

**PROBLEMS WITH THE APPLICATION OF THE INTERNET TO RESEARCH
JOURNALISM AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH**

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Abstract

Just as the Internet has made a difference to all mankind, it has also given immeasurable advantages to research journalism as well as to scientific research, which becomes faster, more accessible and most of all - cheaper, offering in some cases the prompt possibility for checking. The objective of this work is to point out its advantages as well as disadvantages of the use of the Internet in research journalism and scientific research. I decided on a combined method, including theoretical and scientific research and empirical research as well, thereby using the very object of the research, i.e. the Internet. Since the Internet is by definition a social network, I decided to modify and apply the technique of Respondent-Driven Sampling (RDS).

Key words: *research journalism, scientific research, Internet, information and communications technologies,*

1. INTRODUCTION

Information and communications technologies bring about changes in social relationships, economy, industry... Media and information transfer are becoming more significant than ever before because, in the changed value system, information is becoming a leading category. In the process, the media themselves are changed in the same way as they cause a change in society. Digital television, smartphones, electronic editions of newspapers, e-books, tablets... those are all technologically enhanced information carriers which are becoming the imperative in everyday communication and which perhaps most clearly show dramatic changes caused by ICT, to which each member of modern society is compelled to adapt.

Just as the Internet has caused a change in the whole society, so too has it offered immeasurable advantages to research journalism as well as to scientific research that becomes faster, more accessible and most of all - cheaper, offering in some cases the prompt possibility for verification.

The objective of this work is to point out the advantages and disadvantages of the Internet as a source of data, examining problems faced by journalists and scientists who use the Internet as one of the sources in their research. I have chosen those two groups since research journalists and scientists need current, but accurate and reliable sources of different kinds of information, thereby facing almost identical problems. The Internet imposed itself on them as the fastest and most extensive source, but this medium has its disadvantages. Using two parallel methods which came up as the most logical choice, I decided to do research into what those disadvantages are, to what extent they make research difficult, how aware the mentioned users are of those problems and how difficult these disadvantages make their work. The first part, that is the first method, which started as preliminary research and developed into theoretical and scientific research due to the comprehensiveness and amount of multidisciplinary material seemed insufficient and not purposeful enough, so I decided on a combined method, including empirical research as well, thereby using the very object of the research, i.e. the Internet.

I wanted to get first-hand information and use the experience of journalists and scientists, but also illustrate with a concrete example one of the possibilities of the application of the Internet to scientific research in which the Internet can be either a means or the object of research. We can use it by exploring various topics from different fields, but we can also explore the Internet itself. 'From a scientific point of view, the Internet is dual in character. On the one hand, it is a source of useful information necessary in scientific research and on the other, it is the object of scientific research work.' (according to Panian, 2001: 288) Since the Internet is by definition a social network, I decided to modify the technique of *respondent-driven sampling* (RDS) that is part of the family of *peer recruitment* methods based on social networks and to apply it in order to obtain concrete information 'in the field'. Such a combined approach gave me the most artificial picture of the noticed disadvantages of Internet use in research journalism and scientific research, but of its concrete advantages as well.

2. COMPREHENSIVENESS OF MATERIAL - ADVANTAGE OR DISADVANTAGE

A large amount of available data is an advantage encountered by all Internet users, but it also proves to be a disadvantage due to disorganisation and information overload, which causes slow processing speed of data that have otherwise been quickly accessed. Interestingly, the same problem emerged during the research into a really large quantity of Internet literature from different areas and with different attitudes. This literature fragmentarily deals with the researched problems without systemising them, which is what justifies this work. The speed of data change and topicality are virtues which keep emerging when dealing with the Internet. The speed itself and changeability cause difficulties in scientific research as well as in research journalism. Speaking of scientific/journalistic research, the term 'speed' doesn't refer to the possibility of fast data processing as much as to the speed of access to loads of information and facts which a scientist/journalist can (must) deal with. The very definition of fact implies its verifiability. A scientific fact in particular, or what is referred to as scientific fact, must be evident and verifiable, almost palpable. The Internet is often called 'a tank of knowledge', which is completely wrong since it definitely is overloaded with information, but it is still not knowledge. 'Information (data + news) is by no means a synonym for knowledge (or cognition) that can be integrated by only one person/.../ Informing in terms of today's media does not mean spiritual formation, but rather possible spiritual deformation. Information is not knowledge' (according to De Rougemont, 2005: 244.) This duality manifests itself especially on the Internet where in a wealth of information lie half-truths, lies, simulations and commercials.

'Since information has become merchandise, it does not care for the truth. It is important to sell.' (according to Kapuscinski, 2005: 377.) In their research, scientists and journalists cannot therefore rely exclusively on data from the Internet. 'Searching the Internet is not always simple, fast and efficient. The Internet offers a huge amount of information, however a lack of centralisation means that the Internet contains no simple catalogue, no centralised index for every information offered on the Internet.' (according to Ivić, 2000: 198.) 'The world's cobweb (in other words the Web) is a group of data bases which ignore the formal logic and conventional library classifications. Information offered by it lacks control over data paths which are imposed by the logic of the classification convention. In such a data base, a more general term still contains a more concrete one, but now it is also the other way around.' (according to Nguyen, Alexander, 2001: 167.) 'Doing scientific research means dealing with knowledge and since knowledge is nothing but a structured amount of information, it is quite understandable why there is no serious, scientific, fundamental and applied research work without the intensive use of such a rich 'tank' such as the Internet.' (according Panian, 2001: 287.) Many will agree with dr. Željko Panian, but nowadays, especially in sociological articles by foreign authors, the terms 'information' and 'knowledge' cease to be interchangeable because an avalanche of information does not necessarily mean knowledge, especially not on the Internet. On the contrary, knowledge is necessary so that one can

