

MEDIJI

Izvorni znanstveni članak
UDK 070:004.738.5(497.5)
Primljeno:18. lipnja 2013.

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Novinarstvo i Twitter: Između novinarskih normi i novih rutina

Sažetak

Ova studija prikazuje kako se novinari u Hrvatskoj koriste Twitterom te kako se razlikuju s obzirom na njihov rad u elitnim i ne-elitnim medijima. Utvrđeno je da novinari u Hrvatskoj ne koriste Twitter intenzivno što se dijelom može obrazložiti malim brojem ukupnih Twitter korisnika u Hrvatskoj. Također, istraživanje je pokazalo da su novinari, kao rezultat korištenja Twittera, otvoreniji i više uključeni u rasprave s posljedicama veće transparentnosti i promjene u njihovim normama. Elitni i ne-elitni novinari razlikuju se u razini transparentnosti i rutinama objave. Novinari u elitnim medijima će se manje samopromovirati i pisati o svojim životima od novinara koji rade za ne-elitne medije.

Ključne riječi: Hrvatska, novinarstvo, Twitter, transparentnost, ne-elitni mediji, društvene mreže

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MEDIA

Original scientific paper
UDK 070:004.738.5(497.5)
Received, June 18th, 2013

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Journalism and Twitter: Between Journalistic Norms and New Routines

Summary

This study examined how journalists in Croatia use Twitter and how they differ regarding their work for elite and non-elite media. Research focuses on basic journalistic norms of nonpartisanship, transparency and the gatekeeping. It was found that journalists in Croatia do not use Twitter extensively partly because of small number of overall Twitter users in Croatia. But this study also found that, as a result of Twitter use, journalists were more open and more involved in discussions with consequence of more transparency and changes in their norms. Elite and non-elite journalists differ in topic selection, transparency level and routines. Journalists in elite media are less likely to link, self-promote and write about their personal lives than journalists working for non-elite media.

Keywords: Croatia, Journalism, Twitter, Transparency, non-elite media, social network

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Introduction

New communication technologies enabled new ways of communication, faster flow of information, alternative sources and almost instantaneous reaction on news content. The borderline between professional journalists and their audience seems to be blurring (Bruns, 2005; Jenkins, 2006). Twitter can be seen as a form of participatory journalism where citizens report without recourse to institutional journalism (Thurman and Hermida, 2008). It is important to notice that public communication and especially news production are still dominated by the media, but in certain spheres, alternative agenda-setting actors do exist, and they are producing their own news content. In such an environment, traditional journalism and journalistic norms are challenged.

Considering that, classical paradigm of journalism, as a framework to provide report and analyses of events and processes through narratives, producing an accurate and impartial renderings of reality (Dahlgren, 1996), is waning. It can be said that classical journalism is in transition. As Dahlgren (1996) states, new media trends that are changing traditional media environment and questioning classical paradigm are following: increasing amount of information not provided by journalists but available to citizens; blurring distinctions between journalism and non-journalism and implementation of infotainment; redefining professional identity of journalist; development of multimedia and virtual reality; and fragmentation of publics.

Twitter creates highly connected environment with new relations between professionals and amateurs. Some authors agree that it can only be understood under global views that include all interactions and relations (Noguera Vivo, 2013; Naaman, 2010; Hermida, 2010).

Based on literature on new communications technologies in computer science, Hermida (2010) sees Twitter as an awareness system that offers diverse means to collect, communicate, share and display news and information and where value is defined less by each individual fragment of information but rather by the combined effect of the communication. He (Hermida, 2010) describes it as an ambient journalism. Noguera Vivo's (2013:103) also uses the concept of ambient journalism to introduce perspective of "end-user journalism", and explains it as an "ongoing process of collaboration with people in all the news phases: observation, selection, filtering, editing, distributing and interpretation".

The spread of social media enabled mixing of professionals and amateurs in different fields, like in education, arts or in journalism where the Twitter ambient provides great conditions for fully achievement of participatory or citizen journalism (Nougera Vivo, 2013). As concluded (Nougera Vivo, 2013), main objective of ambient created by Twitter is to fix the traditional journalistic tensions between control and collaboration, and the way to do that is more participation from non-professionals and more decisions made by the professionals. But, as Noguera Vivo (2013) pointed, if professionals do not include job talking, linking or sharing in reporting process, the end-user journalism will not be developed.

