, Z., Les responsabilités liées aux contenus postés dans les blogs. In: *Revue du Droit des Technologies de l’Information*, Nr. 36, 2009, p. 30.

¹² ALEXANDER, C., *A Pattern Language. Towns, Buildings, Construction*. Oxford, 1977.

¹³ O’REILLY, T., What Is Web 2.0. Design Patterns and Business Models for the Next Generation of Software. 30 September 2005, <https://www.oreilly.com/pub/a/web2/archive/what-is-web-20.html> (accessed 24 Aug 2021).

¹⁴ OBAR, J. – WILDMAN, S., Social Media Definition and the Governance Challenge: An Introduction to the Special Issue. In: *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 2015, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/315455917_Social_Media_Definition_and_the_Governance_Challenge_An_Introduction_to_the_Special_Issue (accessed 24 Aug 2021).

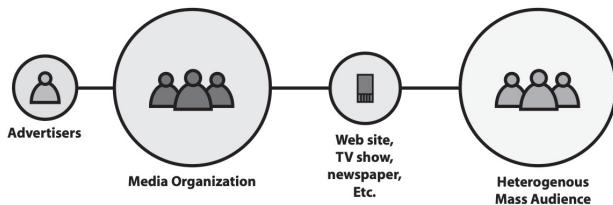
¹⁵ https://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_2.0 (accessed 24 Aug 2021).

- Newsfeeds (feedek, RSS)
- Personalised start pages facilitating remixing of news (iGoogle, Netvibes, Google Reader)
- Communities providing internet access (Fon, Meraki)
- Virtual realities (Second Life) and online games (MMORPG)
- Uniform authentication protocols (OpenID, TypeKey)
- Mashups and services facilitating their creation
- Version control systems facilitating open source softwares (CVS, SVN, Git, Mercurial, Bazaar)
- Pastebins
- Scientific programmes using the internet (SETI@Home, Galaxy Zoo) and meteorological communities (Metnet.hu, időkép.hu, Viharvadász.hu)¹⁶

The average user knows and uses only the most popular of these applications. The list, however, perfectly encapsulates the potential still hidden in Web 2.0. “The exponential growth in the number of creative users results in the democratisation of creation, consumption, communication and expressing opinion, as well as a radical change in our knowledge of the world.”¹⁷

Below are two illustrations by Shayne Bowman and Chris Willis from 2003, who differentiated between what they called *broadcast model* and *intercast model*. The former term is used for traditional media services (television, radio) and is characteristic of Web 1.0 in the 1990s, while the latter is a different, online type of media service, characteristic of today’s online communication, and Web 2.0.

Broadcast Model¹⁸

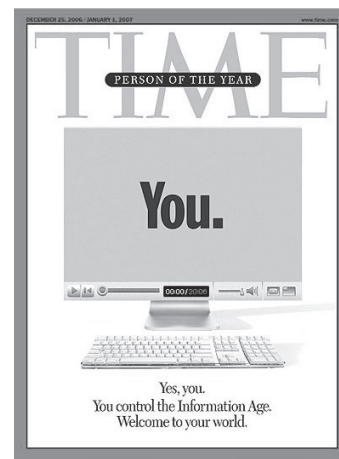


Intercast Model¹⁹



The basic difference between the two models is in their organisational structure. In the *broadcast model* communication is structured vertically, top-down, where, as we have seen, the consumer plays only a passive role, while in the *intercast model* the users form a self-structuring, active platform. This also means that the directions of communication have changed: the former, unidirectional communication has been replaced by bi- or multidirectional communication, that is, the possibility for real conversation.

Does this mean the advent of the brave new world? In the early and mid 2000s many people thought that online communication and Web 2.0 would bring about a democratic form of communication available to everyone, leading to a better understanding of the world, and the education of the masses, free of indoctrination. In 2006 Time Magazine chose as ‘Person of the year’ the millions of internet users participating in online content creation not only as readers but also as writers and editors. The term the magazine used was ‘You’.²⁰ The now iconic cover²¹ showed a Mac computer running a YouTube video.



As Lev Grossman wrote in his editorial: “(We) call it Web 2.0, as if it were a new version of some old software. But it’s really a revolution. It’s a tool for bringing together the small contributions of millions of people and making them matter.”²² Although the decision was not to everyone’s liking,²³ Time Magazine was undoubtedly right in realising that the media, its environment and ecosystem would significantly change in the following years. Grossman continues: “for seizing the reins of the global media, for founding and framing the new digital democracy, for (...) beating the pros at their own game, TIME’s Person of the Year for 2006 is you.”²⁴ Dan Gillmor called this ‘the new wave of journalism’, summarizing its essence:

¹⁶ The order of the examples mentioned in the Wikipedia entry was altered altered, starting with the most popular services - Author’s comment.