manage in a wealth of information taken out of context. 'Under the modern conditions of scientific research work, computing networks such as the Internet and CARNet are becoming the imperative/.../ Using the services of those networks, a scientist can communicate relatively fast and simply, find necessary data and information, performing the function of generating and sharing world knowledge. In order to manage in a wealth of information, we use the so-called web information service. With the help of those services, different kinds of information can be found on the Internet. In fact, network services help researchers in finding and gathering programme packages. In that way, the communication of people from chosen areas, participating in various discussions and reading news from different areas of life are enabled. Thus, information users can publish information on the Net themselves, which in turn other researches can benefit from. Information from all areas of human activity can be found on the Net today.' (according to Lamza Maronić, 2000: 219. and 222.) The Internet is really polythematic and there is no human activity that doesn't have a picture on it, and various scientists can simply exchange knowledge from different areas and make correlations which were not impossible, but most certainly unexpected until now whereas they, in the shared discursive Internet space, refigure the fragmentary state into syncreticity and syntheticity of a unique scientific approach. Using the Internet in science, journalism, and everyday life turns out to be a necessity, as long as there's a need for facing challenges of time. 'Learning from the web-based contents with the highly valuable help from multimedia includes not only a huge scientific activity, but also a cultural one in which we will all have to engage sooner or later. Knowledge transfer through modern communications media influences the change of demands of students, pupils, and professors.' (according to Ivić, 2000: 198.) Those who have a different opinion about the Internet keep quiet, considering it worthless, and from their anachronistic perspective they punish it by ignoring it. Every now and then, somebody expresses their view that reminds of the science fiction genre in which people become robots. 'A virtual machine is actually the one that talks to you, the one that thinks for you. Is there a possibility of some real revelation in the virtual space anyway? The Internet only simulates the mental space of freedom and revelation. It actually offers a multiplied, but conventional space in which an operator deals with known elements, created sites and established codes. There is nothing beyond those parameters of research. The question itself is addressed to the anticipated answer. You are both the one who asks questions and the one who answers them behind the machine. A coder and decoder at the same time - you are actually your own terminal.' (according to Baudrillard, 2006: 73-74.) If we agreed with Baudrillard, we could immediately give up the Internet research because he believes that we won't find out anything new, and that we'll only go round in circles. Even though all the sites we will be studying already exist and have been set up before, isn't that the case with books which, of course, have already been written so that we discover the joy of reading over and over again? What kind of freedom of thought would it be if we all had the same views? Wouldn't exactly that be the reason for doubting it?

Other critics approach the problem of the Internet seemingly more carefully, however with a dark vision of the future of a wounded computerised society. Will people who have been for a decade or two used to information nets, which dictate their behaviour, be able to manage if the nets come to a standstill? Just as they cannot calculate without a calculator, so neither will they remember anything without a calculator. They will be helpless in any unexpected situation.' (according to De Rougemont, 2005: 252.) Some experts, on the contrary, find the Internet indestructible because 'the intelligence community has turned it into a secure net for data transfer capable of surviving a nuclear war that would destroy 95% of communications systems and secondly, it has rendered all existing communications systems obsolete, superfluous and/or ready for colonisation.' (according to Fawcett, 2005: 169.) Pictures of overall success that is aided by the Internet are more frequent than cataclysmic ones. In such a bipolar division of standpoints lies the most frequent error associated with the interpretation of the Internet which, either in a positive or negative sense, is given great importance, whereby people often forget that it is just a medium. 'Technology is in itself neutral, a tool at the service of man, of the whole man, of what's good and bad in him. But in essence, that bad part of man stands a chance of benefiting from this neutrality a

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bit more than the good one. Because the function of technology is to make our efforts easier and multiply its consequences.' (according to De Rougemont, 2005: 253.) The Internet is just a medium and, even though it's a great help in scientific or any other research work, it is not scientific in its essence and errors can exist and subsist on its sites even for a very long time. 'There is a huge difference between sciences, in the same way as between humanities or social sciences and media. In natural sciences you are faced with natural facts which are perceived as a strict supervisor. You cannot get far with nonsense. Errors cannot persist in developed sciences. A theoretical error can persist because it is not easily detected. If someone conducts an experiment and presents the wrong results, it will be very soon discovered when the experiment is repeated. There is a rigid international discipline which on no account guarantees that you will find the truth, but it points out the standards that are difficult to avoid. There are also external conditions which determine how science works: foundations and the like. They are quite different from other areas in which external coercion and limitations are very strong. There is less of what is understood, empirical refutations get through much harder. It's much simpler to ignore what we don't want to hear.' (according to Chomsky, 1999) The stated texts deal with scientific research, but they are entirely applicable to journalistic research which must also be credible and verifiable, and recently it has been often oriented towards the use of the Internet. 'Research journalism is, more than any other, oriented towards the use of computer technology. Therefore, research journalism is becoming a computer (or computerised) science/.../ It is important for every researcher, and not only for a journalist, to acquaint themselves with the Internet very well. It is important to keep two crucial problems in mind: credibility - the reliability of information on the Internet is not less guaranteed than in other media, and what's more, it is easier to cover up an information source and its verifiability as well as its redundancy - there is simply too much content to browse through on the Net.' (according to Bešker, 2004: 148 and 157.) Just as titles from books, periodicals and everyday life emerge on the global net, we can't and mustn't restrict ourselves to the Internet when doing scientific research either, because our picture will be distorted. What's more, such exclusive research would be impossible to conduct due to the Internet being polythematic. Its sources in the outside world are not separated from it, but rather completely incorporated. We mustn't think of the Internet as a subject or separate world, but rather as a medium serving modern man. In the second half of the 20th century, there was a series of scientific contributions, huge discoveries which were to have an enormous influence on the development of journalism for the next hundred years and later. None of those discoveries was made either by a journalist or the one who studies journalism.' (according to Johnson, 1994) In the same way, the computer invented for quite different purposes has become irreplaceable in modern journalism, however not as irreplaceable as a capable journalist. It still remains a tool which enables the faster and more available flow of information. 'The computer is the first machine used by the journalist and organ. Unlike journalists, whose basic *modus operandi* hasn't changed for centuries, organs owe its structure to technologies, newspapers to the invention of the printing press, modern newspapers to the invention of the rotogravure. Radio journalism wouldn't exist without the invention of the radio, television journalism without the invention of the television, internet journalism without connecting the Internet to the world net.' (according to Bešker, 2004: 146.) The invention of each of those devices brought about a specific revolution in the then conception of media and, without a doubt, intensified the then media scene; nowadays, however, each of them undergoes a specific post-revolution in which they are more or less changed in order to be ready to further meet the increased demands of the global public. At the same time, journalists start using various information and communications technologies for their research and reporting, thereby bringing a revolution in the field of journalism which from the very start strived for topicality, because old news is not news and new technologies bring speed. The Internet is the only medium which doesn't undergo its post-revolution, but its revolution keeps going on and causes post-revolutions in other mediums and the entire society.