Twitter and Journalism

Twitter is a social network focused on interests rather than on friends, where users create posts of 140 characters or less. Twitter users can create posts with text, links, photos and videos; view and follow updates from other users; send public or “semi-private replies or have private conversations with other users” (Hacker and Seshagiri, 2011). Also, users can search the entire network in real-time for interesting topics or breaking news, organize their streams with hash-tags (Hacker and Seshagiri, 2011). According to Drap Agency (2013), in February 2013 Twitter in Croatia had 51.986 users.

On Twitter people follow accounts/profiles that provide valuable information, whether they've met or not (Hacker and Seshagiri, 2011). Also, Twitter is fully public and content has a wide reach. One of Twitter's key functions is as a news and information amplifier. Hacker and Seshagiri (2011) showed how large portion of tweets were pointing back to traditional media sources to get the full story. As they concluded, Twitter was amplifying the spread of news, not replacing it.

Marwick and Boyd (2011) describe Twitter as an example of a technology with a networked audience, where users create and exchange content in a many-to-many model. Of course, different users differently use Twitter. For consumers it's a way to connect to friends, brands, celebrities, political actors or interest groups. For political candidates it's a way to make campaign. For journalists, it's a way to engage with

communities, locate sources, and find information and to report on the new ways.

Marshall Kirkpatrick (2008) says that Twitter in journalism can be used for detecting and following breaking news, for interviewing, for ensuring the quality in journalism and for promotion of own content. One of the advantages of Twitter is easy integration with smartphones that enables reading or publishing content even far from the computer (Brautovic, 2011a). Many big news stories have broken first on Twitter. One of the examples is resignation of Croatian Prime Minister Ivo Sanader, published first on Twitter profile of Jutarnji list, and after that on the media web site (Grbacic, 2009).

Journalists also can use Twitter for the interviews. Not to conduct, but to find ideas for interview from their followers, additional information and primary source (Brautovic, 2011a). Media and individual journalists can use Twitter for promotion of their content. It is a way to reach audience that usually don't visit their online editions. Twitter users can share tweets to other users (RT) which gives this microblogging viral potential (Brautovic, 2011b). One of the main characteristics of social media is interaction (Craig, 2011), so media and journalists can use Twitter to create and maintain community with the audience and to enable them alternative source of information when online media is not in function. Alongside so many ways in which journalists can use Twitter, main question of this study is how they use it and how it affects their professional routines?

Transparency, Gatekeeping and Nonpartisanship

New media, such as blogs and Twitter, with its participatory nature enable journalists to achieve greater transparency and challenging the role of nonpartisan gatekeeper of information which is central journalistic norm (Lowrey and Mackay, 2008; Robinson, 2006; Singer, 2007). In that way, findings of Singer (2005) for journalists who use blog is similar to findings of Lasorsa et al. (2012) to journalists who use Twitter: expressing personal opinion is deviation from their role as nonpartisan information providers that sticks with neutrality on issues of public controversy; including postings from others (retweeting) is opening journalist's

gatekeeping role in deciding what is credible and newsworthy; and offering links to external websites that complement the information journalists provide is increasing job transparency.

Negotiating professional norms

Many scholars are dealing with interplay between established norms and practices in journalism and evolving means of communication, characterized by its collaborative nature that allows new relations, with focus either on media organizations or on individual journalists. So far, research showed that, in most of cases, interactive and collaborative potential of Twitter is not recognized, or just not applied. Research based on official accounts of media organizations and individual journalist accounts have shown Twitter use as a free and easy distribution channel for news content (Blasingame, 2011; Messner, Linke, and Eford, 2012), and as a promotional tool to drive traffic to media websites (Messner, Linke, and Eford, 2012).

Dealing with Croatian media, the study of Brautovic (2011c), based on two online editions of traditional media (24sata and Jutarnji list) and two exclusively online editions (Index.hr and Tportal), have shown that Croatian media also use Twitter far more for promotion of content than to establishing two-way communication with audience.