¹⁷ CSERPES, A., *Marketing és menedzsment a közművelődésben* [Marketing and management in community culture]. Zalaegerszeg, 2011, p. 194.

¹⁸ BOWMAN, S. – WILLIS, C., *We Media. How Audiences are Shaping the Future of News and Information*. The Media Center at The American Press Institute, 2003, https://www.hypergene.net/wemedia/download/we_media.pdf, p. 10. (accessed 24 Aug 2021).

¹⁹ BOWMAN – WILLIS 2003, p. 10.

²⁰ ‘You’ being both singular and plural, thus allowing for a wide range of interpretations.

²¹ <http://content.time.com/time/covers/0,16641,20061225,00.html> (accessed 24 Aug 2021).

²² GROSSMAN, L., You Yes, You Are TIME’s Person of the Year. In: *Time Magazin*, 25 December 2006, <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1570810,00.html> (accessed 24 Aug 2021).

²³ KEDROSKY, P., *I Call „Market Top” on „You”*. https://web.archive.org/web/20080207013442/http://paul.kedrosky.com/archives/2006/12/16/i_call_market_t.html (archived from the original by Internet Archive). (accessed 24 Aug 2021).

²⁴ GROSSMAN 2006.

- „My readers know more than I do.
- That is not a threat, but rather an opportunity.
- We can use this together to create something between a seminar and a conversation, educating all of us.
- Interactivity and communications technology — in the form of e-mail, weblogs, discussion boards, web sites and more — make it happen.”²⁵

It would be easy to say they were wrong, but it wouldn't be true. They were right in their basic principles: a brand new form of communication became available for the first time in the history of mankind. For the first time it was possible for the masses, not only the privileged elite minority, to communicate, to have a real conversation.²⁶ Looking back on the history of communication,²⁷ there had always been some kind of 'entry threshold' preventing the masses from participating in communication processes. We do not need to go back to the very beginnings of the media, only as far back as the pre-printing press codices: the issues of paper, ink and literacy were all obstacles to communication. Although Gutenberg seemed to have ended this situation with the invention of the movable type,²⁸ due to the lack of paper at the time, and the relative novelty and underdevelopment of the technology, the famous Gutenberg Bible was printed in only 180 copies.²⁹ Of course, the invention of the printing press greatly contributed to the spreading of information, but a significant change required quite a lot of time. The classic press and the appearance of monthly, weekly and daily newspapers enabled a wider, but still limited audience to get information.³⁰ In the 20th century the spread of radio,³¹ and later television,³² allowed even more people to join in the communication processes, though, as we have seen, merely as passive recipients. Therefore, while radios, televisions and newspapers were widespread, and there were more and more

ways to spread information, there was still no possibility for feedback - that is, real conversation.

3. Problems of Web 2.0, or the myth of 'lawless space' debunked

The possibility of real conversation in mass communication arose only with the advent of Web 2.0, so it is no wonder that it created an overly optimistic atmosphere. Another factor, perhaps foreshadowing future problems, was the myth that the Internet is a space outside the law, where those participating in any communication can have a freedom never before experienced, in a self-regulating way, without any state regulations. "Is the Internet a lawless space? Of course, Effectively, there are no laws, except in places like China. I'm a liberal, so I believe in the free flow of information (...)" said British politician Paddy Ashdown in 2008³³ when talking about a national report³⁴ which stated that the number of terrorism-related and violent online contents was on the rise.³⁵ The myth of the lawless space³⁶ could not be maintained for long: year by year, month by month, and even day by day it became apparent that this 'Brave new world', as Aldous Huxley put it, was not the fantastic utopia many people had hoped for.

Brand new difficulties arose not only for users but for legislators too:

- The scattered, atomized state of the Internet and online communities³⁷
- The questionable quality of communal knowledge sources³⁸
- The difficulty of obtaining reliable information (fake news, deepfake)³⁹
- Financial risks, which might lead to yet another dotcom bubble⁴⁰

²⁵ GILLMOR, D., Journalistic Pivot Points. 7 March 2002, quoted by: BOWMAN – WILLIS 2003, p. 13.