3. RESPONDENT-DRIVEN SAMPLING

In order to check concrete problems faced by today's journalists and scientists when using the Internet in their research, I decided to carry out a survey based on two related techniques of social expression that's been established on social networks, and those are *respondent-driven sampling* (RDS) and *snowball sampling*. These methods came into being earlier and were not originally intended for research via the Internet, but rather for social chains, and most often they were used for exploring hidden and inaccessible populations. Since the Internet is in itself a social network, I used the advantages of these two techniques so that I get to the target group of respondents quickly and without any financial costs. Theoreticians of those methods point out their disadvantages as well, for example homophily. 'The term *homophily* arising from the theory of social networks especially present among the methods of peer recruitment is used to describe the fact that all social relationships are mostly based on similarity, in other words on the tendency of similar people, on the basis of all characteristics which bring them together so that they can establish social relationships.' (according to Heckathorn, 1997, 2002b, Salganik and Heckathorn, 2004). 'That means that the recruitment isn't based on random sampling. Therefore, homophily poses a problem when it comes to recruiting respondents, since it brings a systemic error caused by the fact that respondents tend to recruit those people who are similar to them and those who they have a strong social relationships with.' (according to Baćak; 2006, 198.) Homophily itself was the reason for which I decided on such a research method because in my research, homophily was a starting point, i.e. an advantage and not a disadvantage because I specifically wanted to get to the similar respondents.

'Respondent-driven sampling has a great number of advantages in relation to other methods of sampling. Using the logic of nets and stimuli, RDS deeply penetrates the population, thereby spanning the groups which escape other methods. Solving the problem of homophily and the initial selection of respondents, RDS surpasses standard methodological difficulties of peer recruitment methods, thus enabling the achievement of a representative sample. Owing to controlled conditions under which research is conducted, RDS offers safety and discretion to the respondents. In comparison to other methods, its implementation does not require either great financial and institutional capacities or time capacities/.../ Keeping the existing methodological efforts and recent empirical verification in mind, RDS proved to be the most advanced method of sampling hidden and inaccessible populations that social researchers have at their disposal the moment.' (according to Baćak; 2006, 201-2.) Not having conducted research on hidden populations, but rather on public people and having guaranteed discretion and anonymity by using the technique of gathering, i.e. completing questionnaires online, thereby modifying the mentioned technique (I didn't give vouchers, the request, and not a reward, was a stimulus), I must stress that I deviated from some of its basic postulates and partly resorted the snowball sampling method. 'Snowball sampling, (according to Erickson, 1979, Sudman and Kalton, 1986) in its various forms, is, according to many, the most frequently used method of sampling hidden populations.' (according to Magnani et al., 2005; Heckathorn, 1997) In short, a starting point is locating a certain number of members of a target population which satisfy the established criteria for entering the sample. They are the initial source of the required information and the other members are found through them; they direct researches to their acquaintances and friends who satisfy the established criteria. That chain of recruiting or referring goes on as long as new respondents are required, in other words as long as the desired size of the sample is not accomplished. Many problems are associated with this method, however the most serious one is the bias of the sample or a systemic error which is caused by the selection of the initial sample of respondents and biased selections that respondents make when recruiting other members of the population. The selection of each new respondent is not coincidental, but rather determined by the characteristics and preferences of the respondent who does the recruitment. The sample will be dominated by those members of the population who are more cooperative and more available, for whatever reason, instead of randomly selected individuals/.../ 'Finally, since recruitments take place via

social networks, those individuals having larger personal networks, in other words having more acquaintances and more connections with other members (in RDS, individuals with unusually large personal networks are called *sociometric stars*) will also have an enormous influence on defining a sample, whereas the influence of relatively isolated individuals will be small.' (according to Baćak; 2006, 195.) Biased selection, i.e. subjectivity and uncritical acceptance turned out to be a problem in this research as well, especially among journalists, because not all journalists who joined the research are also research journalists and they are not fully engaged in research journalism. Since I didn't intend to do research into the population, but rather into the problems faced by the population, from my questionnaire I left out usual parts such as age, sex, narrow field of work from my questionnaire. I tried to adapt to the medium I do research into and on, and I asked only five questions so that the respondents can answer within the shortest time, whereby they would be encouraged to forward questionnaire. If the survey had been more extensive (even though it was interesting to explore some other questions), the number of respondents would have probably been smaller and the survey would have taken longer. I asked journalists and scientists identical questions, but in two separate surveys so as to have information for each group:

1. How often do you use the Internet in research?
2. Do you think the Internet is a reliable source of information?
3. What is the estimated percentage of your Internet use in relation to other sources?
4. What are the advantages of the Internet in research?
5. What are the disadvantages of the Internet in research?