This paper is focused on individual journalists and their negotiation between social media characteristics and established professional norms and practices. In one of the foundational studies in this line of research, Jane Singer (2005) examined how the increasingly popular blog format affects long-standing journalistic norms and practice. She found that the journalists generally „normalized“ their blogs to fit old norms and practices. Singer points that even in that highly interactive and participatory format most journalists seek to remain gatekeepers. Common characteristics of blogs are expressing opinion and use of hyperlinks. As Singer (2005) found, journalists did express opinions fairly frequently, and they also used hyperlinks extensively, but they linked mostly to their host news organization and other mainstream media. Conclusion was that, even while experimenting with a participatory form of communication, journalists continue to think in terms of their traditional professional role

as information providers - it was still about vertical communication, from journalist to user, rather than horizontal where journalist is a participant in a conversation.

As an extension to the Singer's (2005) study, Lasorsa et al. (2012) focused on Twitter as a microblogging platform. They analyzed how journalists who use Twitter negotiate their professional norms and practices in a new media format, and also found that journalists are offering opinions quite freely, which deviates from their traditional professional conventions and threatens nonpartisanship. However, journalists in research of Lasorsa et al. (2012) also rather adapt new media to professional standards than to adopt characteristics of new media. The few studies which have been conducted so far indicate that journalists mostly have "normalized" the Twitter but with some indicative exceptions. Findings of Lasorsa (2012) in the study of transparency and other journalistic norms on Twitter, suggest that female journalists are more transparent in their tweets than their male counterparts.

In the study of Lasorsa et al. (2012) journalists working for major national media generally appear to be changing less than their counterparts at other news media. The more „elite“ media tend to share opinions and engage readers less than local media that are more inclined to “explore other innovative ways to attract an audience” (Larson et al., 2012:31).

The basis for the division between elite and non-elite media has not been precisely established, which can be considered research gap, but Lasorsa et al. (2012) explained it with a need to get a deeper sense of whether journalists working for different news media might differ in their microblogging activities. They considered journalists affiliated with national newspapers and major television broadcasters as “elite”, and those working for the other news outlets “non-elite”. The roughly categorization on the similar basis is used in this research of Croatian journalists on Twitter because it can be useful to indicate a trend.

Journalism and social media is a rapidly expanding research field but there are not much studies focused on journalists' professional norms in social media. So, the survey samples and templates are still creating and adapting to the specific context. Since this is the first study of how Croatian journalists use Twitter and how they negotiate professional norms of nonpartisanship, gatekeeping and transparency in that new, interactive environment, the research methodology is taken from Singer (2005), Lasorsa (2012), Lasorsa et al. (2012) and Noguera Vivo (2013).

This study tries to give contribution to the analysis of Twitter and journalism in Croatia, with special emphasis on how this social media challenges and influences long standing journalistic norms. Overlooked literature (Singer, 2005; Lasorsa et al., 2012; Nougera Vivo, 2013) suggests that journalists are more likely to “normalize” the Twitter to fit their norms and practices than to adjust them to new participatory landscape. Unlike those studies, the research goal of this study is to provide evidence supporting the claim that journalists who use Twitter change their traditional norms and standards by adopting them to microblogging service. That results in greater transparency regardless of the medium they work for.

Research questions are:

RQ1: In what way Croatian journalists use Twitter?

RQ2: Is Twitter changing their traditional norms of nonpartisanship and gatekeeping?

RQ3: Is Twitter increasing the transparency of the journalistic work?

RQ4: Is there a difference between „elite” journalists and „non-elite“ journalists in the way they use Twitter?

Method: Content analysis

For this study we used content analysis. The coding was conducted based on the coding first introduced by Singer (2005), Lasorsa et al. (2012), Lasorsa (2012) and Noguera Vivo (2013).

The content analysis consisted of these categories: topic of tweet, type of the tweet, retweeting, the transparency of the news production process and hashtag. Based on Lasorsa et al. (2012) the topics of the tweet were labeled: politics, technology, economy, entertainment, sports, environment, the social welfare, journalist’s personal life and unspecified topic.

The type of the tweet category proposed by Lasorsa et al. (2012) was extended and labeled: convey information, seek information, convey opinion, self-promotion, conversation (Noguera Vivo, 2013) and breaking news (Noguera Vivo, 2013). The seek information had three labels:

question for followers, first-hand accounts from followers and all other tweets. The breaking news was generated from Noguera Vivo (2013) and it had four labels: news from own voice, link to own media, link of the news with links to other professional media and breaking news with links to non-professional media. The same as Lasorsa et al. (2012) category conveying opinion was labeled major opining and minor opining which can indicate deviation from nonpartisanship norm.