²⁶ SPEIER, H., International Political Communication: Elite vs. Mass. In: *World Politics*, vol. 4, Nr. 3, 1942, p. 305-317.; FOLEY DABBARACCIO, A., *Communication in History: The Key to Understanding*. <http://www.uwgb.edu/nationalhistoryday/files/pdf/2021%20Theme%20Narrative.pdf> (accessed 24 Aug 2021).

²⁷ BARBIER, F. – LAVENIR, C. B., *The history of the media. From Diderot to the internet*. Budapest, 2004.

²⁸ GILES, M. W., From Gutenberg to Gigabytes. Scholarly Communication in the Age of Cyberspace. In: *The Journal of Politics*, vol. 58, Nr. 3, 1996, p. 613.

²⁹ ANDREWS, E., 7 Things You May Not Know About the Gutenberg Bible. In: *History*, 23 February 2015 (updated 22 August 2018), <https://www.history.com/news/7-things-you-may-not-know-about-the-gutenberg-bible> (accessed 24 Aug 2021).

³⁰ KING, A. – EASLEY, A. – MORTON, J., *The Routledge Handbook to Nineteenth-Century British Periodicals and Newspapers*. Abingdon, 2019.

³¹ MACLENNAN, A. F., Celebrating a Hundred Years of Broadcasting – An Introduction and Timeline. In: *Journal of Radio & Audio Media*, vol. 27, Nr. 2, 2020, p. 191-207.

³² ELLIS, J., Television and History. In: *History Workshop Journal*, Nr. 56, 2003, p. 278-285.

³³ ESPINER, T., Internet is a 'lawless space', says expert. In: *ZDNet*, 28 November 2008, <https://www.zdnet.com/article/internet-is-a-lawless-space-says-expert/> (accessed 24 Aug 2021).

³⁴ Institute for Public Policy Research: Shared Destinies: *Security in a globalised world. The interim report of the ippr Commission on National Security in the 21st Century*. November 2008, https://www.ippr.org/files/images/media/files/publication/2011/05/Security%20Commission%20Interim%20Report_1666.pdf (accessed 24 Aug 2021).

³⁵ Institute for Public Policy Research 2008, p. 66.

³⁶ SUZOR, N. P., *Lawless: The Secret Rules That Govern our Digital Lives*. Cambridge, 2019, p. 1-2.

³⁷ BROOKS, D., *Can We Build Trust in Online Communities?* <https://weareweavers.org/weavers/can-we-build-trust-in-online-communities/> (accessed 24 Aug 2021).

³⁸ GRABNER-KRÄUTER, S. – BITTER, S., Trust in online social networks: A multifaceted perspective. In: *Forum for Social Economics*, vol. 44, Nr. 1, 2015, p. 48-68.

³⁹ VACCARI, C. – CHADWICK, A., Deepfakes and Disinformation: Exploring the Impact of Synthetic Political Video on Deception, Uncertainty, and Trust in News. In: *Social Media + Society*, January-March, 2020, p. 1-13.

⁴⁰ KILMANN, C., Are We Experiencing Another Dot-Com Bubble? In: *Bacon Bits*, 18 February 2021, <https://medium.com/bacon-bits/are-we-about-to-experience-another-dot-com-bubble-dc480fc75320> (accessed 24 Aug 2021).

- Information overload (that is, a tremendous amount of information versus the limited attention span of users)⁴¹
- The issue of 'spam' content, slowing down online traffic (data pollution, digital pollution)⁴²
- Anonymity, which used to be a main feature of the early days of the Internet, but which has become the foundation of abuse (online bullying, online ruthlessness, flame war, revenge porn)⁴³
- Censorship by companies and states
- Self-censorship

As world-renowned Polish philosopher and sociologist Zygmunt Bauman put it in a 2016 interview: "Social media does not teach us how to converse, as it is easy to avoid arguments... Most people use social media not to reach a common platform with others, not to widen their horizons, but quite the opposite, to create their own comfort zone where they only hear their own echo, and only see their own mirror image. Social media is indeed useful, and gives a lot of pleasure, but it is actually a trap."⁴⁴ Although many people hoped to eventually become a star, Andy Warhol's 15 minutes of fame⁴⁵ remained an unfulfilled dream for the majority.