Possible answers were already given to the first three questions and the last two offered the possibility of two answers in the text frame. I assumed that the most respondents would refer to speed as an advantage and to the superfluity of the material as a disadvantage, which proved correct, but other advantages and disadvantages stated by the respondents seem particularly interesting as well as their ways of solving the stated problems that they pointed out on their own initiative, thereby showing that a short survey was a good choice for this medium because the respondents didn't get tired of answering and they were willing to extensively explain the problems they face, and that is precisely the objective of the research. I assigned the survey to my acquaintances from different editorial offices as well as to workers in the marketing of certain institutions with a request to forward the survey to research journalists. In the same way, I assigned the survey for scientists to my friends and the relatives(!) who are at different faculties according to academic professions. Such personal contact proved necessary, probably due to an element of motivation because I originally sent the survey to editorial offices, institutes and faculties at their official contacts, but the response was very weak. Also, it was interesting to follow the number of answers which rapidly grew after forwarding the survey to an acquaintance, but then again stagnated very soon because the second round of the respondents was encouraged to participate, but in most cases they were not willing to forward, however. If the RDS method were used for some more detailed, more extensive and more delicate research, it would be necessary, before the beginning of the research, to consider the ways of motivating the respondents who are very often indifferent and overloaded with various (internet-based and telephone-based) surveys. Because if you start with personal contacts, which was the case in this research, the respondents are motivated only in the first questioning wave, the motivation drops later, however the fundamental error occurs when it comes to objectivity. In this way, the researcher himself is cast in the role of a sociometric star, which is not good. An even bigger problem will emerge if the researcher does not have contacts in the researched groups. The problem of motivation in online surveys that are intended for the needs of certain companies is solved in many ways: with prize competitions (who enters the competition can win a prize), conditioned approach (only after the questionnaire has been completed, some content can be accessed

or an application can be downloaded), related contents (the respondent is motivated by an interesting accompanying text) or a request. At any rate, solving the question of motivation must be taken into consideration before carrying out surveys via the Internet because the Internet audience is overloaded with all kinds of surveys, and therefore the brevity and ease of answering alone are not a sufficient stimulus.

4. RESULTS

The RDS method research took a month: from 7th February to 8th March. 115 scientists and 79 research journalist took part in the research. There is a considerable disproportion in the number of the respondents who accepted the survey between the two questioned groups. This problem emerged due to the clear definition of who is a scientist (the one with an academic profession) so the respondents knew whom to forward the survey, however the number of profiled research journalists is relatively small and since this sampling is driven by the respondents, they often, without knowing it, forwarded the survey to the same sender and the circle of the respondents closed relatively soon. Having noticed during a result check that that had happened, I tried, according to the rules of the snow ball sampling method, to get the survey started again, but the journalists I contacted had already completed the questionnaire which they got from some other sources and offered the possibility for forwarding to journalists who are not engaged in research journalism. Wanting to have a respectable sample rather than a respectable number of the sampled, I dismissed this possibility and decided to stick to a relatively small number of respondents. This confirmed one more important prerequisite of respondent-driven sampling, and that is that the sampled group must be accurately defined so that the respondent can be sure whom to forward the survey. It was left to the subjective assessment of the research journalists and there appeared a possibility of an error. Since there is no official classification of journalists, we will have to content ourselves with the assessment and self-assessment of the journalists questioned.

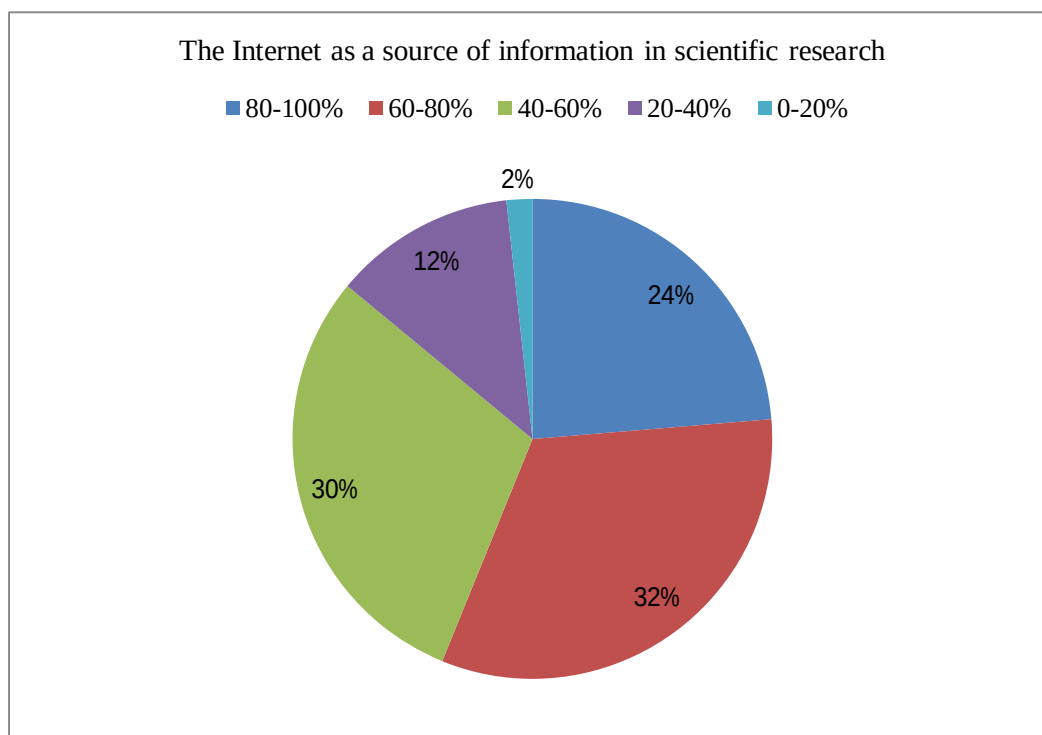
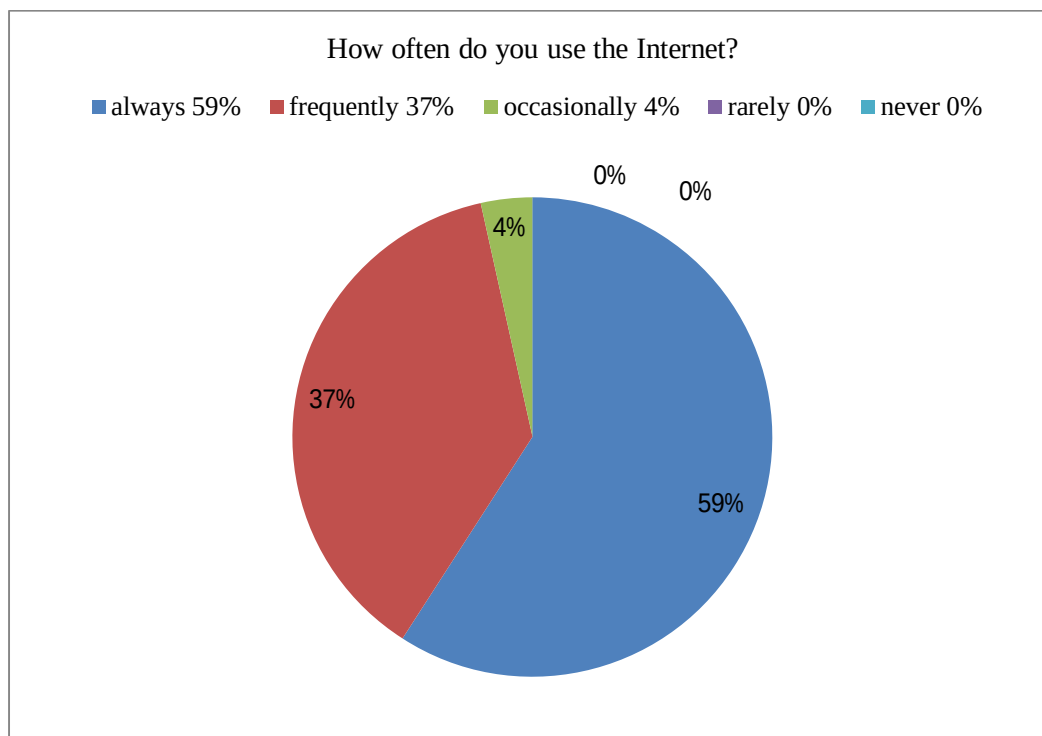
Scientists who completed the questionnaire gave really surprising answers. The Internet is stigmatized as an unscientific and superficial medium, however almost all the scientists, even 96% of them, always (59%) or frequently (37%) use precisely the Internet in research, and not a single scientist use it rarely or never.