Lasorsa et al. (2012, p. 26) pointed that “retweeting is an indication of a journalist’s ‘opening the gates’ to allow others to participate in the news”. In this coding, category retweeting (RT) had three subcategories retweet, retweet of its own tweets and no-retweet where retweet was labeled RT without comment; RT negative comment and RT positive comment (Noguera Vivo, 2013).

The same as Lasorsa (2012) category the transparency of the news production process was labeled job talking, linking, personalizing tweets and lifecasting. The linking had four sub labels: the journalist’s own news organization, another news medium, an outside blog and another link (Lasorsa, 2012). Linking to external websites is the way that Twitter can contribute to transparency, and indicative is also the type of external website to which the tweet linked.

The category hashtag was labeled: promotion of the author or show, "Temporary" hashtags issued by journalists/reporters/anchors to engage with viewers during broadcasts, public events, other and no hashtag (Ferenstein, 2011).

The units of analysis were tweet and hashtag.

The sample was selected in a way that initial list of journalist was produced from impressum lists found on the web sites of the most popular Croatian media (Gemius, 2013). The reason for that was the fact that was only secure way to determine who is working for the media and which role he or she has. The initial sample of journalists from Croatia included journalists and editors from national elite media Novi list (23), Slobodna Dalmacija (18), Croatian national broadcaster Croatian television (27), RTL TV (30), 24sata (20), Jutarnji list (8), Večernji list (19), Nova TV -Dnevnik.hr (7) and non-elite media: Tportal.hr (59), Index.hr (10), Net.hr (36). After comparing the names of the journalists from the impressum lists with twitter users lists only 52 of 257 journalists had the twitter account with more than 5 tweets. We took 5 tweets as minimum for

detecting active use of Twitter. Also, three had no public open profiles so they were excluded from the analysis.

Using the Nvivo 10 capture tool we scraped 45788 tweets from 52 Croatian journalists covering the period from January 1, 2010 to June 9, 2013 for content analysis. Because of the huge quantity of the tweets in initial sample of tweets and assumption that recent tweets show better use of the platform, the sample was reduced to period from January 1, 2013 to June, 1 2013 and included 7606 tweets for content analysis from 39 Croatian journalists. Of 39 Croatian journalists 16 are journalists at the elite media, and 23 are journalists at the non-elite media.

The coding was made by two coders and intercoder reliability was determined by selecting 117 pairs of tweets which were coded by both coders. The reliability was calculated with ReCal 0.1 Alpha tool (Dfreelon, 2013). The conservative Cohen's Kappa with a value over 0.90 shows very high reliability (Lombard et al., 2004). The Cohen's Kappa for the "topic of tweet" was 0.929; for the "type of the tweet" was 0.89; for the "retweeting" was 0.958; for the "transparency of the news production process" was 0.923 and for the "hashtag" was 0.972. Contrary to Lasorsa et al. (2012) the results based on this coding are fully acceptable.

Table 1 The reliability and validity of data

	Percent Agreement	Scott's Pi	Cohen's Kappa	Krippendorff's Alpha
Topic of tweet	94%	0.929	0.929	0.929
Type of the tweet	91.5%	0.89	0.89	0.89
Retweeting	99.1%	0.958	0.958	0.959
The transparency of the news production process	94.9%	0.923	0.923	0.924
Hashtag	99.1%	0.972	0.972	0.973

Results and discussion

A descriptive profile of average Croatian journalist on Twitter is presented in Table 2. The total sample (52 journalists) shows that they

have small number of the followers and that they are following small number of other Twitter users compare to USA (Lasorsa et al., 2012). An average Croatian journalist on Twitter had 567 followers and he or she was following 357 Twitter users. It seems that journalists with presence on Twitter do not have celebrity status. The partial explanation for this can be found in small number of Twitter users in Croatia and their low activity via Twitter. An average journalist published 183 tweets during 5 months periods or 36.3 tweets per month or 1.2 per day.

