

USAGE OF SECURE-QUALIFIED SIGNATURE IN POLAND

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Abstract

The working paper consists of the research's results concerning the process of local communication in Poland. Due to the results the map of local communication in Poland is being prepared as well as the list of obstacles in that process. The process of communication between the local authorities and its surroundings cannot be classified as an effective one due to domination of the traditional (non interpersonal) forms of activities.

Key words: *e-government, e-administration, digital signature, secure-qualified digital signature, local communication*

Creating the map of local communication and identify the main obstacles in that process were the objects of the nationwide survey. The working paper consists of results of such survey made by the e-platform called ePUAP within the period of six months – from June to end of November 2011. ePUAP is an acronym for Polish name of electronic portal of public administration's services designed to provide public services on the Internet. It offers the remote access to the catalogue of the most popular services made by the public administration in Poland for the citizens. In order to use the ePUAP portal application for remote access to services, one is obliged to create a personal profile on ePUAP portal and then pay a visit in local office where the clerk according to the identity card shall confirm the identity. This type of digital signature is called: secure-qualified digital signature. There are three types of such service: digital signature (scanned handwritten signature), secure-qualified digital signature (confirmed by the public administration on the basis of the identity card) and certified secure-qualified digital signature (the holder has either its own token or cryptographic card such as USB device) [Directive 1999/93/EC]. Further user of the ePUAP portal is entitled to send its requests, using the passwords distributed via a registered e-mail address. "Electronic Platform of Public Administration Services (ePUAP) is a coherent and systematic action program designed and developed to allow public institutions make their electronic services available to the public. The website www.epuap.gov.pl enables defining citizen and businesses service processes, creates channels of access to different systems of public administration and extends the package of public services provided electronically between customer and administrations, business to administration and administration to administration." [<http://epuap.gov.pl>, on-line 18.03.2014].

1. THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The nationwide survey was made with the co-author Patrycja Szostok from the University of Silesia's Department of Journalism and Political Sciences. Scientists have decided to use the e-platform in order to distribute the survey's questionnaire to all town, cities and counties in Poland due to the low costs. Poland as an unitary republic is divided into 16 regions (voievodship in Polish language), 314 counties, 65 cities and 2499 towns – including the rural communities (data corresponding with the period of research) [Official Journal of the Republic of Poland/1990.16.95, herein after acronym OJoRP]. According to the internal law, towns, cities and counties shall be considered as local communities whereas the voievodship is entitled to be a regional community [OJoRP/ 1998.91.576]. On that reason, the regions were excluded from the survey because they are supposed to maintain the other type of public services such as: regional transportation, regional policy, regional development and urbanisation or regional labour market [OJoRP/ 1998.91.576]. The administrative division is not based on the hierarchic subordination but each of the 16 regions usually consists of several counties and every county consists of a few towns [OJoRP/1998.91.578]. Cities are entitled to be the hybrid, which aggregates features of town and county. The Polish local government system is based on the

principle of the subsidiarity. Each level of division has its own local authorities elected in general elections for four years term. Mayors of the towns and cities are elected in direct elections whereas the counties' and voievodships' councillors elect the executive branch of district and voievodship in indirect elections.

The direct elections entail the specific regime of communication with the local community and audience. Nowadays, due to the requirements of electoral system, local leader should be widely known among the inhabitants. Leader is no longer an anonymous person, except the situation in districts and voievodship. During the elections, voters do not know the candidates for the president of the county's executive board or region's executive board. That is why mayors try to maintain permanent communication with their publicities using local hall's issued media financed or subsided by the local budget. Within the research process, analysis of different types of local mass media was under the consideration of scientists such as: local radio and television channels including Internet radio and television stations. Also local newspapers, weekly, biweekly, quarterly or monthly magazines were analysed as well as official websites, local Internet portal or social and content media profiles. Besides those, the usage of any direct or indirect forms of marketing communication was examined such as: events, leaflets, direct meetings or any kind of cooperation with twin towns, cities or counties both domestic and foreign. The existence of Public Relations or promotion departments were put on analyse as well as their status and role in the local hall structure. The age and education of the PR or press officers also were under the consideration according to the answers to the questionnaires questions. Eventually, the issues of local mass communication and Public Relations were involved in the questionnaire. There are questions put into the questionnaire:

Part 1: Structure of mass communication
Is there any PR department in the local hall and who is the head of that department?
Is there a press officer in local hall? How old is he/she? What is the level of his/her education?
What are his/her duties: media relations, media clipping, organizing the promotion events, providing the promo leaflets or other?
What forms of mass communication have been being used in town/city/county? Local budget subsided or financed media/meetings with inhabitants/mayors' or councillors' meetings with the inhabitants/events/posters and leaflets/press releases and press conferences, mailing, social and content media/website/promo publications/billboards/cooperation with local religious leaders.
Are there any social studies in town/city/district? What are they about? When did the local hall organize such studies last studies?
What are the most popular events organised by the local halls?
What does the local hall do as far as the cooperation with twin towns/cities/counties is concerned?
Part 2: Local press
Is there any newspaper subsided or financed by the local budget? Who is the editor-in-chief? What is his/her education level?
How many journalists do work there? Who are they: clerks/local religious leaders/teachers/mayors/deputy mayors/councillors/president of executive board/president of town/city/county's councils?
Does newspaper publish the pieces of advertisement? How much percentage of the newspaper's surface is it?
What is the circulation of the newspaper?
Are there any other types of newspaper being published in town/city/county: weekly, biweekly, quarterly or monthly magazines?

Part 3: Internet
Is there a local hall's own website? How many times does it being updated within a week? Who does the update?
Does the local hall provide only the public information bulletin?
What is the level of interactivity of local hall's website? What types of them are there?
Is there a possibility to download the electronic documents?
Are there any audio/video files or paid announcements/pop-up ads?
Part 4. Local radio and television stations
What kind of local radio has been being broadcasted in town/city/county: commercial/public/religious?
Has it got its own frequency in the air/internet streaming or shared frequency?
What sort of radio programme does the local radio broadcast: own one/local musicians/programme about local culture/live broadcasts/interviews with the representatives of local authorities?
What many journalists work for the local radio station and who are they?
How does the local hall cooperate with the local radio stations? What kind of cooperation it is?
Is there any local television station? Is it cable/satellite/on-line/ or has its own frequency?
How does the local television station's programme offer look like? Is it regular local news bulletins/24/7 programme/half of the day programme/quarter of the day programme/depends on the request for the events?
How is the local television station financed: local budget/television ads/subsidies or donations?

Some notices shall be made as far as the content of questionnaire is concerned. It is worth focused that local radio or local television stations are concerned; locality is considered under the interpretation of programme content not a location because in this case any internet radio stations would not be taken into the consideration due to their hosting in different countries [more about locality Kowalczyk 2011]. What's more, the television channel is also considered as a local one in case of fission of television signal on specific local frequencies. It means that nationwide channel has its own, local branches whose broadcast within local frequencies. The occupation of journalists working in subsided or financed by local budget newspapers is very important because the teachers and employees of local institution usually are subordinated to the local authorities [Michalczyk 1996, p. 25-26]. From this point of view the issue of self-censorship is a question. Another important notice is concerned with public information bulletin. It is mandatory for the local authorities to operate a dedicated website: public information bulletin in order to fulfil the requirements of the law. Public information is an every piece of information that refers to public interest.

1.1 Problems with distribution

As far as the ePUAP portal is concerned, first step was to create own private profiles on that portal according to the procedure has presented above in this text. Then authors were obliged to set up the amount of desired locations in which the questionnaire should be sent. The database of the Polish Ministry of Administration and Digitalization was involved to establish that. Next step was connected with sending the survey's questionnaires whose were being distributed via e-mail and secure-qualified digital signature through 2878 town, city and district halls in entire state. 63% of the all questionnaires were distributed via ePUAP portal and the rest – 37% via e-mail address. The problem with ePUAP portal profile of many local towns, cities and districts hall has occurred. It did not work unfortunately so there has been the decision made to send the questionnaires via e-mail addresses in order to check the readiness and ability to receive the electronic documents and proceed with them by the local administration. During the process of distribution some technical failures have occurred. Many of