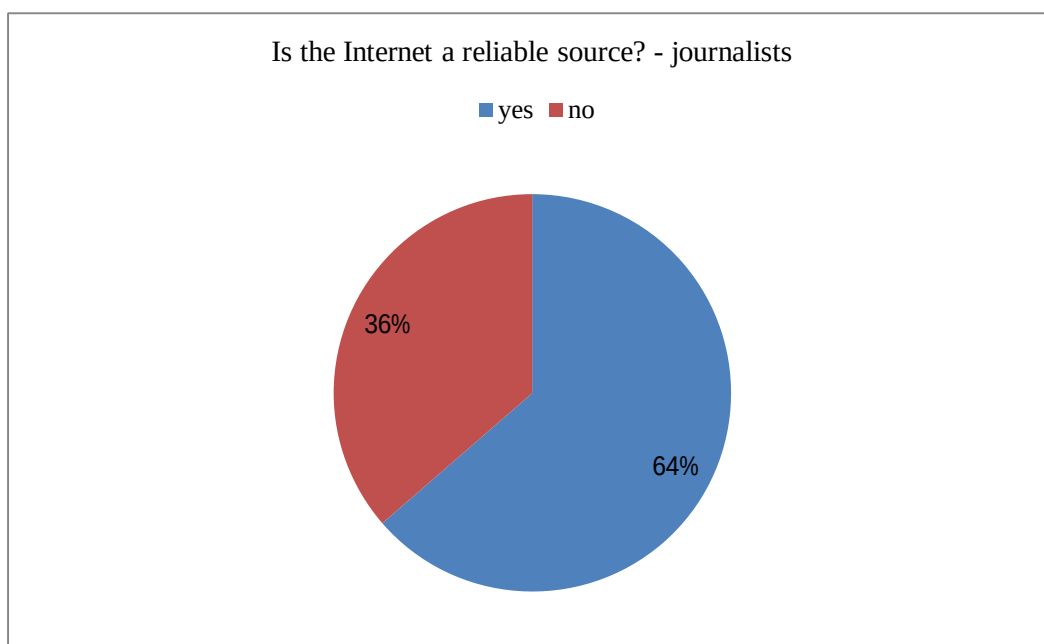
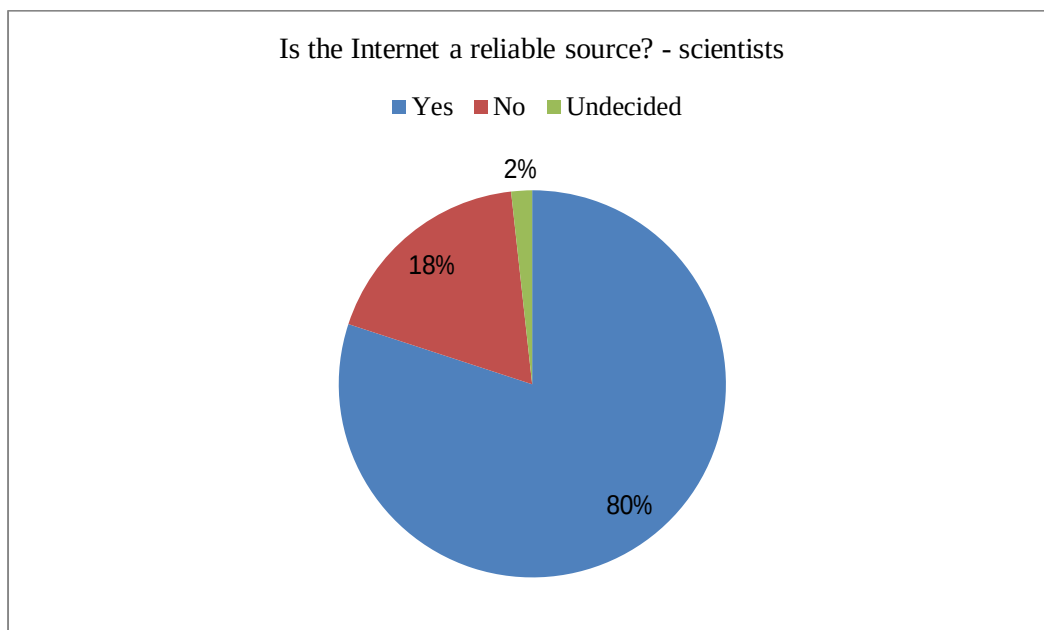
Only four scientists use the Internet in research only occasionally, but only one doesn't consider the Internet a reliable source of information and only one uses it 20-40%, whereas the others stated that, even though using it only occasionally, it makes up 40-60% of the source in their research. Only 16 scientists (14%) use Internet data sources below 40% and only two scientists less than 20%. Surprisingly, even 27% of scientists (24%) use Internet sources in the proportion of more than 80%. 60-80% of the Internet is used by 37 scientists, i.e. 32% and there are 34 or 30% of scientists who, in their research, use the Internet in the proportion of 40-60% in relation to other sources. Even those who don't consider the Internet reliable use it in high proportions.