4. Web 2.0 and the issues of regulation

As we have seen, a significant number of active, participating users have appeared alongside applications which were able to satisfy these users' needs to express their opinions (first and foremost: social media sites), but in the first years there was a kind of legal vacuum around the Internet. No wonder it was the privately owned companies that first set up the rules and conditions for users. For a few years this *status quo* was satisfactory for all parties. States washed their hands, pointing to tech companies in any given dispute; tech companies were able to maximize their profit without any outside control; and masses of users could be part of a media environment never before experienced, largely independent from the regulations of earlier, traditional media.

The new type of media has completely changed both our private and social lives, and nobody was prepared for the ex-

tent of this change. "Early commentators questioned how governments would respond to the spread of the Internet and whether an international approach to internet governance would develop."⁴⁶ Most people agreed with Steve Hanley, who said "Stymied legislative bodies find the Internet difficult to regulate, however, the present hands off approach is creating a mockery of well established law.' Each country connected to the Internet may opt to either ignore Internet regulation or implement a system that supports an international scope and uphold each nation's established jurisprudence."⁴⁷ However, the need for a unified regulation arose only after the number of problems grew. It is also of importance that the Internet was born in the United States, and was based on ensuring the freedom of speech and the users' privacy, and while in Europe these basic principles were more or less accepted, the Internet soon spread in other (legal) cultures where these values are not of paramount importance.⁴⁸

So legislators have multiple tasks at hand. Firstly, to formulate a legal framework around a mass communication device used by billions of people on all continents, operated and owned mostly by American companies with the aforementioned American attitude. And secondly, to handle legal questions which are viewed differently by countries of different legal cultures or even by different laws of countries having similar legal cultures. Not to mention the diversity in social and political structures in different countries. Also, the Internet has developed its own set of rules, which the users implicitly (i.e. with the act of using the Internet) accept.⁴⁹

This way regulating states can easily find themselves in a situation where the object of regulation can only be defined at "different, often overlapping levels: from local to supranational and global levels."⁵⁰ Thus "the vertical, centralized and state-based modes of traditional regulation have been complemented by collaborative horizontal arrangements, leading to 'a complex ecology of interdependent structures' with 'a vast array of formal and informal mechanisms working across a multiplicity of sites.'"⁵¹ All this might explain why many states were content to sweep the question under the carpet.

⁴¹ N/A: *Information Overload, Why it Matters and How to Combat It*. <https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/information-overload-why-it-matters-and-how-to-combat-it> (accessed 24 Aug 2021).

⁴² BEN-SHAHAR, O., Data Pollution. In: *Journal of Legal Analysis*, Nr. 11, 2019, p. 104-159.

⁴³ NAMASUDRA, S. – DEVI, D. – CHOUDHARY, S. – PATAN, R. – KALLAM, S., Security, Privacy, Trust, and Anonymity. In: NAMASUDRA, S. – CHRA DEKA, G. (eds.): *Advances of DNA Computing in Cryptography*. London, 2018.

⁴⁴ QUEROL, R. de: Zygmunt Bauman: "Las redes sociales son una trampa". In: *El País*, 9 January 2016, https://elpais.com/cultura/2015/12/30/babelia/1451504427_675885.html (accessed 24 Aug 2021).

⁴⁵ PIECHUCKA, A., *Fifteen Minutes of Fame, Fame in Fifteen Minutes: Andy Warhol and the Dawn of Modern-Day Celebrity Culture*. 2014, https://depot.ceon.pl/bitstream/handle/123456789/8734/08_pjas8.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y (accessed 24 Aug 2021).

⁴⁶ PASLAWSKY, A., The Growth of Social Media Norms and Government's Attempts at Regulation. In: *Fordham International Law Journal*, vol. 35, Nr. 5, 2017, p. 1487.

⁴⁷ HANLEY, S. M., International Internet Regulation: A Multinational Approach. In: *The John Marshall Journal of Information Technology & Privacy Law*, vol. 16, Nr. 4, 1998, p. 1023-1024.

⁴⁸ PASLAWSKY 2017, p. 1489.

⁴⁹ PASLAWSKY 2017, p. 1541.

⁵⁰ RABOY, M. – PADOVANI, C., Mapping Global Media Policy: Concepts, Frameworks, Methods. In: *Communication, Culture & Critique*, Special Issue: Media Governance: New Policies for Changing Media Landscape, vol. 3, Nr. 2, 2010, quoted by: HINTZ, A., Social media censorship, privatized regulation, and new restrictions to protest and dissent. In: DENCIAK, L. – LEISTERT, O. (eds.): *Critical Perspectives on Social Media and Protest: Between Control and Emancipation*. London, 2015, p. 111.

⁵¹ HINTZ 2015, p. 111.