them were connected with lack of ability to connect the database server. Also the lack of ability to operate the e-platform by the local clerks in local halls was involved. Due to that reason 26% of research questionnaires were received by mail. 23% were delivered by the e-mail and 51% by the e-platform. The return status of all questionnaires is about 20% - exactly 19,85%. It means that only the one on five applications was taken into the consideration of the local administration. It is against the Polish internal law stipulated that every application should be considered within the 30 working days. What's more interesting, the filled questionnaires were delivered to the post addresses either of the survey's authors or their private home addresses. It means that some clerks who were unable to operate the e-platform have decided to search on their own the post address of the Department of Journalism and Political Sciences instead of sending the letters to the scientists' private home addresses directly available from their private profiles' content of ePUAP e-platform. There are a few reasons of such result. First of all, clerks usually cannot operate the e-platform due to the lack of training. Besides, they usually do not trust e-mails. Those ones could be treated as a spam and finally there is too much work for them in the local hall so they have not got enough time to handle many applications without delays. The delays were not taken into the consideration because only few applications have been sent within the term of 30 days required by the law. It is hardly to explain why clerks do not meet that requirement. Hardly, there is any effective system of control so it shall be treated as one of the possible explanation of such situation. Although, there are some systems of the electronic circulation of documents in the local administration but usually they are doubled and assured in the traditional way. So every received document is manually described into the dedicated book. The post address and name of the sender as well as the subject of the proposition are written in that book. Sometimes, the received document is also scanned and leads in the system of electronic circulation but usually there is not a way to verify the deadline. The notification comes from the electronic circulation system but it is not usually taken seriously until the inspection comes through this. Another keynote issue is connected with the so-called popularity of ePUAP. E-platform has 221476 users (according to 23.03.14) whereas there are 37.7 million citizens in Poland, while among them 30.5 million have a right to vote. According to that data, considering the rate of the access to the Internet which is available to 67% households in Poland, it means that 75,7% of Polish people have an access to the Internet [<http://www.diagnoza.com/index-en.html>, on-line 23.03.2014]. But among the total number of potential Internet users about 15% do not use that possibility because they do not need it (57%) and because of lack of devices and training [<http://www.diagnoza.com/index-en.html>, on-line 23.03.2014]. The return rate status is the first conclusion to comment on. As far as the amount of receiving of questionnaires is concerned, the smallest community – towns, have delivered the biggest part but the cities placed the main position as far as the percentage is concerned. This phenomenon is very simply one to explain. The smallest towns – including rural communities – stand as a biggest amount of territorial units in Poland whereas there are only 65 cities [66 nowadays according to data based on <http://www.mac.gov.pl>, on-line 23.03.2014]. Silesia, Pomerania, Opole and Małopolska regions (voievodships) have sent the biggest percentage of questionnaires among the 16 regions all together in Poland. Those regions were during the ages into different political and administrative systems such as: Kingdom of Prussia (formerly Germany) and Austro-Hungary Monarchy [Mikułowski Pomorski 2005, p. 133-135]. Both countries were known and famous for their professional administration. Due to such historical tradition the “administrative and organizational cultures” are very specific ones. The tradition stands that every application shall be taking into consideration and must be answered in limited period of time. What's more, the interpersonal service shall be done politely and without any prejudices. But the biggest amount of documents has been received from the smallest communities (town and rural ones) with 5000-20000 inhabitants. In this kind of towns not many clerks work in the local halls. They usually know each other and with the neighbours in whole locality. From this point of view, the direct communication is one of the most effective ways of communication in such location. Small town hall has to serve not many inhabitants so the clerks work relatively less than in bigger communities. That is why they are able to handle every document delivered to the local hall, including the e-document.

2. RESULTS

As far as the size of the territorial unit is concerned, it also has influence on the media relations in bigger and biggest territorial units. Those types of the territorial units, especially cities and district's main towns are usually the seat of the local newspapers, radio and television stations. There are more journalists than in small towns or rural communities who are interested in local events and politics. It requires a professional service for the press.

2.1 Professionalization of press and PR service

According to the survey's data, in small towns or rural communities there are any press or PR officers either few of them but usually media relations do not belong to the press office or department of promotion rather than to district's executive board cabinet or mayor's office. 54% of all local halls participating in the research have got neither a dedicated department of PR nor the promotion [Szostok & Rajczyk 2013, p. 37]. Cities' and districts' halls structure analysis shows the existence of the press offices and PR departments. It is easy to explain. Due to the large amount of journalists the professional press service is required in order to avoid the unsuitable image of the local authorities in local press. The process of professionalization the PR or press services has been being done on the city and district level. The head of such department or office usually has the university degree (32%) and journalistic background (20%) [Szostok & Rajczyk 2013, p. 44]. The gender equality is also worth considering. Men and women are press or PR officers respectively 47% (women) and 44% (men) – 9% no data to analyse [Szostok & Rajczyk 2013, p. 44].