Confidence that the scientists have in the Internet is also beyond expectation. Even 92 scientists consider the Internet a reliable source of information, whereas only 21 scientists consider it unreliable. The rest of them couldn't decide.

Research journalists mostly consider the Internet a reliable source of information, i.e. thirty-five, meaning 64% said they believed the Internet was reliable.

Unlike them, 20% of the research journalists consider the Internet unreliable and they make up 36% of the questioned.



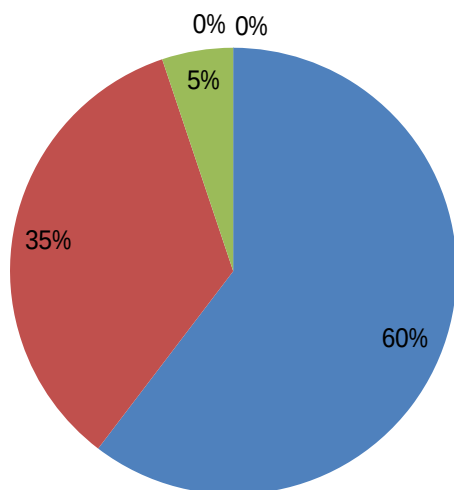


From the above-mentioned data we can conclude that the scientists have much higher confidence in data from the Internet. Such an attitude developed probably due to different kinds of information which certain groups search for by means of the Internet as well as due to the verifiability of the sources that has been enabled for the purpose of scientific data and works.

Irrespective of whether research journalists consider the Internet reliable or not, 94% of them use the internet in their research frequently (34%) or even always (60%). 5% of the journalists use it occasionally and none of the journalists chose the option never or rarely, either.

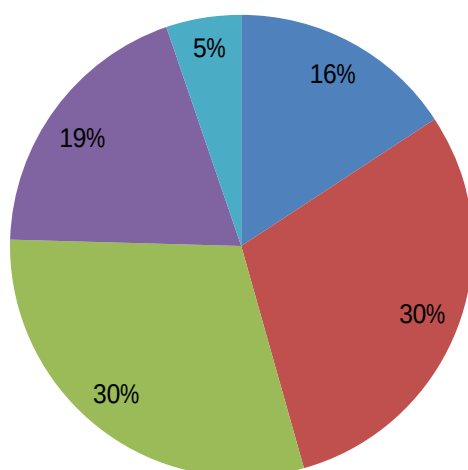
How often do you use the Internet in research? - journalists

■ always ■ frequently ■ occasionally ■ rarely ■ never



The Internet as a source of information in journalism

■ 80-100% ■ 60-80% ■ 40-60% ■ 20-40% ■ 0-20%



On the basis of the stated results, we can conclude that the Internet has become an inescapable tool in research journalism as well as in scientific research. Therefore, it was interesting to explore in what

proportion the Internet as a source of information in journalism was represented in relation to other sources. 9 journalists use it in the proportion of 80 to 100% and they make up 16% of the questioned population, the Internet makes up 60-80% and 40-60% of information sources for 30% of the journalists, i.e. 17 journalists per section. Only 5% of the journalists, i.e. three of them, use the Internet as a source of information in the proportion of 0-20%.

We can conclude that the Internet, apart from it being inevitable, has imposed itself as a highly represented source of information which proves to be a highly represented source of information among two thirds of the journalists. The research journalists put the reason for this in writing;

Speed is an advantage pointed out by 53 (90%) respondents, mostly coming first.

Accessibility is the next important advantage. It is pointed out by 38 respondents i.e. 68%.

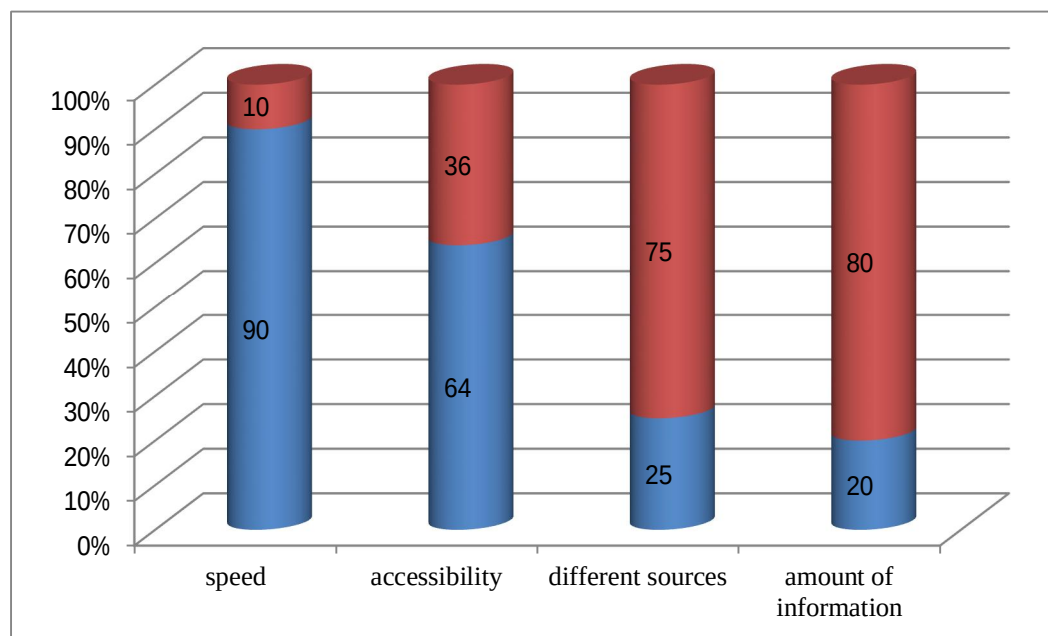
Accessibility is the next important advantage. It is stated by 38 respondents, i.e. 60%.

