

# **INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS ON CIVIC ACTIVISM AND DEVELOPMENT OF CIVIC SOCIETY**

## **Abstract**

The evolution of digital technology has opened the door to new means of creating and passing information in various forms with the help of new media. Civil society often takes over public services that the state does not or cannot provide, and serves as a sort of corrective for state institutions, especially if the institutions are weak or ineffective. Such social changes are a great challenge to citizens and civil society. Due to their potential for interactive communication, online media, and particularly social networks influence the development of political activism. The transition from conventional media (newspaper, television) to unconventional (internet, social networks) enables the decentralisation of communication, hinders restrictions and control as well as makes the exchange of opinion and information widely accessible. Through social networks, citizens are allowed to participate in public discourse, present their opinions and thoughts, and discuss political and social matters. Once seen as pure passive consumers, the viewers now become active participants as citizens – the source of information (Perišin, 2010.), which has a great impact on the interaction between citizens as well as the development of critical thought. The very advancement of technology and the evolution of social networks enable easier networking and encourage certain civic initiatives. This in result opens up new possibilities for the strengthening of the civic initiative's potential for citizen mobilisation towards participating in socially beneficial programs and projects as well as opening up new space for the support of civil society. The purpose of this paper is to investigate how the use of Internet media, that is social networks, affect and stimulate the development of civic activism and civil society.

**Keywords:** new media, social networks, civic activism, civil society