2.2 Instruments of local public communication: local press and media relations

The press subsidized or financed by the local budget (either directly or indirectly – from the budget of local halls' subordinated institutions) is the most popular way to communicate with the local audience – 37% mainly in the urban towns (54,29%) and cities (59,26%). There is such local newspaper in every city between 200-500 thousand inhabitants according to the survey's data [Szostok & Rajczyk 2013, p. 45-47]. 67% of local halls organize the local events, mainly in cities and urban towns to gain publicity among the audience within local community. As far as media relations are concerned, 56% of local administration is involved in. The bigger territorial unit the more attention to media relations is noticed. Press releases, press conferences or study tours are the most popular forms of media relations [Szostok & Rajczyk 2013, p. 52-63]. 87% territorial units have not got any radio stations and 78% of them have not got any local television stations, including the video files about current events and regularly updated on the local hall's website [Szostok & Rajczyk 2013, p. 126-130]. Those results mean that local radio and local television are barely used as forms of communication, probably because of the high costs of functioning the radio or television channels. A habit of listening radio and watching television and consider them as sources of information is another reason that explains low popularity and non-existence neither local radio nor local television stations in almost three-fourths territorial units.

2.3 Instruments of local public communication: direct meetings

According to the survey's data direct meetings are being set up in 81% of towns, cities and districts attending the nationwide research. Direct meetings are connected mainly with urban towns and cities whereas in districts and rural town communities (villages) such meetings are not very popular. There are being organized only in 40% of districts because of the difficulties connected with the size of that type of territorial unit, which usually consists of a few rural towns. The latter ones are the smallest communities where most inhabitants know each other and communicate in this way especially through the unofficial channels of communication such as private meetings or every day in shops, schools or churches. The direct meetings are not as much popular as in urban towns or cities where such events are organized in precincts e.g. to integrate the precinct's community [Szostok & Rajczyk 2013, p. 51].

2.4 Instruments of local public communication: e-administration

42% of local halls use the e-administration mainly in urban towns (62,86%) and cities (81,48%). E-administration is defined as a possibility to maintain a contact with local administration through the chat box, chat, mail, communicator (e.g. Skype), social and content media profiles, website or e-

platform, which provides the remote access to the public services through the Internet. It must be stressed that only the ePUAP portal allows one to bargain the errand in the local hall's office. The other forms of mass communication are dedicated to maintain contact because from the internal law point of view, it is not allowed to call the local administration to do something without the handwritten signature or secure-qualified digital signature [Szostok & Rajczyk 2013, p. 52-63]. The social and content media are not very popular according to the results of nationwide research. 82% of local halls do not use them at all. Probably the habits play a keynote role in such process of communication. The clerks could consider those types of media as a form of entertainment not as a way of effective communication. What's more interesting, it is hard to identify the user or sender the request via a social media. Social and content media only as a way of promotion are used in in mostly cases in cities and towns with inhabitants between 200-500 thousand. They are very big territorial units so it very easy to reach with the pieces of information to the audience by the social and content media. The website is the most popular form among other kinds of communication delivered by the e-administration. 96% of local halls have its own websites but many of them are not designed to the interaction with users [Szostok & Rajczyk 2013, p. 63]. So they shall be considered rather as a way of promotion or to inform the users than a channel of communication. What's interesting, some local halls have their own e-mail addresses hosted on the open source free mailing servers. The content of website is being updated no more than a few times a day (37%) or less (34% one time on a day) [Szostok & Rajczyk 2013, p. 119]. The using the websites is an exception but those websites are designed rather for the sharing the pieces of information than to build an interactive process of local public communication. It is worth to underline that the content of districts' websites consists of promotional message because of the specific public functions realized by such kind of the territorial unit and their size.

As far as the ePUAP platform is concerned, it requires a few important amendments in order to make that portal more accessible: easier navigation, logical searching engine and universal catalogue of public services available via Internet. Permanent training program must be implemented among the local and public administration in order to enhance the clerks' knowledge. According to the nationwide survey's data, it is hard to distinguish between PR and propaganda activities especially in the context of domination propaganda leaflets bulletins or newspapers subsidized or financed by the local halls' budget and the regress of local radio and television stations' activity and amount [Kosiorowski 2010, p. 95-111]. The model of the use of media causes that regress. Instead of paying for newspapers or magazines people usually choose the Internet as a source of information due to its on-line updating and being free of charge. According to the nationwide survey's data, the cities are the most effective territorial units in the process of communication, including the usage of the ePUAP platform. Those units cover almost every way and mean of communication and started to provide the media relations on the professional level due to hiring the former journalists or PR officers in cities' halls. A lot of people live there, main and biggest enterprises are located there as well as universities or high schools. In the smallest towns or districts media relations are usually added to the other duties of selected clerks. Geographically, the most efficient territorial units are located in the west and south parts of Poland whereas less effective in process of communication are located in the centre of the country and in the east. The more frequent relations with the neighbouring countries are the explanation. The process of communication between the local authorities and its surroundings cannot be classified as an effective one due to domination of the traditional (non interpersonal) forms of activities.

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