Different sources of information intended for creating a complete image is an advantage which 15 research journalists or 25% state on their own initiative.

12 journalists refer to a huge amount of information as an advantage and this advantage partly overlaps with previous one. They make up 20% of the respondents.

As an advantage journalist-researchers refer to the fact that the Internet often gives them guidelines in research, helps them in finding and preparing the topic of research, facilitates finding the sources and communicating with them, and represents a special archive. Graphically edited data look like this:

Advantages of Internet use in research - journalists



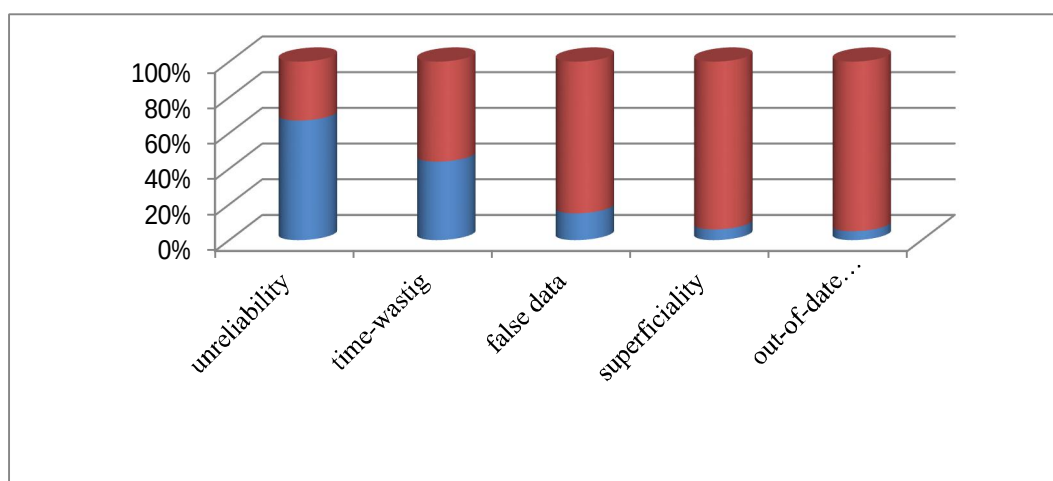
Once again, it is important to emphasize that no answer was offered in this question and surprisingly, different respondents that point out identical advantages are in agreement about the answers. Though speed was the anticipated advantage, accessibility proved to be very important, which was contrary to expectation.

Different sources and a huge amount of information are characterised as an advantage, but they also come as a disadvantage.

Unreliable information and sources present the biggest disadvantage of Internet use in research. This disadvantage was referred to by 45 journalists, i.e. 76% as a crucial one.

This disadvantage partly affects the following disadvantage as well, i.e. time-wasting due to a great amount of information on the Internet, as well as to the necessity for checking every piece of information. 44% of research journalists (26) refer to this disadvantage as being relevant and interfering. In the context of disadvantages, 15% of the journalists pointed out false data, 6% superficiality, 5% out-of-date information, and disadvantages are also associated with poor language, the inability to communicate with the source, as well as the emergence of copy-paste journalism that violates journalistic ethics, and that is an ever-growing phenomenon in industrial journalism.

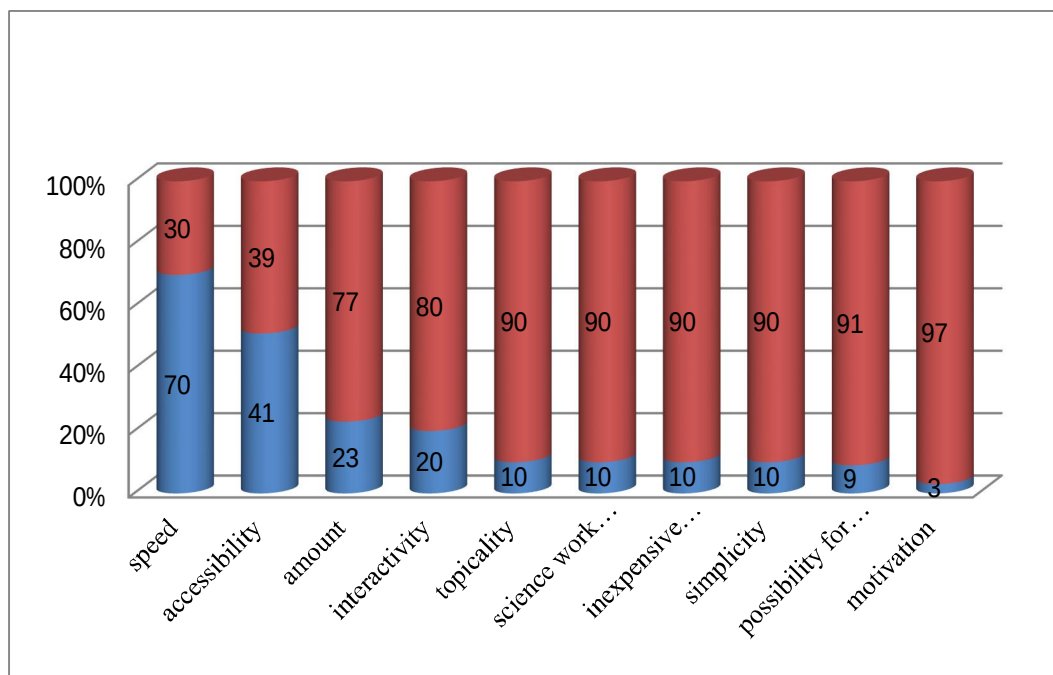
Disadvantages of Internet use in research - journalists