There is disagreement on the exact moment in time when it was no longer an option. It surely happened some time in the early 2010s, when certain events were influenced by the formerly anonymous, voiceless masses now turned active participants. Prime examples are the WikiLeaks scandal of 2010,⁵² the Arab Spring of early 2011,⁵³ the 2011 London riots,⁵⁴ or the 'Occupy Wall Street' movement.⁵⁵ Social media also facilitated the display and publicity of terrorist attacks, such as the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York,⁵⁶ the Boston Marathon bombing,⁵⁷ the shooting at the Bataclan in Paris,⁵⁸ or the attack on the Christchurch mosque in New Zealand.⁵⁹ The Islamic State (IS) was also significantly influenced by the tools and possibilities of this new form of media.⁶⁰ Sadly, the same applies for natural disasters. Whether it was a hurricane named Harvey, Irma or Maria, a 7.0 earthquake in Haiti or a tsunami in the Solomon Islands, whatever happened was either broadcast live or was subsequently covered, in both cases being watched by millions of people worldwide. Later significant events were the US presidential election in 2016 and Brexit, the referendum which led to the United Kingdom

leaving the European Union. The genie was out of the bottle, and by the mid 2010 s governments and states could not turn a blind eye, could not allow for 'privatized regulation'⁶¹ (that is, outsourcing the state's demand for regulation) by social media companies to continue.

5. Conclusion

The altered media environment and the drastically lowered entry threshold have changed what we call the media. If we can participate in global communication using a mobile phone or a computer, then Marshall McLuhan's 'global village'⁶² has indeed become reality. But, as Péter Nádori put it, "the analogies with previous conditions are inadequate: comments, reblogs, tweets, Tumblr posts, search results are, from certain fixed viewpoints, analogous with reader's letters, manifestos on lampposts, solitary stump orator speeches, database enquiries or conversations among friends, but a shift in the perspective reveals the characteristics that burst open the forced framework."⁶³ Along with all the difficulties, sadly, that we have seen on the news.

⁵² CHRISTENSEN, C., WikiLeaks and the Afterlife of Collateral Murder. In: *International Journal of Communication*, Nr. 8, 2014, p. 2593-2602.

⁵³ CHARRAD, M. – ZARRUGH, A. – HA, H., The Arab Spring Protests. In: *Contexts*, Nr. 20, 2021, p. 58-61.

⁵⁴ BANAKAR, R. – LORT PHILLIPS, A., Law, community and the 2011 London riots. In: NOBLES, R. – SCHIFF, D. (eds.), *Law, Society and Community: Socio-Legal Essays in Honour of Roger Cotterrell*. London–New York, 2014, p. 169-185.

⁵⁵ MOORE, M., The purpose of Occupy Wall Street is to occupy Wall Street. In: *Nation*, Nr. 294, 2012, p. 12.

⁵⁶ SCHEPPELE, K. – VEDASCHI, A., Conclusion: The Afterlife of 9/11. In: SCHEPPELE, K. – VEDASCHI, A. (eds.): *9/11 and the Rise of Global Anti-Terrorism Law*. Cambridge, 2021, p. 242-250.

⁵⁷ WOJTYS, E., The Boston Marathon Tragedy. In: *Sports Health*, Nr. 5, 2013, p. 305.

⁵⁸ PACELLI, D. – IERACITANO, F. – RUMI, C., The dimensions of fear in the storytelling of European terrorism: The case of Bataclan. In: BAYGERT, N. – DURIN, E. – LE MOING-MAAS, É. – NICOLAS, L. (eds.): *La communication européenne, une scène de combats? Positionnements politiques et enjeux médiatiques*. Bruxelles, 2019.

⁵⁹ ANDERSON, C., The Facebook Frontier: Harnessing the Power of Facebook Live. In: *South Carolina Libraries*, vol. 5, Nr. 1, 2021.

⁶⁰ MARTIAN, I. – ADAM, F., Role of the Internet and Social Media in the Spread of ISIS in Indonesia. In: *Halaqua*, vol. 5, Nr. 1, 2021, p. 13-15.

⁶¹ HINTZ 2015, p. 109-126.

⁶² MCLUHAN, M., *The Gutenberg Galaxy. The Making of Typographic Man*. Toronto, 1962.

⁶³ NÁDORI, P., Megoldás a komment-dilemmára? [A solution to the dilemma of comments?] In: *In Medias Res*, vol. 3, Nr. 2, 2014, p. 306.