Table 2 Profile of Croatian journalists on Twitter

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
Followers	46	9	3799	567,8	760,5
Following	52	10	2162	357	479
Total tweets	47	5	9865	3075,5	1903,8
Tweets in 5 months coding period	39	1	1833	183	332,1

The most popular topic for tweeting was their personal life. As presented in Table 3 24.66% of all tweets were talking about journalist's personal life. But, there was a difference between elite and non-elite journalists. The non-elite journalist had 28.45% of tweets with content of their personal life compare to elite journalists who had 9.42% or three times less. The elite journalists were posting about personal life in the range of the USA journalist 8.69%-13.9% depending on the gender (Lasorsa, 2012).

The second most popular tweet topic was politics (14.92%). In this case also we found the difference between non-elite and elite journalists. The elite journalists had 25.74% of their tweets in the area of politics compare to non-elite who had 12.23%. If we compare this result with the USA journalists (6.02%-7.76) (Lasorsa, 2012) we can see that Croatian journalists are posting almost twice as much.

The similar but opposite situation was with entertainment. The elite journalists were posting about this topic in 4.46% of tweets compare

to non-elite who were posting in 9.40% of cases. The USA journalist did it in around 7% of tweets (Lasorsa, 2012).

Another great difference between non-elite and elite journalist were sports. The elite journalists had 16.39% of their tweets in this category compare to non-elite who had only 0.43%. In the USA the sports tweets are in the range of 1.39% for females to 8.86% for males (Lasorsa, 2012).

Table 3 Topics of the tweets

	Non-elite	%	Elite	%	TOTAL	%
Politics	684	12,23%	358	25,74%	1042	14,92%
Technology	243	4,34%	34	2,44%	277	3,97%
Economy	113	2,02%	56	4,03%	169	2,42%
Entertainment	526	9,40%	62	4,46%	588	8,42%
Sports	24	0,43%	228	16,39%	252	3,61%
Environment	140	2,50%	29	2,08%	169	2,42%
Social welfare	138	2,47%	10	0,72%	148	2,12%
Journalist's personal life	1592	28,45%	131	9,42%	1723	24,66%
Unspecified topic	2135	38,16%	483	34,72%	2618	37,47%
TOTAL of topics	5595	100,00 %	139 1	100,00 %	6986	100,00 %
TOTAL of all tweets	-	73,56%	-	18,29%	-	91,85%

From the Table 4 we can see that the most popular activity of Croatian journalists on Twitter was conversation or discussion (41.06%). This finding is in the line with Spanish journalists (Noguera Vivo, 2013) and twice popular then in USA (Lasorsa et al., 2012). The elite journalists (49.22%) were more willing to discuss via Twitter then non-elite (38.81%). The second most popular activity was opining with 34.46% of all tweets. Compare to USA journalists (42.7%) this activity is less popular (Lasorsa et al., 2012). Another major activity of Croatian journalists was self-promotion (13.63%) where this activity was more used by non-elite (15.94%) than elite journalists (5.29%). The least popular activities were to

seek information (2.52%), to report about breaking news (1.97%) and to convey information (6.36%) with a difference between elite and non-elite journalists in case of reporting the news from own voice. In comparison with Spanish journalists this activities were non-popular and non-interesting (Noguera Vivo, 2013).

Twitter can be effective tool for promote one's work, but self-promoting tweets were excluded from "job talking" because they do not advance accountability or transparency (Lasorsa et al., 2012). On the other side, as same authors emphasize, discussion or conversation often involve information about how the journalist is doing his or her job and that can reflect journalist's accountability and transparency.

Table 4 Twitter activities of Croatian journalists

	Non elite	%	Elite	%	Total	%
Convey information	265	5,46%	129	9,62%	394	6,36%
Seek information - Other	49	1,01%	14	1,04%	63	1,02%
Seek information - Question for followers	53	1,09%	11	0,82%	64	1,03%
Seek information - First-hand accounts from followers	27	0,56%	2	0,15%	29	0,47%
Major opining	911	18,76%	182	13,57%	1093	17,63%
Minor opining	860	17,71%	183	13,65%	1043	16,83%
Self-promotion	774	15,94%	71	5,29%	845	13,63%
Conversation/Discussion	1885	38,81%	660	49,22%	2545	41,06%
Breaking news - news from own voice	22	0,45%	78	5,82%	100	1,61%
Breaking news - link to own media	4	0,08%	7	0,52%	11	0,18%
Breaking news - link to other professional media	7	0,14%	4	0,30%	11	0,18%
Breaking news - links to non-professional media	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%
TOTAL of activities	4857	100,00%	1341	100,00%	6198	100,00%
TOTAL of all tweets	-	63,86%	-	17,63%	-	81,49%