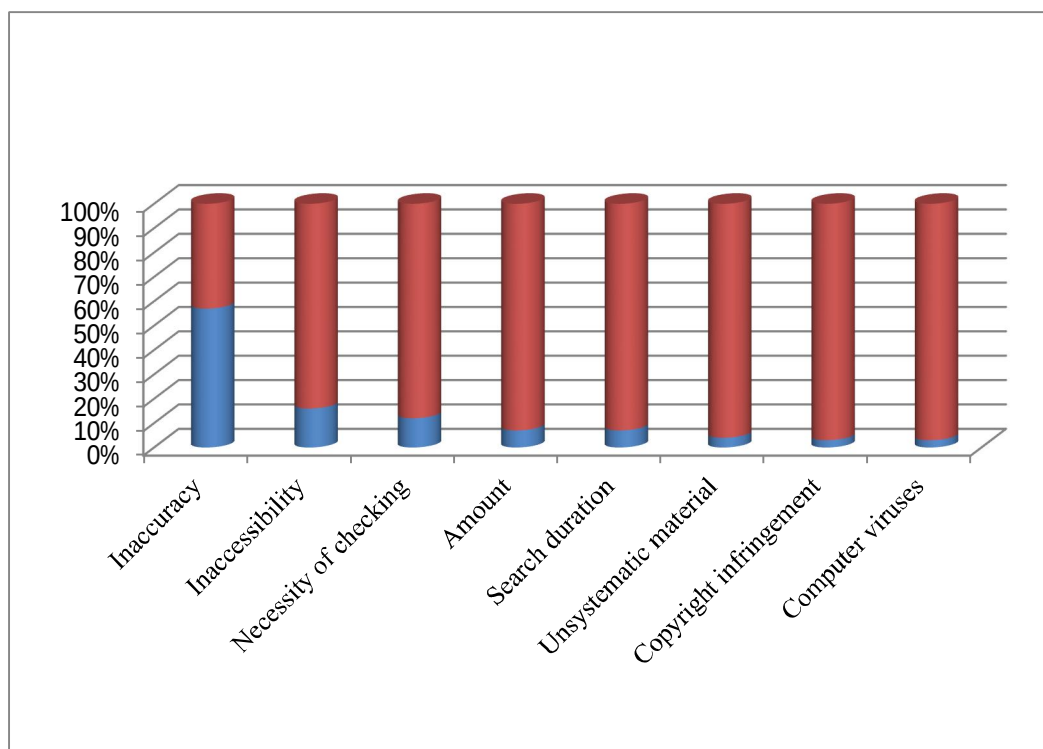
The scientists were much more thorough while explaining the advantages and disadvantages of Internet use in research, some explained different ways in which they use the Internet in their research, discussed the problems, offered suggestions for this work and research, as well as compliments and criticism. Owing to really extensive and exhaustive answers, it was hard to systemise them, however most answers can be reduced to the lowest common denominator.

Just like the journalists, even 80 of the scientists (70%) refer to speed as the greatest advantage, which is followed by accessibility (41%) that is referred to by 47 scientists as an advantage and the amount of information (23%), i.e. by 26 scientists. Interactivity and the ability to communicate with the colleagues are an advantage stated by 23 scientists (20%) and this advantage wasn't mentioned by the journalists. New categories of advantage are topicality, science work bases, inexpensive research and the simplicity of research to which 10% of the scientists refer as an advantage. Somewhat fewer scientists, 9%, refer to the possibility for checking data as an advantage and only 3% find on the Internet topics and motivation for further research.

Advantages of Internet use in research - scientists



Disadvantages of Internet use in research - scientists



The possibility of ordering (foreign) science literature is referred to by the scientists as an advantage, including the possibility for consulting during research via conference links, communication with foreign scientists, possibility for creating their own e-library, using multimedia content, verifying quotes and abuse control, possibility for criticism, quick processing of statistic data, new ways of research...

While explaining the disadvantage of the Internet, the scientists were thorough and meticulous. The biggest disadvantages of the scientific research of the Internet are inaccurate and unreliable data and sources. 66 scientists (57%) consider the stated problem crucial, which is followed by the necessity of verifying data that was stated by 14 scientists (12%). A specific problem that emerges in scientific research is the inaccessibility of certain pages, which makes the work of 18 scientists (16%) difficult. 7% scientists have difficulty dealing with the excessive amount of information, which in turn results in time-consuming browsing. 4% of the scientists refer to unsystematic material as a problem and 3% decided to point out copyright infringement and a possibility of a computer getting infected.

The scientists also refer to the low possibility of control, an invasion of privacy and bad translations as a problem, so that 'The frequent and exclusive use (of the Internet - A/N) can lead to misleading ideas and conclusions.' One scientist argues that 'There is a possibility of stealing someone else's results as well as of fraud and abuse due to loads of information that are difficult to follow. There is also a possibility of interfering with work on their sites if there are fierce opponents and malicious experts and colleague experts.' Interestingly, 7 scientists (6%) stated that there are no disadvantages and problems when using the Internet in research.

5. CONCLUSION

By means of theoretical and empirical research, this work confirmed the thesis that the biggest advantage of using the Internet in scientific research and research journalism is speed and the amount of available information, and unverified data and the superfluity of material are the biggest disadvantage. It showed significant agreement in the answers of the journalists and scientists, which justified the parallel research on those two groups. Also, the research showed some unexpected parameters: that the accessibility of the Internet is a really big advantage for both questioned groups, as well as that wasting time with unnecessary and useless browsing is a big disadvantage. Each of these questioned groups showed their peculiarities as well. For example, the scientists find it very important to communicate with their colleagues and to protect copyrights, which the journalists didn't even mention, whereas the journalists face the problems of out-of-date information that doesn't hinder the scientists' work. Also, what surprised me most was high confidence, especially that of the scientists, in data from the Internet as well as the frequency of Internet use in journalistic and scientific research, which also confirmed the original thesis that the Internet has become irreplaceable in everyday communication as well as in science and journalism.

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