The most popular activity in transparency of the news production process was linking with more than 73% of all transparency activities of Croatian journalists. If we compare these results with the transparency activities of USA journalists we will see that they are very low by percentage (37.76%) of total number of tweets. The American journalists were linking in 42%, personalizing 20.2%, job talking 8.9% of all analyzed tweets in USA (Lasorsa et al., 2012). The non-elite journalists were more linking (78.63%) than elite journalists (55.62%), but elite journalists were more jobs talking (38%). Like in Spain, external links (65.53%) were more popular than internal (9.31%).

Table 5 The transparency of the news production process

	Non elite	%	Elite	%	TOTAL	%
Job talking	242	10,10%	179	38,00%	421	14,68%
Linking - the journalist's own news organization;	208	8,68%	59	12,53%	267	9,31%
Linking - another news medium	236	9,85%	58	12,31%	294	10,25%
Linking - an outside blog	41	1,71%	6	1,27%	47	1,64%
Linking - other link	1399	58,39%	139	29,51%	1538	53,64%
Personalizing tweets	125	5,22%	17	3,61%	142	4,95%
Lifecasting	145	6,05%	13	2,76%	158	5,51%
TOTAL of transparency	2396	100,00%	471	100,00%	2867	100,00%
TOTAL of all tweets	-	31,50%	-	6,19%	-	37,69%

The gatekeeping role of journalists via retweeting the tweets of other Twitter users were not very popular activity. Of all analyzed tweets only 14.34% were retweets. In case of Spanish journalists it was 22.9% (Noguera Vivo, 2013) and in case of the USA journalists 15.2% (Lasorsa et al., 2012). Almost all of the retweets were their own tweets (89.18%) and this can be reason with the result from Table 4 where we can see that self-promotion was very important activity on Twitter. In Spain the most numerous retweets were retweets without comments (21%) but in Croatia

retweets without comment were only 3.21%. The second most numerous retweets were retweets with negative comment (6.78%). The retweets with negative comments in case of Spain constituted only 0.3% (Noguera Vivo, 2013).

Table 6 Use of retweeting

	Number of tweets	Percentage of tweets
RT without comment	35	3,21%
RT positive comment	9	0,82%
RT negative comment	74	6,78%
RT of his/hers own tweet	973	89,18%
TOTAL of retweets	1091	100,00%
TOTAL of all tweets	-	14,34%

As presented in Table 7 91.36% of tweets did not have hashtag what is similar to Spanish journalists with 83.6% tweets without hashtags (Noguera Vivo, 2013). As Noguera Vivo (2013) pointed “the hashtag were not a common resource for journalists...In this sense journalists were not giving advantages to promote the visibility of their content” (Noguera Vivo, 2013:110).

Table 7 Use of hashtags

	Number of tweets	Percentage of tweets
Promotion of the author or show	2	0,03%
Temporary" hashtags	2	0,03%
Public events	20	0,26%
Other	633	8,32%
No hashtag	6949	91,36%
Total	7606	100,00%

Conclusion and future research

Hypothesis of this paper is only partially confirmed. Croatian Journalists on Twitter opened the gates for opining, self-promotion and conversation. The communication became more horizontal and journalists are losing their nonpartisan norms but this helps journalist's accountability and transparency. On other side they are not ready for collaboration with end users because they are not using Twitter for news ideas, crowdsourcing and breaking news reporting. Journalists work became more transparent (linking) than ever before but still not on the level of their colleges in USA. Also, there are differences how elite and non-elite journalists are using Twitter. The elite journalists like to discuss about politics, sports and their jobs but non-elite like to talk about their personal life, entertainment and self-promote.

As Lasorsa (2012) noted in his research limitations and prospects of this study are based on the fact that research is made on the message side. By interviewing the journalists on Twitter we could learn more about journalists and how social media (Twitter) is changing their norms and routines. Besides these limitations, the quantity of analyzed tweets and sample selection are giving us the trends of usage of Twitter within Croatian journalism community.

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